Addressing Gender-Based Violence for Better Climate and Environment Outcomes

GUIDANCE NOTE



UK International Development
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Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

CLEAN HELPDESK
Climate, Environment and Nature

WhatWorks
TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

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We hope that the evidence in this report will support donors, practitioners and researchers to accelerate efforts to address GBV within climate change, environment and nature efforts globally.

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Acronyms – Key Terms

AA	Anticipatory action
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CSOs	Civil society organisations
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EHRD	Environmental human rights defenders
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
FCDO	UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IUUF	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual orientations and gender identities
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NAP	National Action Plans
NbS	Nature-based solutions
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OPDs	Organisations of persons with disabilities
SEAH	Sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics
VAC	Violence against children
VAWC	Violence against women and children
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WEHRDs	Women environmental and human rights defenders
WROs	Women-led and women's rights organisations

Navigating this Guidance Note

This guidance note consists of the following sections:

This is an interactive PDF. Select a box to jump to a section. To return here, select Navigate between Back and Next.

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How to use this Guidance Note?

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How GBV is linked to climate and environmental finance, policy, and programming

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Sectoral Deep Dives for Climate...

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Climate-smart & sustainable agriculture

Conservation & reforestation

Disaster risk reduction

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance aims to help those working in climate and environmental policy, finance and programmes understand how to address gender-based violence (GBV).

Explore by role



For people working in policy, the guidance offers practical suggestions on integrating GBV considerations into international, national and sub-national policy and planning mechanisms. It also shares advice on keeping climate activists, environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs) and policymakers safe while engaging in policy spaces.



For people working in finance, the guidance shares opportunities to embed GBV considerations into the design of financial instruments and when mobilising funding.



For people working in programming, the guidance shares clear steps for identifying and mitigating GBV risks, strengthening GBV response, and developing GBV prevention interventions. It also offers guidance on determining which approach to take, based on programme-type, resources and level of ambition.

The **"Sectoral Deep Dives"** provide sector-specific messaging, suggested activities, and detailed case studies to illustrate what is possible in practice.

How to use this Guidance Note

This guidance is designed to be navigated according to your area of interest or role. We recommend the following approach:

Start at the introduction to understand what we mean by GBV, how it is linked to climate and environmental work, and how addressing GBV complements existing gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) and safeguarding approaches.

Choose which focus area you are most interested in and jump to the relevant high-level guidance.

FOR CLIMATE FINANCE

- **Read the rationale** for integrating GBV considerations into climate finance mechanisms.
- **Identify the opportunities** for doing so, including through funding calls, ringfenced funds for local women-led and women's rights organisations (WROs), and financial standards.
- **Explore a case study** of gender-just financing in practice.

FOR CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

- **Read key policy messages** on the importance of addressing GBV in climate and environmental action.
- **Understand the opportunities** to integrate GBVconsiderations into international, national and sub-national climate and environmental policy mechanisms and planning frameworks.
- **Explore top tips and a case study** about how to support the safe participation of climate activists, environmental defenders and policymakers.

FOR CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMING

- **Read the myth busting section** for an overview of why and how to address GBV in climate and environmental programming.
- **Understand the pathways for addressing GBV:** 1. GBV risk mitigation, 2. Strengthening GBV response, 3. GBV prevention.
- **Use the decision tree** to determine which approach is most appropriate for your programme based on your resources, time and level of ambition. Then, jump to the relevant high-level guidance to find out how to address GBV in practice.
- **Explore step by step guidance** on GBV risk mitigation, strengthening GBV response or GBV prevention. Each of these include short examples from practice, key things to remember, and further resources.

Explore the Sectoral Deep Dives, to find tailored messages, example activities, and real-world case studies.

Look out for the following icons as you make your way through this guidance:



Illustrative example



Important point to remember



Case study, real-world example



Further resources

Introduction

What is gender-based violence?

GBV relates to harmful acts directed at someone because of their gender.[1] It can take many forms, including physical violence, sexual violence, emotional or psychological abuse, and economic violence, such as controlling someone's money or preventing them from working. GBV can happen at home, in the community, or in public spaces, and it primarily affects women and girls, as well as gender-diverse people. It is driven by deep-rooted gender inequality and harmful social norms.

The importance of addressing GBV in climate and environmental finance, policy and programming

REMEMBER: The relationship between GBV and climate and environmental action works both ways. Climate change, environmental degradation and poorly designed climate and environmental interventions can heighten vulnerabilities to GBV. At the same time, GBV restricts women's participation, leadership and decision-making in climate and environmental initiatives, limiting both their effectiveness and the uptake of sustainable solutions.

The risks of GBV are exacerbated by multiple factors, many of which are linked to climate change and environmental degradation such as resource scarcity, extreme heat, food and water insecurity, and climate-induced disasters. A 2023 study from South Asia found that a 1°C increase in average annual temperature leads to a 4.5% rise in domestic violence, including physical and sexual abuse.[2]

GBV risks can also be exacerbated by factors linked to climate and environmental programming and climate finance projects, such as large influxes of male workers on green infrastructure projects, sustainable livelihoods programmes that do not address social norms restricting women's control of resources, and critical mineral extraction that disrupts community access to natural resources, requiring women to walk longer distances alone to gather water and fuel.

GBV is not only a human rights issue. It is a significant barrier to achieving climate and environmental objectives. Mainstreaming GBV strengthens the effectiveness and impact of climate and environmental policy, finance and programming[3] by:

- **Increasing the engagement of women and girls in climate and environmental action**. As roughly half of the population, it is crucial to engage women in climate and environment action for maximum impact.

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By removing safety concerns, women and girls can engage more fully in activities and decision-making, contributing their insights, skills and leadership. In Cambodia and Laos, 42% of 153 women environmental and human rights defenders (WEHRDs) surveyed shared that the primary barrier to their participation in natural resource management was safety concerns, with 73% having witnessed or experienced GBV through this work.[4]

- **Increasing the reach and uptake of project activities, supporting the equitable distribution of benefits, and promoting project sustainability.** For example, addressing concerns about harassment and violence on public transport increases the likelihood that women and girls will use green transport, rather than more polluting alternatives.

> *"Water infrastructure supports water systems. Addressing GBV supports whole communities to benefit from those systems. Sustainability requires both."*
>
> Sawsan Gharaibeh, International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

- **Strengthening policy coherence and accountability,** by aligning national action with UN commitments on climate change, environmental protection, and gender equality. See the Climate and Environmental Policy Section for more details.
- **Promoting socially responsible climate and environmental investments.** Identifying and mitigating GBV risks helps ensure interventions do no harm and protects investments from reputational risk. In 2015, a transport sector project funded by the World Bank in Uganda lost its funding following a campaign by the Bigodi community (amplified by international media coverage) which exposed sexual exploitation against teenage girls by construction workers.[5]
- **Promoting efficiency and value for money**. Aligning climate and gender equality objectives across finance, policy and programme portfolios helps

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avoid inefficiencies created by working in silos. For example, Global Affairs Canada's move towards gender-just climate financing has demonstrated how climate finance can effectively deliver both environmental and gender equality outcomes, in line with OECD DAC reporting frameworks such as the Gender Equality Policy Marker and Rio Markers on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

- **Contributing to individual and community climate resilience.** Addressing GBV promotes more equitable decision-making within households, which improves households' resilience to climate and environmental shocks.[6] It also improves the ability of women, girls and gender-diverse people to access disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts during climate disasters.

Preventing GBV is both possible and practical. Evidence from the UK-funded What Works to Prevent Violence programme, which rigorously evaluated prevention approaches across 12 countries in Africa and Asia, demonstrates that effective and cost-efficient interventions can significantly reduce violence. For example, a community-based intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo reduced intimate partner violence from 69% to 29% and non-partner sexual violence from 20.7% to 3.7%.[7] These findings show that, where climate and environmental programmes identify GBV as a barrier to resilience and participation, there are proven approaches that can be integrated or partnered with to address it.

REMEMBER: Addressing GBV is a technical specialism. Effective GBV policy and programming requires meaningful engagement with GBV specialists to ensure approaches are safe, appropriate, and evidence-based. WROs with experience addressing GBV are experts in context-specific responses and play a critical role in policy and programme design and delivery. Their expertise should be recognised through active participation and fair remuneration.

REMEMBER: GBV should be addressed as part of a GEDSI strategy, mainstreaming approach or investment lens and a comprehensive safeguarding approach, including safeguarding against Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) and other forms of harm.

Safeguarding specifically refers to harmful actions committed by staff, partners, volunteers or contractors within a programme or workplace**.** It includes **sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH)** and other forms of harm such as **bullying, harassment, physical violence, emotional or psychological abuse** amongst others. This guidance note does not cover steps for addressing SEAH but there is a range of guidance available. All organisations and programmes should have comprehensive approaches to preventing and addressing SEAH. The 'Understanding SEAH and GBV' note provides more information on the differences and similarities between the two areas of work.

GEDSI mainstreaming is the systematic process of integrating GEDSI through every stage of a programme or project (design, implementation, and MEL) to ensure no-one is left behind. It is a strategy for making sure the needs and concerns of all relevant groups are built into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. This contributes to more responsive programming and better service provision.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Gender Based Violence: Overcoming an unseen barrier to effective climate action, UK-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Helpdesk VIEW RESOURCE	This report explains how GBV undermines the effectiveness of climate action, draws on evidence and practitioner experience to highlight emerging good practice, and provides recommendations for policymakers, funders and practitioners on addressing GBV more comprehensively through climate programmes and policies.

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Section 1:

Climate and Environmental Policy



Short on time?

See the following for practical entry points and recommended actions.

Actions to integrate GBV into policy and planning frameworks at national and sub-national levels

POLICY INTEGRATION ACTIONS

Addressing GBV against climate and environmental policymakers and activists

PROTECTING POLICYMAKERS AND ACTIVISTS

This section sets out practical approaches for strengthening the integration of GBV considerations into climate and environmental policy frameworks. It also highlights measures to ensure that women and girls can participate safely, meaningfully and effectively in policy-making processes, without fear of violence, harassment or backlash.

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Key messages: why GBV should be reflected in climate and environmental policy

KEY TAKEAWAY: GBV is a barrier to effective, inclusive and sustainable climate and environmental action. Recognising and addressing GBV in policy frameworks can strengthen climate outcomes, support implementation and accountability, and build on existing international commitments.

Message 1. **Climate policies are more effective, inclusive and sustainable when they address the violence and discrimination that limit women and girls' ability to participate in and benefit from climate and environmental action.**

Integrating GBV considerations into climate and environmental policy can strengthen effectiveness, sustainability and equity by:[8]

- Strengthening the resilience of women, girls and communities to climate and environmental impacts, and supporting them to adapt and move away from environmentally damaging practices.
- Removing the substantial barrier that GBV poses to women, girls and gender-diverse people's participation and leadership in decisions around climate action, environmental governance and community adaptation and mitigation efforts.
- Reducing protection risks during climate emergencies, leading to safer and more equitable access to shelter and other humanitarian assistance and recovery support.
- Enabling climate activists and environmental human rights defenders to continue their work without fear or intimidation.
- Supporting an inclusive and equitable transition towards a green economy by ensuring women and gender-diverse people can access opportunities and contribute their perspectives and expertise without risk of violence and backlash.

Message 2. **Recognising GBV in climate policy helps translate commitment to action by creating pathways for finance, implementation and accountability.**

Explicitly recognising GBV within international climate and environmental frameworks can help create entry points for financing and implementation. This can help drive action by:

- Encouraging governments to integrate GBV into climate planning, adaptation and resilience strategies.
- Supporting greater policy coherence across climate, gender equality, humanitarian and development agendas.

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- Creating stronger incentives for investment and programming that address GBV as part of climate and environmental action.
- Strengthening monitoring, accountability and reporting on climate-related gender outcomes.

REMEMBER: Policy commitments must be accompanied by adequate resources in order to be implemented. A 2019 study by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) found that while 61% of countries support women's participation in natural resource management through policy commitments, fewer than half provide the resources needed to enable participation in practice.[9]

Message 3. **Recognising GBV in climate and environmental policy builds on existing international commitments and reflects the growing evidence base on factors that enable effective climate and environmental action.**

Integrating GBV considerations into climate and environmental policy frameworks helps align these with existing commitments across the United Nations system. A growing number of international climate, biodiversity and environmental agreements, decisions and action plans already recognise the links between gender equality, GBV and effective climate action.

Strengthening this language would reinforce existing commitments, while promoting greater consistency across international frameworks.

Examples of UN Commitments related to climate change, the environment and GBV

- **The Belem Gender Action Plan (A.3.9 and B.4)** recognises the importance of addressing violence against women to support their participation and leadership in climate action, and in building the evidence base on the links between climate change and GBV.[10]
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Draft Post-2020 Gender Plan of Action (paragraph 5)**[11] highlights that "measures to eliminate gender-based violence can thereby contribute to curbing practices harmful to biodiversity, upholding human rights, and creating the conditions necessary to enable more sustainable management of natural resources."
- **The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** includes multiple entry points for addressing GBV, including setting out goals to share benefits from biodiversity fairly and equitably, and targets focused on ensuring the participation of all in decision-making related to biodiversity. Further, it sets out various goals and targets that require the participation of whole communities, to which GBV is a

barrier. These include ensuring that biodiversity is sustainably used and managed, that degraded ecosystems are restored, and promoting enhanced biodiversity and sustainability in agriculture, forests and fisheries, among others.

- **The UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the UNCCD Gender Action Plan (2018-2030)** do not include explicit reference to GBV but include multiple entry points for addressing GBV including setting out priorities to increase and strengthen the participation and leadership of women at all levels of decision-making, strengthening women's land rights and access to resources, and integrating women's economic empowerment into UNCCD implementation to eradicate extreme poverty.[12] GBV poses a barrier to achieving all of these aims.
- **The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) on Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability**[13]**,** highlights that GBV can undermine food security interventions **(section 9.10.3.2),** that adaptation and mitigation projects which do not consider local social dynamics can increase risks of conflict (which can include GBV) **(section 7),** and that extreme weather events are associated with increases in intimate partner violence, child marriage, sexual exploitation and trafficking **(sections CCP3.2.2.3, 6.2.2.2, 7.2.7.4, 9.10.2.2.2, 9.10.2.6.1, 14.5.10.11).**
- **The COP28 Gender-Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Action Partnership** highlights that actions on finance, data, and opportunities should be gender-responsive, and recognises that climate change is "exacerbating existing inequalities, as well as gender-based violence". It also commits signatories to "fully incorporate the human rights of women and girls in just transition efforts" and to "encourage gender-responsive strategies on mitigation and adaptation."[14]
- **The SENDAI Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)** outlines concrete actions for Member States to protect development gains from disaster risk. [15] Its guiding principles include that "Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership" and that "A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted." [16]

Actions to integrate GBV into policy and planning frameworks at national and sub-national levels

NATIONAL

Integrating GBV into national climate and environmental policy and planning frameworks

KEY TAKEAWAY: Ensure GBV is explicitly recognised and addressed within national climate, environment and disaster policy frameworks. National frameworks should assess how climate and environmental challenges affect GBV, how GBV can undermine climate action and environmental governance, and embed specific actions, safeguards and accountability measures that promote the safe, inclusive and equitable participation of women, girls, gender-diverse individuals, Indigenous peoples and other individuals facing intersecting forms of discrimination.

When developing and updating national policy and planning frameworks, policymakers can recognise the importance of addressing GBV for sustainable and effective climate and environmental action and call for greater investments in efforts to address GBV. Entry points within specific policies and planning frameworks include:

- **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs):** All parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are expected to update their NBSAPs to align with the 23 targets. GBV considerations can be added under the following targets;
  - Targets 9-13, on promoting sustainable resource management and benefit sharing, which requires women's safe participation and leadership. [17]
  - Targets 21-23, on ensuring equal participation in decision-making, and equal access to knowledge, resources and land for women and girls.
- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** In 2022, the IUCN found that 15 countries included references to the links between GBV and climate change in their NDCs. [18] This represented a marked increase from just six countries in 2021, suggesting growing recognition by governments that climate change can exacerbate risks of violence against women and girls. Assessing how climate change affects GBV and how GBV, in turn, can limit climate action, helps governments identify appropriate responses. This can encourage access to climate finance, improve policy coherence, and strengthen action and accountability at the national level.
- **National Adaptation Plans (NAPs):** NAPs outline how countries will implement climate-change adaptations. Integrating explicit activities to address GBV aligns efforts with national gender-equality frameworks, promotes social impact of NAPs and supports accountability.

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EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: Suriname's NAP includes GBV training for disaster response volunteers.[19] Kiribati's NAP aims to strengthen evidence on the links between GBV and climate change. [20]

- **Climate Change Gender Action Plans (CCGAP):** CCGAPs bring together governments and civil society at national and sub-national levels to set priorities and actions for gender equality in climate policy. To date, 10 national and one sub-regional CCGAP recognises the links between climate change and GBV. [21]

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: Nepal's CCGAP includes an activity focused on GBV training, safeguarding, and conflict management to help prevent negative impacts of climate and forestry initiatives, such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries REDD+, and disaster risks on women's rights and Social Environmental Standards (SES).[22]

- **REDD+ Safeguard Information Systems (SIS):** The UNFCCC Cancun safeguards for REDD+ activities include reference to open, clear and fair forest governance, respecting Indigenous peoples' rights and traditional knowledge, and enabling the participation and voice of communities within the activities. National governments using REDD+ are expected to track and share how they follow these rules through a public SIS that demonstrates how safeguards are met. National governments could embed specific social indicators into these systems, establish survivor-centred grievance mechanisms, and track gender and GBV risks across forestry activities. For example, they could conduct a social assessment that is gender and disability inclusive during project design to map specific GBV risks associated with land-use change, resource competition, and women's participation in forest governance. They could also create measurable indicators in the SIS to track women's safety, inclusion, the frequency of gender-sensitive consultations, and the extent to which women's priorities have shaped project design.
- **Disaster Management Plans**: National disaster management plans should include analysis of GBV risks in disasters and pre-empt responses from different stakeholders.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: Samoa's National Disaster Plan and National Policy on Gender Equality and Rights of Women and Girls integrate GBV risks.[23]

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Case Study: Addressing GBV through disaster risk reduction and anticipatory action policy in Pacific Island countries

The Pacific region is one of the most vulnerable to climate change globally, facing rising sea levels, coral reef degradation and increasingly severe weather events. Despite clear evidence that GBV risks increase during climate-induced disasters,[24] and explicit policy commitments under the Sendai Gender Action Plan (GAP) to address these risks, it is not yet consistently integrated as a core component of disaster-risk analysis, planning and implementation. This gap is significant, since 64% of Pacific women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner.[25]

Funded by DFAT, the UNFPA Pacific Sub-regional Office, in collaboration with UNDRR and UN Women, launched a project to operationalise Objective 9 of the Sendai GAP across 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). This supported evidence-based policy and inclusive advocacy to ensure access to Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services and GBV prevention and response during disasters.

Addressing GBV in practice

The project began with a regional scoping study that identified significant policy gaps. While climate change, GBV and SRH policies exist, they were rarely connected in practice. Limited data, including disaggregated data, was identified as a barrier to designing targeted and intersectional interventions.

In response to these findings, the project:

Developed a regional policy brief and country-specific "one-pagers" to serve as practical reference tools for integrating SRH/GBV into national frameworks. These drew on key informant interviews in the 14 PICTs, focus group discussions in Fiji and Tonga, and workshops in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, which reviewed existing disaster risk reduction efforts, identified gaps and priority actions, and explored how GBV could be better integrated into national disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes. Consultations were conducted in collaboration with local partners, following safeguarding and ethical protocols to ensure informed consent and safe participation. They included safe consultation spaces for women groups, youth groups, organisations of persons with disabilities, groups representing people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) and religious groups.

Facilitated dialogue between governments and civil society through workshops and technical working groups to advocate for GBV considerations within climate policy and preparedness. These provided a platform to bring community perspectives into policy discussions. The programme also convened sub-regional workshops in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, bringing together government representatives, UN agencies and diverse community groups. These workshops enabled dialogue, feedback and joint problem solving, grounding policy recommendations in lived experience.

These efforts led to significant progress in putting GBV on the DRR agenda. In Fiji, the SRH/GBV one-pager was formally annexed into the updated National Anticipatory Action (AA) Framework for tropical cyclones. This ensures that GBV and SRHR considerations are embedded within early warning triggers and response planning.

SUB-NATIONAL

Integrating GBV into sub-national climate and environmental policy and planning frameworks

KEY TAKEAWAY: Ensure sub-national climate and environmental plans systematically assess and mitigate GBV risks while enabling the meaningful participation of women in their diversity in local decision-making. This should include GBV risk audits, gender-responsive budgeting, GBV safeguards for climate and infrastructure projects, and accessible, survivor-centred reporting, referral and disaster preparedness mechanisms.

It is crucial that efforts to address GBV through climate and environmental policy and planning frameworks are localised. Whether looking at **Local Climate Action Plans (LCAPs), Land-Use and Zoning Regulations, Resource Management Strategies, Regional Adaptation Strategies, Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (LDRRMP)**, or other approaches to localise climate and environmental policy and planning frameworks, the following approaches could be considered:

- **Consider GBV risks and mitigations within audits for projects:** Include questions about risks of GBV within audits for projects, including related to use of land, access to project benefits, and participation in decision-making. Disaggregate data by gender, age, disability and geography to understand which groups face specific risks so that projects can respond to the needs of whole communities. Require mitigation measures to address these risks for project approval.
- **Involve women in decision-making:** Ensure women-led community groups are included in the design of local energy and land-use transitions. Work with them to identify barriers to their meaningful participation and ability to influence decisions. Ensure you are engaging with women in their

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diversity as they will face different risks and opportunities; engage women-led organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), Indigenous women's associations, youth movements, and groups led by women from other socially excluded groups.

- **Apply gender budgeting:** allocate a portion of local climate adaptation funds towards safety audits and infrastructure, inclusion measures and support services.
- **Enforce labour codes:** require contractors on local green infrastructure and renewable energy projects to sign zero-tolerance codes against GBV and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, with penalties for breaking codes. Ensure there are accessible, clear, safe and inclusive reporting mechanisms for survivors to report cases. Establish confidential and survivor-centred referral pathways for survivors.
- **Consider GBV risks within disaster preparedness:** When tracking and preparing for climate-induced disasters, identify safe spaces for survivors, train response teams to recognise and handle GBV risks, and maintain referral pathways to ensure survivors can access support.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector **VIEW RESOURCE**	This guidance note, commissioned by CDC, the EBRD and IFC, provides overarching principles and guidance to support companies and investors safely and effectively assess, prevent, monitor and respond to GBV.
Prevention of, and Response to, Gender-Based Violence in Settings Affected by Natural Disasters **VIEW RESOURCE**	This guidance note offers an introduction to how disasters are likely to increase as a result of climate change and the disproportionate effect they have on women, particularly in terms of increasing their vulnerability to GBV. It highlights lessons from disasters in Asia and Pacific region on how to improve GBV preparedness, response and recovery.

See the Sectoral Deep Dives for tailored suggestions on addressing GBV at a project level.

SEE SECTORAL DEEP DIVES

Addressing GBV against climate and environmental policymakers and activists

KEY TAKEAWAY: Creating safe conditions for participation is essential to preventing the silencing, exclusion and loss of leadership of those at the forefront of climate and environmental action. As a minimum standard, work with women, girls and gender-diverse policymakers, activists and defenders, particularly those facing intersecting forms of discrimination, to identify context-specific GBV risks and establish clear, survivor-centred protection, reporting and referral mechanisms.

Addressing GBV is essential for enabling the full participation and leadership of women, girls and gender-diverse climate and environmental policymakers and activists, particularly those from Indigenous communities, who are often at the forefront of climate action.

REMEMBER: Women and girls engaged in climate advocacy often face elevated risks of GBV, particularly where sexism and misogyny intersect with other forms of discrimination, including racism, homophobia, ageism, ableism, religious intolerance and sectarianism. For example, Indigenous women made up almost two-thirds of women environmental human rights defenders killed in 2021, many of whom also faced racial discrimination.[26]

Similarly, online abuse towards activist Greta Thunberg frequently included attacks targeting her age and her neurodivergence in efforts to discredit or silence her.[27]

The silencing impact of GBV is significant. A YouGov survey found that 41% of female climate scientists who had experienced online abuse and harassment were less likely to post on social media and 27% were less likely to speak in public about climate issues.[28]

How to address GBV against climate and environmental policymakers and activists:

Step 1. **Assess the risk and develop mitigation measures**

It is crucial to work with women, girls and gender-diverse policymakers and activists to identify context-specific GBV risks and develop mitigation measures. It is also important to consider both online and offline harms

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and embedding strategies to mitigate and manage risks when developing communications strategies and materials. Particular attention should be paid to the experiences of those facing intersecting forms of discrimination, including adolescents, women and girls with disabilities, and Indigenous women and girls.

Examples of mitigation measures are listed in the table below:

Policy/ activist context	GBV risk	Example mitigation measure
Attending events and conferences, such as UNFCCC COP	Sexual harassment by power holders.	Establish and communicate clear standards of behaviour covering sexual harassment to all participants, including a zero-tolerance policy on GBV and harassment, reporting procedures and sanctions for misconduct.
Engaging in a social media campaign.	Technology-facilitated online abuse such as doxing threats or coordinated harassment.	Provide training and guidance on security and social media safety for women engaged in social media campaign.
Speaking to local government about Indigenous people's rights to natural resources	Backlash from intimate partners and local community members who disapprove of women taking leadership roles.	Map clear referral pathways to ensure activists facing backlash can access the support they need. Where possible and appropriately resourced, collaborate with local WROs to host dialogues with husbands and men from local communities to explain the importance of women's leadership in activism.
Protesting biodiversity loss associated with business operations	Violence against activists and their families by private security forces used to silence activists.	Offer accompaniment by Human Rights Observers (see example box below).

Creating safe spaces within women's agroecological groups in high-risk operating contexts

In a context shaped by insecurity, a local women's agroecological organisation used participatory assessments to identify GBV risks, unequal gender norms, barriers to women's participation in climate activities and their demands for comprehensive care. Based on these findings, the organisation then integrated GBV considerations into its agroecological programming by establishing safe spaces for rural women to discuss and reflect on GBV, delivering GBV prevention training, coordinating links with local service providers, facilitating referrals to legal, psychosocial and protection services, and reinforcing community-based support networks through participation in local roundtables. To improve accessibility and support women's safe participation, activities were delivered through trusted local venues, scheduled at flexible times and designed using participatory approaches tailored to different literacy levels. Transport and other participation costs are covered by the organisation to remove financial barriers. These measures increased women's confidence and participation, with some participants going on to assume leadership roles in agroecological production initiatives despite the high-risk operating context.

Further Resources

Handle Resistance and Backlash - Spotlight Initiative. VIEW RESOURCE	This webpage shares learning from the Spotlight Initiative (a United Nations high-impact initiative to end violence against women and girls), top tips to handle resistance and backlash, and case study examples.
Resource Pack: Online Safety for Activists, Countering Backlash, Institute of Development Studies (2024). VIEW RESOURCE	This resource pack shares knowledge and learning about online gender-based violence (OGBV). It provides a comprehensive list of strategies and existing protection mechanisms to create safety for online activists and others.

Step 2. Establish clear, accessible and survivor-centred reporting mechanisms

Ensure that in any policymaking, consultation or advocacy setting, there are clear and publicised mechanisms for participants to report instances of GBV, harassment, intimidation or discrimination. Reporting pathways should be confidential, survivor-centred and clearly communicated to all participants from the outset. It is good practice to assign trained focal points and offer multiple reporting channels (such as in-person, telephone and online options), ensuring these are accessible for people with disabilities.

Step 3. Map survivor-centred referral pathways

Efforts supporting policymakers and activists should establish clear, confidential and survivor-centred referral pathways that connect survivors with safe medical, psychosocial and legal support services. These pathways should be accessible to all, regularly updated, developed in consultation with local WROs and designed to avoid causing further harm. Staff and partners should be trained on how to use referral mechanisms appropriately and safely when responding to disclosures of GBV.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: Peace Brigades International (PBI) supports environmental and human rights defenders by providing an international protective presence. By accompanying defenders in their work (whether as journalists, in community-led activism, or in protests against corporate-driven environmental degradation), these observers can help increase public scrutiny and reduce the likelihood of threats, intimidation and violence. In 2022, PBI collaborated with CREDHOS, a human rights organisation in Colombia's Magdalena Medio region, to support women environmental defenders and help create safer conditions for them to continue their advocacy and community leadership.[29]

Case Study: Supporting the safe participation of Indigenous women environmental human rights defenders in policy spaces in the Philippines

In the Philippines, Indigenous WEHRDs play a critical role in climate action, yet participation brings significant risks. When women take on leadership roles, their contributions are often belittled or met with backlash, including violence and accusations of neglecting family and community responsibilities. Despite being among those most affected by climate change, Indigenous women remain underrepresented in climate movements.

LILAK Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights recognised that without addressing violence, exclusion and lack of representation, Indigenous women

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cannot safely participate in environmental and policy spaces. Funded by the Equality Fund, LILAK strengthens Indigenous women's leadership through capacity building while advocating for stronger accountability and policy protections to support their safe participation.

Addressing GBV in practice

LILAK's approach to integrating GBV considerations into advocacy and addressing GBV faced by activists involves:

Building confidence and knowledge around women's rights. Learning sessions on women's rights, Indigenous peoples' rights, CEDAW, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and local policies provide a foundation for Indigenous women to understand their rights and strengthen their capacity to engage independently and effectively in climate initiatives. These sessions also create safe spaces for sharing experiences and shaping programme priorities.

Facilitating Indigenous women's participation in policy spaces. As confidence and capacity grow, these discussions move outwards into advocacy. The organisation facilitates participation in policy spaces by providing practical assistance, including travel to the capital and preparation for engaging with government entities.

Supporting engagement with both formal systems and customary practices in both local and national advocacy. LILAK facilitates dialogues with national agencies, including the National Human Rights Institute and the Commission on Human Rights, supports CEDAW Shadow Reports and contributes to research. This approach creates spaces for collaboration to address the broader violence faced by WEHRDs, while helping navigate policy systems that are often difficult to access.

Supporting movement-building. LILAK facilitated discussions on how to communicate advocacy around ending GBV to the elders and leaders of the community to engage with men as partners in change. This also involves advocating for their participation in climate groups which tend not to include Indigenous women.

Establishing systems of protection and coordination. LILAK has established the "Web of Care", a support and protection mechanism that maps organisations and government agencies responsible for GBV response. They use this Web of Care to refer survivors to the support services they need. It is also used to identify gaps in service provision and in patterns of GBV, which are used to inform advocacy efforts.

Strengthening protection for defenders through WEHRD profiling and data collection. Building public profiles increases visibility and can deter perpetration of violence, while also enabling LILAK to assess individual needs, respond to emergencies and maintain a database of Indigenous WEHRDs.

Conducting security risk assessments. Security risk assessments help address threats linked to environmental advocacy and women's rights work. Indigenous WEHRDs face violence and backlash when taking leadership roles or opposing corporate projects. Conducting risk assessments and implementing protection measures is essential to safe programming and building community buy-in.

As Judy A. Pasimio, Co-Founder and Coordinator of LILAK, explains:

"GBV is a pervasive and harmful force used to subjugate and silence Indigenous women as they remain at the forefront of defending their land, forests, waters and their communities. With their relentless fight against land grabbers, polluters and destroyers of all life forms, they are being harassed and attacked. As we all fight for and work towards climate justice, it is imperative that we also expose, prevent and stop gender-based violence against Indigenous women. After all, their struggles are our own, and their survival is our survival."

Women-led environmental network strengthening the empowerment and protection of women environmental and human rights defenders (WEHRDs) in Latin America

Rural and Indigenous communities across Latin America are increasingly affected by mining and accelerating climate change. As one of the key global hubs for mineral extraction, the region supplies approximately 40% of the world's copper and 35% of its lithium.[30] Environmental degradation from mining and related activities, including water contamination, land loss, biodiversity decline, floods and droughts, threaten health, security and local economies.[31] Women are often the first to identify these impacts because of their roles in food production, water management and caregiving. Yet despite leading community responses and environmental monitoring, women frequently face exclusion from decision-making and resistance when entering public leadership.

In response, the Red Latinoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Sociales y Ambientales (Latin American Network of Women Environmental and Human Rights Defenders, hereafter 'The Network'), a grantee partner of the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA), was formed. After years accompanying communities affected by environmental degradation, the network identified gender inequality and GBV as central barriers to environmental justice. Women were carrying environmental defence efforts but remained underrepresented in leadership spaces and their participation carried risks of exposure to violence from family members, the community, political actors, corporate groups and organised crime. The network therefore developed women-led approaches to environmental defence that strengthen participation, leadership, wellbeing and collective protection of WEHRDs.

Addressing GBV in practice

Strengthening women's leadership and decision-making: The Network supports women's safe participation in local governance structures through long-term dialogue and community engagement with community leaders and community members. In one community forestry association led by men, the Network supported the development of a Women's Council which gave women a safe space to engage as a collective. Women now participate in many councils and, in some cases, hold leadership positions.

Strengthening regional solidarity and movement building: Country nodes provide dedicated training spaces for WEHRDs, while regional exchanges connect women leaders across Latin America to share learning, build alliances, and sustain solidarity. Sustaining these networks and the safety of their members requires flexible, long-term funding that supports ongoing collaboration and exchange. Training spaces for women were not always well received by communities and collective care, patience and intercultural approaches that respect Indigenous governance were essential.

Education and capacity building: The Escuelita por la Justicia Climática Feminista en Mesoamérica (Little School for Feminist Climate Justice in

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Mesoamerica) creates safe spaces for reflection and action on mining, climate change, GBV and other related topics.

Territorial monitoring via a virtual feminist mapping tool**:** The Network's mapping tool uses a filter system that allows users to explore different territories across Latin America and examine impacts across three interconnected dimensions: 'Body Territory' (e.g. forms of GBV and femicides), 'Land Territory' (environmental and climate impacts), 'Organisation Territory' (e.g. criminalisation of activist groups), alongside 'Strategies of Resistance' (e.g. legal action, alliances, media initiatives and mobilisation). By enabling users to analyse these dimensions together, the tool helps map the intersections between environmental damage and GBV, revealing patterns at the local and regional level.

Advocacy and awareness-raising: The Network hosts campaigns and protests at the local and regional level and has produced communication materials, such as podcasts, that raise awareness of links between GBV and environmental justice. Feminist approaches can be advanced without leading with labels where that creates resistance. Context-appropriate framing is key to ensure the security of WEHRDs and reinforces the sustainability of their work.

Legal accompaniment and strategic litigation: They have also supported emblematic environmental defence cases and built relationships with legal actors and Indigenous women lawyers to strengthen protection in insecure contexts. Strategic litigation remains difficult in territories affected by violence and organised crime, making broader protection ecosystems essential, alongside continued investment in organisations managing these security risks.

Anchor all work in care and support with an intersectional lens, collaborating with local trusted service providers. Feminist ethics of care create safer, more sustainable participation. In some territories, women engage in 'therapeutic workshops' with a local organisation of GBV specialists who explore the impacts of the multiple overlapping forms of violence they face. Care and wellbeing must be recognised as core components of movement building, with these considerations integrated into budgeting plans and funding mechanisms.

Invest in territorial presence, rather than online networks alone. Strong local roots generate more effective regional movement building. In-person meetings and annual conferences sustain support and foster a sense of community.

Build alliances beyond sectors for continuous learning. Climate and gender justice work is strengthened through partnerships across environmental, legal care and civil society spaces. Operating in siloes limits impact and learning opportunities. Long-term investment in existing women-led climate initiatives strengthens these partnerships and enables continued learning at local, national, regional and international levels.

"The current [funding] situation is existential for many organisations...a struggle for survival. […] We urge for continued attention to funding and sustained efforts to make visible what is happening in the Global South: a highly complex reality shaped by both powerful networks working to defend life and unprecedented levels of vulnerability in the history of these movements."

Key Informant



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Section 2: Climate Finance



Short on time?

Click the button below for practical entry points and recommended actions.

Actions to integrate GBV into climate financing

CLIMATE FINANCE ACTIONS

Adequate climate finance[1] is essential for avoiding the worst impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation and realising the goals of climate and environmental policy. Women's full and meaningful participation is critical to achieving these objectives. This includes ensuring women can shape climate finance decisions, access funding opportunities, and take on leadership roles. Despite this, current estimates suggest that only 0.01% of global funding is directed towards gender-responsive climate finance.[32] In 2018-2019, OECD analysis found that just 0.04% of climate-related development assistance had gender equality as its principal objective.[33] Funding that explicitly addresses GBV is likely to represent an even smaller share, limiting efforts to remove barriers to women's and girls' participation, leadership and influence in climate action. The sectors that attract the most climate capital are those where women are most underrepresented in leadership, for example, in the energy sector, only 7% of startup founders were women.[34]

1 An umbrella term often used to apply to local, national, and international financing for adaptation and mitigation activities that address climate change.

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An analysis of the US$12.7 billion of climate finance allocated to Rwanda between 2013 and 2022 shows that only 0.01% of interventions incorporate the GBV purpose code, suggesting a lack of systematic integration of GBV.[35]

Ensuring climate finance is accessible and inclusive also helps distribute benefits equitably and avoids reinforcing existing inequalities. For example, climate risk insurance can support women's resilience following climate and environmental shocks, and improve productivity and savings opportunities, creating positive economic inclusion co-benefits.[36] There is also a strong economic case; research shows that every €1 spent on preventing violence against women and children can yield up to €87 in economic returns.[37]

Rationale for integrating GBV considerations into climate finance:

Introducing GBV considerations within climate finance has a range of economic and social benefits:

- **Addressing barriers to women's access to climate finance, including GBV, can help address underlying drivers of climate vulnerability and environmental degradation.** Gender differences in access to assets, credit, and markets, alongside time poverty and GBV risks, constrain women's economic opportunities and increase reliance on environmentally damaging practices and scarce natural resources for livelihoods and subsistence.[38]
- **Supporting more effective and impactful development impacts for communities**. Ignoring the risks of GBV means that climate, nature and environment programmes and funding will be less effective and sustainable as women and gender-diverse people will face greater barriers to engaging. Failing to consider GBV in climate finance overlooks a key impact of climate change, which is linked to increased rates and severity of violence.
- **Facilitates more equitable distribution of benefits within sectors that attract climate capital.** Women are underrepresented in sectors that are likely to benefit from a transition to net zero. The transition to a net-zero economy could lead to about 22.5 million new jobs in Latin America; 80% of jobs will be in traditionally male-dominated sectors, including construction, energy, and manufacturing.[39] As such, the gap in decent employment, leadership and wages between men and women are likely to rise if barriers to entering these sectors – including the risk of GBV – are not addressed.
- **Contributes to ensuring climate finance does no harm.** A robust GEDSI approach, which includes GBV risk mitigation measures, can reduce risks, avoid exacerbating inequalities, and avoid exposing women to violence, as power and resources will be more fairly distributed rather than concentrated with men.[40]

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- **Supporting women in corporate and financial leadership often leads to better environmental outcomes.** Companies with greater gender diversity on their boards and in management positions are more likely to reduce the intensity of energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and water use.

Banks with more than 37% female directors had around 10% lower lending volumes towards companies with higher pollution rates.[41]

> 37% female directors

≈ 10% lower lending to higher-polluting companies

- **Contributing to coherence across finance portfolios.** Funding initiatives that lead to positive gender equality and climate outcomes avoids the inefficiencies of working in silos, improves reporting credibility and coherence, and also reflects a more effective use of public finance by aligning impact across interconnected priorities for ODA.
- **Reducing the risk of litigation and reputational damage.** Community members, service users, and workers can take legal action against companies and investors and make claims for compensation, leading to litigation costs, loss of confidence amongst investors and partners, and damaged relationships with communities and partners.
- **Increased productivity and worker retention.** GBV can undermine workforce productivity by increasing absenteeism and staff turnover. It can also affect performance, with wider health and safety risks for both workers and surrounding communities.[42] GBV may also make it harder to attract and retain talent by negatively influencing decisions about where people choose to work.

Actions to integrate GBV into climate financing

This section provides guidance on integrating GBV into different aspects of climate finance, including national, sub-national, bilateral, risk finance, and grants, suitable for government, multinational, and private sector actors. General guidance is also provided that is relevant across different types of actor and financial instrument. For more information on the types of activity that can be embedded within the programmes or projects you finance, visit the guidance for programmes or the sectoral deep dives.

Climate finance governance

KEY TAKEAWAY: Embed GBV risk assessment and mitigation into climate finance governance, due diligence and risk management processes, recognising that GBV risks and barriers are often heightened for women, girls and people facing intersecting forms of discrimination.



- **Ensure GBV is reflected within climate finance governance policies and processes.** Conduct a review of existing policies and processes, identifying opportunities for embedding GBV risks and opportunities for greater focus. This includes codes of conduct for climate investment via funds and asking for information on how the fund's investment strategy, processes and measurement procedures will address GBV. Ensure the fund manager has established, or will contractually commit to establishing, a process for identifying and mitigating GBV risks, a GEDSI mainstreaming approach/strategy that mentions GBV, and reporting on activities.
- **Embed GBV considerations within climate risk assessments and scoping studies.** When making decisions on where and what issues to fund, identify risk areas and opportunities to address GBV. Embed findings from a GEDSI analysis, conduct a GBV risk assessment, and meaningfully engage with civil society organisations, including WROs, so their expertise and insights are reflected in design and decision-making processes. Questions to consider include but are not limited to:
    - What are the existing patterns of GBV nationally or within communities?
    - How are the impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, or biodiversity loss affecting GBV and GBV response systems?
    - How might different components of the project increase risks of GBV?
- **Utilise Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and financial standards that emphasise gender equality and GBV considerations.** Explicitly consider GBV risks in social impact assessments and risk mitigation plans. For example, within the voluntary carbon market, the Gold Standard requires project developers to implement appropriate measures to prevent and address any form of violence and harassment, bullying, intimidation and/or exploitation, including any form of GBV, and the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market's (ICVCM) Core Carbon Principles (CCPs) require that projects protect against and appropriately respond to violence against women and girls.
- **Embed GBV considerations in due diligence.** Require evidence on steps taken to address GBV in grantees or investees reporting or reviews. For example, by including GEDSI indicators or regular updates against a GEDSI action plan.
- **Ensure grievance and redress mechanisms are effective, inclusive and accessible.** Ensure there are adequate reporting mechanisms, survivor-centred referral pathways, and report handling.
- **Establish sector standards and utilise convening power.** Engage with others within the sector to influence higher standards and learning from practice on addressing GBV.

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Mobilising climate finance

KEY TAKEAWAY: Make GBV and GEDSI requirements a scored criterion in all climate finance funding calls and investment decisions, with particular attention to the needs, participation and safety of women, girls and people facing intersecting forms of discrimination.

- **Embed GBV considerations within funding calls.** When designing calls for proposals for climate finance, reflect a requirement for a strong approach to GEDSI mainstreaming, GBV, and safeguarding in the terms of reference and scoring criteria. These approaches could include a GEDSI analysis that incorporates a GBV risk assessment, dedicated GEDSI and/or GBV expertise within the team, a strategy to meaningfully engage with women's rights organisations, and activities to address or respond to the risks of GBV. Engage with a diverse range of WROs to identify funding priorities. Consider adding a budget line to directly support addressing GBV.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: The Green Climate Fund's gender policy requires all projects to assess the levels of violence against women in countries of operation and identify interventions to address the risks.

- **Create dedicated grants focusing on GEDSI and addressing GBV.** GBV prevention programming requires longer-term social norm change and sustained financing.
- **Ringfence funding for WROs and addressing GBV.** WROs, particularly those led by Indigenous women, women with disabilities, LGBTQ+ women, and young women, often face additional barriers to accessing climate finance. These barriers may stem from eligibility criteria or application processes that are not designed with smaller or grassroots organisations in mind. Reviewing and adapting funding processes can help improve accessibility. Dedicated funding for WROs can also be important because many operate in contexts with high levels of GBV that they must address using their limited funds before continuing their work.
- **Integrate a GBV and GEDSI lens in the selection process for proposals or investments.** Engage a GBV specialist to review and score options and to highlight risks and opportunities within selection panel meetings.

Addressing barriers to accessing climate finance

KEY TAKEAWAY: Review funding eligibility and application requirements through an accessibility audit with WROs and organisations representing people facing intersecting forms of discrimination, including OPDs and organisations supporting the rights of Indigenous peoples, to identify and remove barriers to access.

- **Embed GEDSI and GBV considerations within sustainable bond frameworks.** Develop social eligibility criteria that directly refer to women and girls and consider GBV risks.
- **Develop accessible and inclusive climate risk insurance products** to support building resilience for women and address risks of financial dependence.
- **Adapt assurance requirements for women.** Access to financial products can be contingent on having land rights or larger assets to secure loans and other financial products, which disproportionately affects women who face more barriers to owning resources.
- **Conduct an accessibility audit of application processes.** Work with civil society organisations (CSOs) including WROs and women-led organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) to understand and address barriers to accessing finance.

Case study: Taking a robust GEDSI approach to climate finance

Whilst this case study does not focus on addressing GBV, lessons can be applied on GEDSI mainstreaming.

The UK Aid funded programme UK PACT (Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions) requires implementing partners to mainstream GEDSI within their work on climate finance. Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), an implementing partner for Mexico-UK PACT, led multiple projects on accelerating green finance flows and enhancing adoption of Mexico's Sustainable Taxonomy and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) regulation. The project created enabling conditions for more inclusive finance through communications campaigns and awareness raising on links between GEDSI and climate finance, and targeted training to improve capacity of financial and federal actors to self-assess their level of alignment with the Sustainable Taxonomy's Gender Equality Index. To further support uptake of more inclusive approaches, they developed tools including a Gender Screening Tool for ESG Management to address capacity gaps.

The project was successful in supporting financial instruments and sustainable bond frameworks to embed gender equality considerations to improve inclusive access to finance. The organisation's thematic bonds, which collectively amount to more than USD 1,895 million, introduced new eligible social categories

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focusing on financial inclusion, gender equality, and the socioeconomic advancement of women. This unlocks finance for inclusion, as these bonds will fund projects that deliver gender equality and inclusion benefits.

Read the full case study here. Read guidance on GEDSI Entry Points in Green Finance from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) funded UK PACT programme here.

What can global climate and environmental finance coalitions do?

Coalitions that influence the flow of public and private finance can help reduce GBV risks and strengthen gender equality, even when they do not directly implement programmes. Examples include:

- Integrating GBV and gender considerations into funding criteria, safeguards and due diligence processes.
- Encouraging partners to assess and mitigate GBV risks as part of s ocial and environmental risk management.
- Promoting the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data to better understand who benefits from investments and who may face harm.
- Supporting accessible, survivor-centred grievance and accountability mechanisms across funded programmes.
- Using purchasing, investment and partnership requirements to incentivise good practice on social integrity and gender equality.
- Convening governments, donors, private sector actors, women's rights organisations and GBV specialists to share learning and strengthen approaches.
- Encouraging meaningful participation of women and marginalised groups in decision-making bodies linked to climate and environmental finance.

By embedding these considerations into governance, standards, investment decisions and partnerships, coalitions can help ensure environmental and climate finance delivers both environmental and social outcomes.

Case Study: Funding research at the GBV, climate and environment nexus: lessons from the Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Environment (RISE) Grants

The Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Environments (RISE) Challenge, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), supports innovative partnerships that address GBV in environmental programming while generating evidence and practical solutions for implementation in the field. By funding and connecting organisations working at the intersection of GBV mitigation and environmental action, RISE is helping ensure environmental

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programmes and policies have the tools, partnerships, and evidence needed to address GBV.

The RISE Challenge supports organisations working at the forefront of GBV and environmental action through three core pillars.

1. **Funding Innovative Solutions:** RISE provides grants to organisations implementing projects that address GBV risks within environmental and climate programming.

2. **Building Cross-Sector Partnerships**: Projects bring together environmental organisations, women's rights groups, GBV specialists, and local communities to co-design and pilot new approaches.

3. **Generating Evidence and Learning:** RISE documents project results and develops practical tools and research to help environmental organisations and policymakers identify, prevent, and respond to GBV.

To date, RISE has supported 23 projects implemented by more than 60 local organisations working across 16 countries in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas. Learning and results from RISE projects can be found in the sectoral deep dives.

Case Study: The shift towards gender-just climate finance: lessons from Global Affairs Canada

Through Canada's CAD 5.3 billion climate finance commitment (2021-2026), Canada set a target for 80% of climate finance projects to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment – an objective that has been surpassed.

Global Affairs Canada has been supporting the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) since 2023, with a CAD 11 million investment from its climate finance portfolio. GAGGA is an alliance and network of community-based organisations, women's and socio-environmental funds and NGOs led by Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres Foundation (FCAM), Mama Cash and Both Ends.

By supporting GAGGA to implement the Women Leading Climate Action project, which promotes locally-led feminist climate action that explicitly addresses gender inequality and women's rights, Global Affairs Canada demonstrated how climate finance can effectively deliver both environmental and gender equality outcomes, in line with OECD DAC reporting frameworks such as the Gender Equality Policy Marker and Rio Markers on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

By funding initiatives that intentionally pursue both gender equality outcomes and climate results, GAC has demonstrated strong integration of gender equality and women's empowerment across its climate finance programming and can report 'double marker results' for global goals on climate, gender

equality and sustainable development. This not only improves reporting credibility and coherence but also reflects a more effective use of public finance by aligning impact across interconnected priorities for ODA.

What is Global Affairs Canada doing differently?

1. **Channeling climate finance to women-led organisations:** Canada's support to GAGGA ensures funding directly reaches grassroots, women-led groups. Their work addresses the intersection of climate justice and gender equality, including i) delivering effective climate action, ii) addressing GBV in context-specific and holistic ways, and iii) strengthening women's economic independence, thereby reducing vulnerability to GBV.

2. **Embedding prevention in funding design** Long-term, core, flexible support to local women-led organisations ensures funding is designed to centre the needs and experiences of women and structurally excluded groups. Rather than just mitigating risk, these organisations focus on preventing harm through safe and inclusive participation in climate action.

3. **Valuing grassroots expertise in decision-making** Women Environmental and Human Rights Defenders and women-led community-based organisations are treated as strategic partners with opportunities to shape funding and policy priorities, and the design and implementation of climate action.

Read the full case study here.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Gender Lens Investing for Climate (GLIC) Knowledge Library and Transaction Database VIEW RESOURCE	Maintained by AlphaMundi Foundation, this knowledge library contains guidance and resources, including those with a focus on GBV. The Transaction Database features real-world examples of investments, funds, bonds and facilities that combine gender and climate objectives.
A Roadmap for Private Investors: Investing to Address Gender-based Violence. VIEW RESOURCE	This guide, developed by Criterion Institute and Tiedemann Advisors, is a tool for those who steward wealth. It outlines strategies on how to direct investments to address GBV, provides a process for making decisions, and provides tools to support conversations with investment advisors and asset managers.

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Gender Lens Investing for Climate (GLIC) Knowledge Library and Transaction Database **VIEW RESOURCE**	Maintained by AlphaMundi Foundation, this knowledge library contains guidance and resources, including those with a focus on GBV. The Transaction Database features real-world examples of investments, funds, bonds and facilities that combine gender and climate objectives.
Guidance Note on Addressing GBV and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment. **VIEW RESOURCE**	This guidance note was produced by WWF for implementing projects from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Environment Facility.
Entry Points: Climate Finance and Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion. **VIEW RESOURCE**	This practical guidance, produced by the UK Aid-funded UK PACT (Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions) programme identifies the linkages between GEDSI and the climate finance sector, and the various 'pathways' that can help to strengthen both the approach and results.

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Section 3:

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Short on time?

Click the button below for a concise overview of available approaches

PATHWAYS FOR ADDRESSING GBV: DIFFERENT APPROACHES FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF AMBITION, TIME AND RESOURCES

and use our

DECISION TREE

to identify the option that best fits your programme.

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KEY TAKEAWAY: GBV is both a risk to programme participants and a barrier to achieving climate and environmental goals. Integrating GBV considerations from the outset helps programmes reduce harm, strengthen the safe and meaningful participation of women, girls, gender-diverse people, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination, to achieve more sustainable and equitable outcomes. Every climate and environmental programme should consider GBV as part of programme design and implementation.

Addressing GBV can help climate and environmental programmes achieve more sustainable and equitable outcomes by enabling women and girls to participate safely in climate action, natural resource management, and environmental decision-making. This section provides practical guidance on why and how climate and environmental programmes can engage with GBV. It includes a myth-busting section to address common misconceptions, outlines a range of approaches for addressing GBV based on different levels of ambition, time, and resources, and provides a decision tree to help programme teams identify the most appropriate course of action for their context. Together, these tools are intended to support practitioners to take proportionate, practical, and effective action on GBV within climate and environmental programming.

Myth busting: why and how to address GBV through climate and environmental programming?

Myth: **Addressing GBV won't help me achieve my environmental and climate goals.**

Reality: Addressing GBV within climate and environmental programming directly supports women and girls to safely participate. Their expertise and lived experience are essential to designing and delivering climate and environmental solutions that are effective, inclusive and sustainable. Without them, these efforts will fall short. Addressing GBV helps ensure women and girls can access the information and skills they need to keep themselves and their families safe during climate and environmental shocks. It also supports them to engage as environmental stewards within their communities, without risk of backlash.

Myth: **I can't address GBV through my work because I don't have the expertise to do so/Addressing GBV sounds straightforward, so we won't need specialist expertise.**

Reality: GBV programming does require specialist expertise to ensure it is safe and effective. However, this does not mean that every programme team needs to have that expertise in-house. Instead, programmes should partner with GBV specialists from the outset, integrating their expertise into project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Wherever possible, this should include collaboration with local WROs, who are best

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placed to understand local gender dynamics, social norms and culturally appropriate approaches.

Where local WROs with GBV expertise are not available or partnership is not feasible, support can also be sought from specialist NGOs, GBV consultants, women's networks, academic institutions, or experienced GBV practitioners. The key is not to become a GBV expert yourself, but to ensure that the right expertise is involved throughout the programme so that activities are safe, context-appropriate, and effective.

> *"Sometimes as engineers we think that because we can do hard things, we can do everything. However, in the same way that we would not ask a GBV prevention practitioner to design and build a bridge, we should not be asking engineers to design and build GBV prevention programmes."*
>
> Water engineer, working on an IWMI-IUCN project.

Myth: **This is too much work on top of what our team and partners are already expected to do.**

Reality: Programmes can address GBV in different ways, depending on their time, resources and level of ambition. At a minimum, every programme has a responsibility to make sure it does not cause harm, including increasing the risk of GBV. GBV risks can be integrated into existing risk assessments, identified through GEDSI analyses, and be addressed using existing safeguarding approaches such as referral pathways. Beyond this, programmes should take further action where possible, based on what is most appropriate and practical for their context. Considering GBV from the programme design phase is often more efficient than responding to risks and

adding a GBV component later. Doing so helps ensure GBV components are fully integrated, and that whole interventions deliver stronger, safer, and more equitable outcomes for women, girls, and communities.

Myth: **GBV isn't a documented issue in our programme context, so it isn't a priority.**

Reality: GBV is highly prevalent globally. It is also a sensitive issue, and many survivors face significant barriers to reporting or may not feel comfortable discussing levels of GBV directly with programme teams they do not yet trust. As a result, the absence of reported cases should not be interpreted as the absence of risk. Programmes can use a range of strategies such as reviewing national prevalence data, or asking communities about broader issues of safety, mobility, decision-making and social norms that are considered appropriate for men and women to help identify risks. It is important for all programmes to take context-appropriate steps to mitigate these risks, and where appropriate, to support women to access the services they need, and gradually transform harmful norms to promote gender equality and safety without increasing the risk of harm to participants.

Myth: **Addressing GBV is too expensive. We cannot justify allocating resources to this work.**

Reality: Adequately resourcing efforts to address GBV is crucial to ensuring a programme does no harm, promotes the sustainability of project outcomes, and supports the equitable distribution of project benefits, all of which are crucial to ensuring value for money. Additionally, not all GBV-related interventions cost money. For example, integrating GBV-risk questions into risk assessments, conducting safety audits, or adjusting locations or timings of meetings to enable women's safe participation, do not require significant budget allocations.

Pathways for addressing GBV: different approaches for different levels of ambition, time and resources

Projects can address GBV in different ways depending on their objectives, timeframe, resources, context and level of ambition. Efforts to address GBV exist along a continuum. All programmes should, at a minimum, identify and mitigate GBV risks linked to their activities and take steps to avoid causing harm. As capacity, resources, and partnerships develop, programmes may also support access to survivor-centred services and referral pathways. More ambitious approaches may seek to prevent GBV by addressing its root causes, including harmful social norms, unequal power dynamics, and other structural drivers that can affect women's participation in climate and environmental action. Such approaches generally require dedicated expertise, longer time horizons, and sustained investment.

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MINIMUM STANDARD

GBV risk mitigation

Identify and reduce GBV risks linked to a programme (e.g. safe transport, well-lit spaces) and establish processes for responding to instances of GBV. This applies to all programmes that work with, or may affect, women and girls.

+

GOOD PRACTICE

Strengthening GBV response

Improve access to survivor services (e.g. medical care, counselling, legal support, referrals). Climate and environmental programmes can work with other sectors providing these services to make sure survivors can access them.

+

GREATER AMBITION

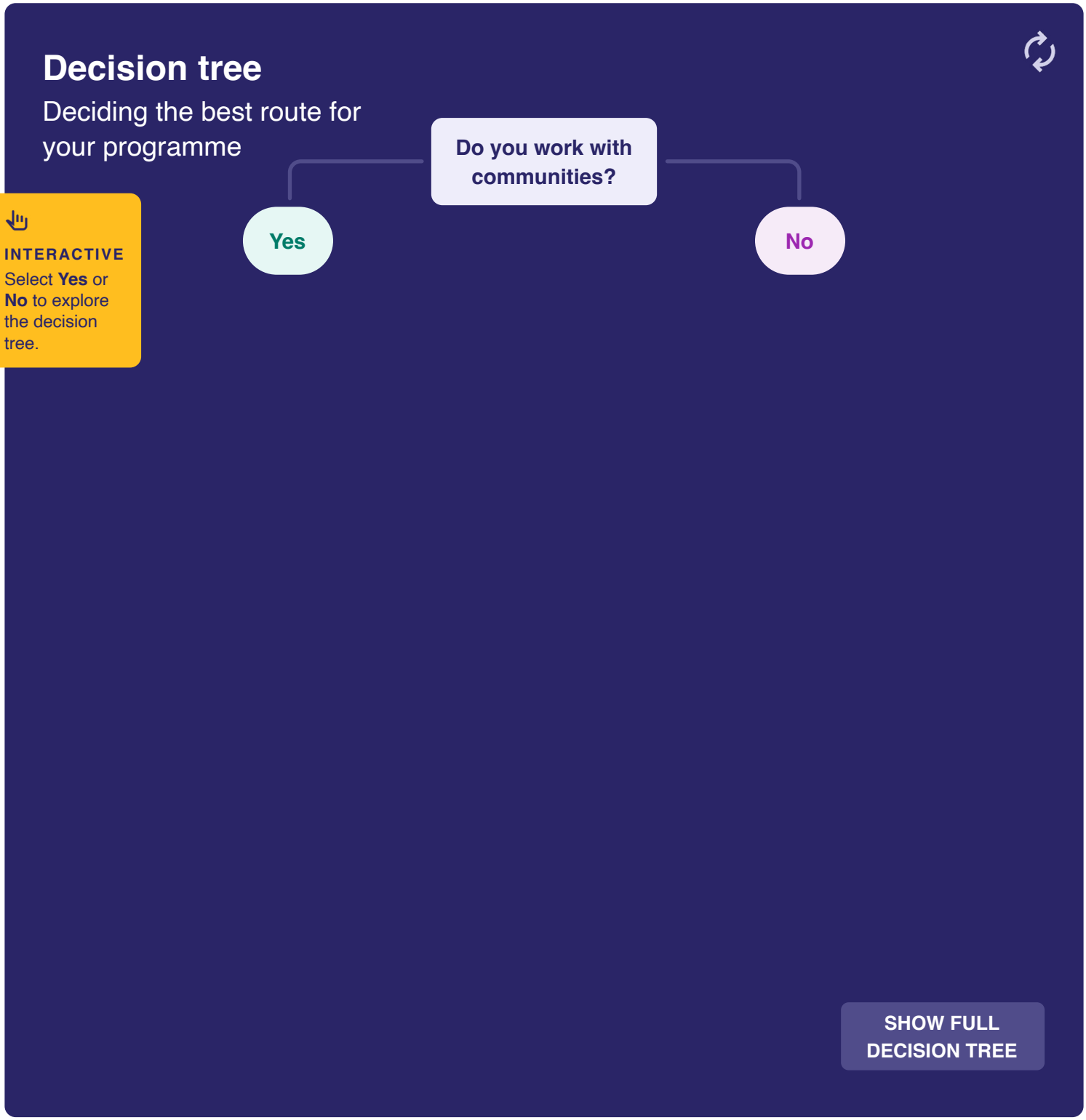
GBV prevention programming

Prevent violence by addressing root causes (e.g. social norms work, community engagement with families and leaders). This type of programming can have the most significant and sustainable impact on ending GBV. When supported by sufficient time, resources, and community-wide engagement, it can help drive lasting change across all levels of society, from families to community leaders.

REMEMBER: Local WROs and women-led organisations often have deep contextual knowledge and trusted relationships that are essential for effective GBV programming, but they must be resourced to participate meaningfully and sustainably. Existing funding infrastructures, such as women's funds, can help facilitate this by providing flexible, accessible funding to local women's groups. Women's funds often have established relationships with grassroots organisations, understand local contexts, and can advise on appropriate partners and collaboration models, helping to ensure resources reach the organisations best placed to deliver impact.

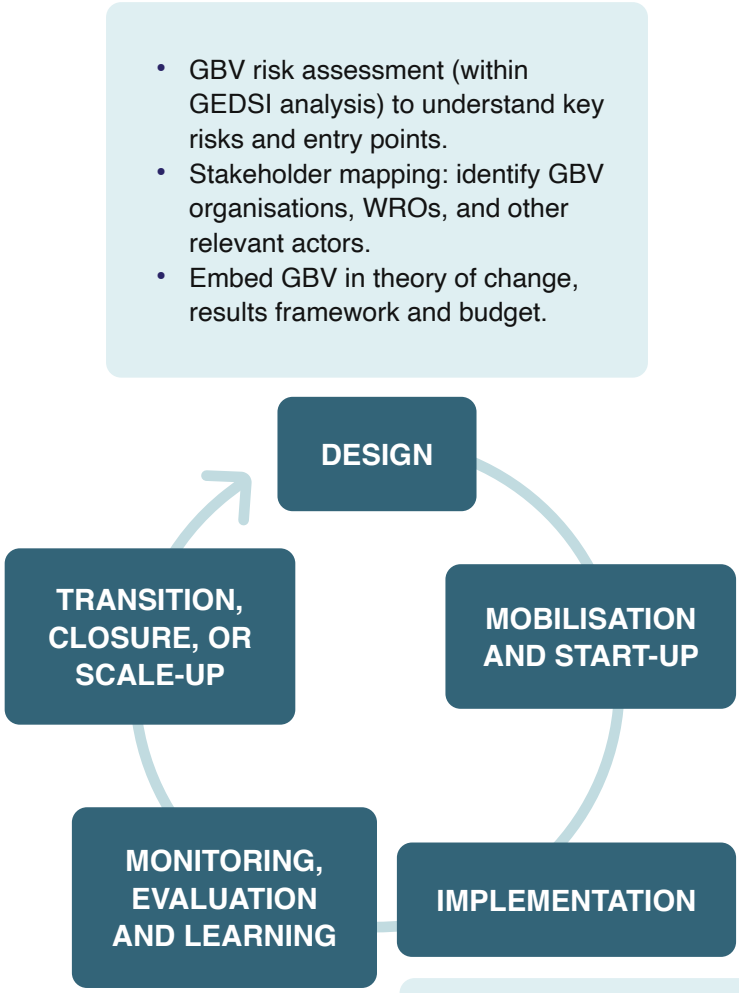
Decision tree: deciding the best route for your programme

This decision tree is designed to help programme designers and implementers identify the most appropriate approach to addressing GBV based on the time, resources, and level of ambition available to them. Starting at the beginning, follow the pathway that best reflects your context and answer each question in turn. At the end of your journey through the decision tree, you will reach a recommended approach. By clicking on the final box, you will be taken directly to the relevant high-level guidance, where you can find more detailed information and practical recommendations to support your programme design and implementation. Once you have read this guidance, visit the Sectoral Deep Dives to find more sector-specific examples and case studies to illustrate how other programmes have addressed GBV in practice.



Embedding GBV considerations throughout the programme cycle

Acknowledging that different organisations use different terms and approaches, the diagram below shows a simplified version of a programme cycle to help you plan and implement GBV mainstreaming throughout programming.



- GBV risk assessment (within GEDSI analysis) to understand key risks and entry points.
- Stakeholder mapping: identify GBV organisations, WROs, and other relevant actors.
- Embed GBV in theory of change, results framework and budget.

- Embed GBV in workplan.
- Ensure GBV expertise is included in partners/ staffing.
- Assign responsibility and accountability for GBV mainstreaming.

- Ensure accessible, survivor-centred grievance redress mechanisms are in place.
- As appropriate, deliver GBV prevention, risk mitigation, and/or response – see section 3 for details.
- Manage risks relating to GBV and safeguarding.

- Capture results and learning on addressing GBV.
- Report on progress, challenges, adaptations, and lessons learned.
- Create regular spaces for learning on GBV.

- Responsible exit: plan and communicate closure early.
- Handover and sustainability: identify what services can be transferred and maintained by local organisations and governments.
- Document learning.

FURTHER RESOURCES

How and why to meaningfully mainstream GBV into other sectors.

This report from the UK-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Helpdesk provides guidance on why and how to mainstream GBV in programming with case studies and key resources.

VIEW RESOURCE

GBV risk mitigation

Key takeaway: Integrate GBV risk assessment and mitigation into programme design from the outset. Early identification of GBV risks, combined with meaningful engagement with women, girls, gender-diverse people, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, other marginalised groups and GBV specialists, is the most effective way to ensure climate and environmental programmes do no harm and support safe, meaningful and inclusive participation.

GBV risk mitigation should be implemented by all climate and environmental programmes working with or potentially impacting women and girls. GBV risk mitigation involves activities that identify and reduce the risk of GBV linked to a programme. This means thinking ahead about how activities, locations, resources, or participation requirements might put women, girls, or other at-risk groups in danger, and taking steps to prevent this.

How To Steps

Step 1. Conduct a GBV risk assessment

Programmes addressing climate change and environmental degradation can unintentionally increase the risk of GBV faced by women. Where programmes work more closely in communities, conducting a GBV risk assessment at the beginning of programme activities is essential to designing and implementing safe and inclusive programmes. This could be integrated into existing GEDSI analyses. Programmes that work less closely with/to communities should, at a minimum, integrate GBV risks into wider programme risk screening and safeguarding processes.

Risk assessments should consider how GBV risks may arise throughout the programme cycle, from design, through implementation, to monitoring, evaluation and learning. They should also consider how the location of programme activities, travel arrangements, and other logistical considerations could elevate risks of GBV.

GBV risk assessments do not necessarily require asking community members direct questions about experiences of violence. Such questions can be sensitive and, in some contexts, could increase risks for participants. Where programmes do ask individuals about their experiences of violence, this should only be done by appropriately trained persons and with safe, confidential referral pathways already in place. Alternatively, assessments can draw on existing GBV prevalence data and explore issues such as safety, mobility, decision-making dynamics, and gender norms. Understanding social expectations around the roles of women and men can help identify potential risks of backlash, exclusion, or safety threats associated with programme activities without requiring disclosure of personal experiences.

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Engaging women and girls in GBV risk analyses: Women and girls are best placed to identify the GBV risks in their communities. Engaging with them is crucial for understanding existing patterns of violence and how programme activities might affect their safety. Consultations should include women and girls with diverse lived experiences, including those with disabilities, adolescents, displaced individuals, rural populations, Indigenous women, and others who face heightened risks.

Risk analyses can be done in a participatory way. For example, practitioners could go on 'safety walks' with women from the community, making adjustments for those with mobility impairments. During these walks, women are encouraged to point out places where they feel unsafe and explain why, helping the team better understand their concerns and design programmes that respond to real risks.

Step 2. Develop and implement a GBV risk mitigation plan

Based on the GBV risk assessment, programmes should put in place steps to reduce the risk of harm. To develop these steps, teams need to plan ahead, set aside enough resources, check that the steps are the right ones with women, and regularly monitor and adjust them as needed. A GBV risk mitigation plan should:

- **Prioritise risks and identify mitigation measures:** It can be useful to prioritise GBV risks based on severity, likelihood and the potential impact on participants. Programmes can then develop steps to reduce the risk of harm, tailored to the programme context. These could include:
    - Adjusting the timing, location or format of activities to reduce exposure to unsafe environments.
    - Ensuring safe and discreet access to programme assets such as cash transfers.
    - Providing safe transport options for participants travelling to project sites.
    - Implementing codes of conduct, safeguarding policies, and staff training on GBV awareness and response.
    - Working with community leaders and local men to ensure they understand the importance of engaging women within a project.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: The Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) programme recognised the importance of engaging men as allies.[43] Transboundary water governance is a male-dominated sector, with entrenched institutional norms limiting women's participation and leadership. These exclusions reinforce wider gender inequalities that are linked to GBV risks, particularly in fragile and climate-affected contexts where access to resources and decision-making power is contested. CIWA recognised that increasing women's participation alone was insufficient to address structural barriers.

In response, the programme piloted a Male Champions Forum, bringing together senior male decision-makers from water institutions and government bodies. The Forum created a structured space for dialogue, reflection and peer accountability on gender equality, with a specific focus on removing institutional barriers and supporting women's leadership. Early evidence suggests the Forum is helping shift gender equality from being seen as a "women's issue" to a shared institutional responsibility. By engaging influential men as champions of change, it aims to reduce backlash and create safer environments for women's participation.

- **Check mitigation measures are appropriate by asking women and girls from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities:** This is crucial to ensure the steps to reduce harm are appropriate for the context and do not reinforce harmful gender norms. Engaging with a diverse group of women reduces the risk that mitigation measures will be inaccessible or inappropriate for women from different groups.
- **Integrate GBV risk mitigation measures into programme design:** Make sure that the steps to reduce the risk of GBV are included in workplans, budgets and operational procedures. Include clear responsibilities for staff and partners in managing GBV risks and allocate resources as necessary.

Hypothetical GBV risk mitigation measures:

Activity	GBV risk	Mitigation measure
Community training on regenerative agriculture skills	Intimate partner/ domestic violence by husbands/male family members who do not want their wives/female family members to attend.	Door-to-door conversations with men in advance of community meeting to invite them to the meeting and explain the importance of women's participation in the meeting.

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Activity	GBV risk	Mitigation measure
Community consultation on green infrastructure project	Abuse and harassment on public transport against women travelling to and from training sessions.	Organise safe transportation for community members attending consultation meetings.
Anticipatory action ahead of flooding	Women face increased risks of GBV during displacement.	Include training on dedicated GBV referral pathways in preparatory flood evacuation drills with communities.
Designing shelters for communities displaced by a climate disaster	Women and girls face increased risks of GBV in shelters.	Ensure shelters include safe and private accommodation, lockable bathrooms, and that buildings and surrounding areas are well lit.
Hydrogen demonstration project	Women at risk of backlash for attending public consultations where they would be able to access environmental and safety plans and voice concerns/shape project design.	Collaborate with local WROs or spaces where it is publicly acceptable for women to gather, such as health centres, to advertise and run women-only consultations, led by female facilitators.
Critical minerals pilot project	Women working in critical minerals sector face high levels of intimate partner violence, posing a risk of absenteeism. Mining of critical minerals disrupts access to natural resources as the environment is degraded, meaning women must travel further to access water and firewood, putting them at greater risk of violence at home and by community members.	Map clear referral pathways for women subjected to GBV. Coordinate with local service providers to ensure women can access mobile services in rural and hard-to-reach locations. Where mining of critical minerals disrupts access to natural resources for local communities, establish mechanisms or build infrastructure that mitigates this. For example, build wells or provide clean fuel sources for communities.

Step 3. Develop ways for staff and communities to report GBV

- Programmes should develop reporting mechanisms with women and girls to make sure they are safe, confidential and easily accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. Programmes should offer multiple ways to report GBV to give survivors a choice of how to report. For example, this could include a free hotline, an email address, a person or designated community organisation who people can report to directly, and an anonymous box in a safe community space.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: LILAK Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights shared in an interview that following a typhoon in the Philippines, they facilitated the establishment of community kitchens near shelters where Indigenous women often gathered to cook for their families. These kitchens served as safe spaces for reporting incidents of GBV and sharing information about GBV response services.

For more information please jump to the CASE STUDY

Step 4. Establish clear referral pathways

Programmes should establish a clear step-by-step process to guide survivors to the services and support they need. These referral pathways may be the same as those developed through a programme's SEAH approach. These steps should be safe and accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. They should respect confidentiality and not put survivors at risk of further harm. During this process, programmes should:

- **Identify safe GBV services in the programme area:** These should include medical, psychosocial, and legal support. Programmes should include a range of services providers including local NGOs, international organisations, government agencies, community-based organisations, and informal support networks, to give survivors choices. Teams should work with WROs to ensure these services are safe and will not put survivors at greater risk of harm.
- **Regularly update the list of services available:** Mapping of GBV services should be regularly updated to reflect changes in service availability.
- **Train staff and partners:** All staff and partners should be trained on how to use this step-by-step process. They must feel comfortable on how to use referral pathways so that they know what to do if someone reports an incident of GBV to them.

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EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: The NGO Badabon Sangho shared in an interview that through a mangrove restoration project in Bangladesh, they established strong, trusted partnerships with local service providers, helping them develop a trusted referral pathway for survivors. The programme also linked survivors with volunteers who could provide accompaniment at every stage of the referral process.

For more information please jump to the CASE STUDY

Step 5. Monitor GBV risks and adapt programme activities accordingly

Programmes should monitor GBV as part of programme-wide risk monitoring efforts. To monitor risks and adapt programme activities, programmes should:

- **Include GBV risks in their wider risk-monitoring tools:** This could involve regularly reviewing the number of incidents of GBV reported, and feedback from programme participants about how safe they feel engaging in the programme.
- **Adjust programme activities based on GBV risks:** Programmes should use information gathered about GBV risks to help the programme adjust its activities to make them safer. These adjustments could include changing activity schedules or locations to improve safety, changing how the programme distributes assets like cash to reduce the risk of harm, and strengthening staff training.
- **Strong internal communication to ensure all staff understand their responsibilities:** Programmes should make sure that changes in GBV risk levels and any associated changes to programme activities are communicated with staff and partners. They should also make sure staff and partners understand their responsibilities for managing GBV risks.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: A climate-smart agriculture programme in Syria conducted quarterly GBV risk assessments and, in collaboration with women, including women with disabilities, developed measures to mitigate identified risks.[44] The programme also established an accessible community feedback mechanism through which participants could report violence and seek support. All facilitators and implementation staff received training on GBV referral pathways to help connect survivors with safe and accessible services.

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FURTHER RESOURCES

IUCN (2025) Gender-based violence referral pathways for environmental programs and projects. A guidance note. VIEW RESOURCE	This guidance provides step-by-step guidance on developing safe, confidential and survivor-centred GBV referral pathways.

GBV response

KEY TAKEAWAY: Partner with local WROs and GBV service providers to strengthen referral pathways and ensure GBV response is included in programme delivery and climate emergency planning. Ensure an intersectional approach is taken, working with women, girls, gender-diverse people, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and marginalised groups to understand and address different needs in the community.

Climate change and environmental disasters increase the risk of GBV,[45] so strengthening GBV response helps reduce the harm caused by these crises. Supporting survivors to recover from violence is also an important step to ensuring they can participate fully in climate and environmental programmes. GBV response services can include medical care, counselling, legal help, and protective shelters. There are four key ways that climate and environmental programmes can strengthen GBV response, including through anticipatory action:

1. Sharing information about existing GBV services

Climate and environmental programmes can support women and girls to access GBV services by identifying opportunities to safely share information about local GBV response services with women in their programmes. For example, programmes could:

- Team up with local women's rights organisations to create posters, pamphlets, or signs that let women know about GBV support services nearby, which can be displayed in spaces where the programme operates. Ensure these are in a range of formats to enable people with disabilities and lower literacy levels to access the information.
- Invite GBV service providers or women's rights groups to all-women activities in the programme to share information about local GBV services.
- Include information about GBV services alongside other information and assistance for women, for example with dignity kits, cash vouchers, or livelihoods packages.

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EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: In an interview, NGOs for Fisheries Reform shared that through a programme ending illegal fishing and promoting sustainable fishing practices among communities in the Philippines, they had integrated information about types of GBV and support services available to survivors into existing training for municipal, social welfare offices and academic institutions. This has better equipped them to refer survivors to services.

For more information please jump to the CASE STUDY

2. Advocating for stronger GBV service provision

Climate and environmental programmes can work with local women's rights organisations to collectively advocate for stronger and more accessible GBV service provision. This is especially important in locations where gaps in GBV services are identified. For example, programmes could:

- Coordinate with local GBV service providers to arrange mobile visits to remote communities engaged in climate and environmental programmes.
- Support women's fishing or agricultural cooperatives to engage with local authorities to share the GBV risks they face and to advocate for stronger GBV response support, whether in health care, access to justice, or other measures.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: The Badabon Sangho Mangrove Forest Initiative in Bangladesh supports Indigenous women's groups to adapt to rising sea levels and protect mangrove forests. It works in remote areas where programme representatives estimate over 70% of women face GBV, but support services are limited.[46] In response, the programme partnered with local women's rights organisations to advocate for stronger service provision. This included supporting women to explain to local government decision-makers how climate change increases their risk of GBV, and how experiencing GBV affects their ability to stay resilient during climate shocks and protect mangrove forests.

For more information please jump to the CASE STUDY

3. Considering GBV response in anticipatory action around climate emergencies and shocks:

When planning for climate emergencies, it's important to integrate GBV response preparation. This is because GBV risks often increase during emergencies, and crises can make it harder for survivors to seek help. Planning for climate emergencies should always include GBV response experts, who understand how to develop safe, inclusive and accessible GBV services that respect the dignity and meet the needs of survivors. Efforts should align with the 16 Interagency Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies Programming. In the case of multi-agency anticipatory action, appointing a GBV coordinator is also crucial. Examples of how GBV response can be integrated into anticipatory action efforts include:

- **Assess GBV services to identify gaps:** Before an emergency happens, a GBV coordinator can check how well local GBV services and staff are prepared. This helps spot any gaps in support so teams can decide where extra help and resources will be needed during a crisis.
- **Engage GBV service providers in the design of early warning systems:** Make sure local GBV organisations understand the warning signs and timing used in anticipatory action so they can plan and design GBV interventions effectively before a crisis happens.
- **Evacuation planning and preparedness:** Programmes should involve women's rights groups and GBV service providers in evacuation drills. This can help teams identify gaps and fix them, reducing the risk of GBV and making sure survivors can get help.
- **Pre-positioning supplies:** When preparing supplies in advance, programmes should consider the needs of GBV survivors. For example, shelters should have necessary medicines and health supplies, such as emergency contraception.
- **Designing evacuation support:** Shelters and transport arrangements should be planned with safety and accessibility in mind. Practical measures may include private spaces for unaccompanied women and girls, lockable sanitation facilities, and well-lit shelters and surrounding areas.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: Oxfam in Cambodia supports communities to anticipate and respond to floods.[47] Through their work, they have integrated GBV planning and response into flood simulation exercises. This involves bringing community members together to plan and practice how to respond to a flood. As part of this work, community groups map the nearest GBV support services, create clear referral pathways for survivors, and identify local groups responsible for providing immediate support or first aid to survivors until they can reach official services.

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FURTHER RESOURCES

GBV and Anticipatory Action Approaches. GBV AoR Helpdesk VIEW RESOURCE	This report provides an overview of the systems, processes and timelines for anticipatory action with detailed guidance on how to integrate GBV activities into these systems.
Tip Sheet: Ensuring Attention to GBV in Anticipatory Action. GBV AoR Helpdesk. VIEW RESOURCE	This provides an update to the previous report.

4. Supporting GBV services to become more resilient to climate emergencies and shocks:

Climate disasters, including slow-onset events like drought, can disrupt GBV response services. They may damage the buildings where services are provided, cause displacement that leads to lost health or justice records, or block access to important resources that survivors rely on. Activities that could support GBV services to become more resilient to climate emergencies and shocks include:

- Reinforcing the buildings where GBV services are provided to reduce the risk of damage during climate crises.
- Supporting GBV service providers to use digital technologies and sustainable transport to enable remote data collection and mobile service delivery.
- Installing climate-smart technology such as solar panels or clean cookstoves to enable GBV services to provide support to survivors in a sustainable and low-cost way.
- Building the capacity of GBV service providers to understand and plan for climate risks.

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GBV prevention

KEY TAKEAWAY: GBV prevention is possible and practical. The What Works evidence demonstrates that well-designed programmes, implemented consistently over 2-3 years, can halve rates of violence.[48] Effective programming requires long-term investment, specialist expertise and partnership with WROs. Wherever possible, programmes should adapt proven GBV prevention approaches with GBV specialists and local WROs rather than creating new ones from scratch. It is crucial that an intersectional approach is taken, working with women, girls, gender-diverse people, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and marginalised groups to understand and address different needs in the community.

GBV prevention interventions integrated into climate and environmental programmes aim to stop violence in communities and households as this can pose a substantial barrier to women's participation. These efforts address the root causes and drivers of GBV, including gender inequality, harmful social norms, power imbalances and other factors that increase the risks of violence. They involve working with communities and mobilising actors at different levels, from the household level through to community leaders. They require consistent engagement with participants over extended periods of time (2+ years) and must be designed and implemented with GBV prevention experts and women's rights organisations to ensure they are safe and effective.

How To Steps

Step 1. Identify a partner with GBV prevention expertise

GBV prevention programming requires specialist expertise to ensure it is safe and effective. It is therefore crucial to embed GBV specialists in the programme from the outset. This could involve:

- Contracting external technical assistance from GBV specialists/experts, who bring knowledge of global best practice.
- Engaging local GBV specialists working in WROs, who bring expertise on what will work in their contexts.
- Embedding GBV specialist(s) in the programme delivery team.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: The Al Murunah+ initiative is integrating GBV prevention programming into a Nature Based Solutions water management programme led by the International Water Management Institute across Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.[49] This initiative combined all three of the above strategies. They engaged technical assistance from the UK-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Helpdesk to support with the design and delivery of

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the intervention; they recruited an in-house gender adviser with GBV experience; and they contracted a women's rights organisation in each of the four countries to manage the culturally-sensitive implementation of the GBV prevention curriculum, including the recruitment, training and supervision of the facilitators.

Over the past decade, substantial research has been conducted into what works to prevent GBV in practice, including through robust evaluations. Effective GBV prevention should be tailored to local contexts and aligned with global best practice. The following initiatives provide extensive guidance for how to design, implement, monitor and evaluate a GBV prevention programme effectively.

Initiatives that provide further on GBV Prevention	Details
UK-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Impact at Scale Initiative VIEW RESOURCE	What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale (What Works II) is a seven-year initiative funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) that builds on the success of What Works I to scale-up effective and innovative interventions to stop violence before it starts. The Evidence Hub includes guidance and evidence.
The Prevention Collaborative VIEW RESOURCE	The Prevention Collaborative is a group of practitioners and researchers connecting local and global knowledge to prevent violence against women and children. Their website provides information about prevention strategies, programme examples and guides to programming along with other resources.
Spotlight Initiative Learning Centre VIEW RESOURCE	The Spotlight Initiative Learning Centre is an online platform that hosts guidance to support individuals and organisations designing, implementing and managing comprehensive programmes to end violence against women and girls. It builds on learning from the Spotlight Initiative and the wider field.
Southeast Asia GBV Prevention Platform VIEW RESOURCE	The South East Asia Prevention Platform is an Australian Government Initiative that aims to strengthen efforts to prevent gender-based violence in the Southeast Asia region. Its Knowledge Hub includes resources that share lessons on a range of topics such as how to embed intersectionality into GBV prevention efforts.

Step 2. **Conduct a gender equality, disability and social inclusion analysis or community needs assessment that includes GBV considerations.**

This could involve reviewing existing data and speaking with women's rights organisations to understand how different forms of GBV may stop women and girls from diverse backgrounds from fully taking part in the programme or prevent programmes from achieving their intended outcomes. These discussions should be carried out in an accessible, culturally sensitive, survivor-centred way that minimises distress, respects the dignity of survivors, and does not put anyone at further risk of violence. This research could explore the following:

- Different types of GBV
- Risk and protective factors for GBV
- Social and gender norms that reproduce or challenge violence
- Community attitudes related to GBV and gender inequality
- Cultural expectations around relationships
- Legal protections against violence
- Availability of survivor-centered services

REMEMBER: It is important to understand the different types of GBV and what drives them, so programmes can be designed safely and effectively. In addition to physical and sexual intimate partner violence, GBV can also include economic abuse and emotional/psychological abuse that limits women's ability to take part in livelihood activities. It may also involve backlash from communities that discourages women from being active in public spaces or decision-making. Child marriage, rooted in structural gender inequality and harmful social norms, which often increases during times of crisis, is also a form of GBV that can weaken community resilience.

It is also crucial to understand the different risks to women and girls from diverse backgrounds and the impact of GBV on their lives. For example, globally, women and girls with disabilities, Indigenous women and girls, and displaced women and girls face higher rates of GBV and greater barriers to accessing support.[50]

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Step 3. Build buy-in from a broad range of stakeholders

Effective GBV prevention efforts require engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including women's rights organisations, community representatives, local men and boys, traditional and religious leaders, local and national government officials, and GBV service providers. Involving these actors throughout the project cycle helps build ownership, strengthen uptake, and reduce the risk of backlash against women and girls. These partnerships can also support longer-term sustainability of efforts. Stakeholder engagement should be informed and led by local WROs. They are often best placed to identify who should be involved, how engagement can be undertaken safely, and what approaches are most likely to achieve sustainable change due to their deep knowledge of local gender dynamics, social norms, and power structures.

REMEMBER: Work with men and boys can play a critical role in preventing VAWG, provided it is guided by and accountable to the needs, experiences, and priorities of women and girls. Men and boys often influence the social norms, behaviours, and power dynamics that can perpetuate or challenge violence. However, efforts to engage men and boys should complement, not replace, investments in women and girls. Programmes should remain accountable to women and girls by ensuring their voices, rights, priorities, and safety remain at the centre of programme design and implementation. This includes working in partnership with women's rights organisations, monitoring for unintended harms, and ensuring that activities to engage men and boys contribute to, rather than detract from, broader goals of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The type and level of engagement required will vary depending on the project stage and objective. Some stakeholders may play a key role in programme design, while others are critical for implementation, service delivery, advocacy, or long-term sustainability. Engagement should therefore be strategic and tailored to the local context.

Key resources	Details
Practice-based learning brief: working with governments to end violence against women and children. UK-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Helpdesk, 2025 VIEW RESOURCE	This brief shares learning on how to work with governments to build buy-in for GBV prevention programming.

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Engage men and boys to end VAWG. Spotlight Initiative VIEW RESOURCE	This website provides key lessons about how to engage men and boys in GBV prevention, while remaining accountable to women and girls
Effective Partnerships, Spotlight Initiative VIEW RESOURCE	This website provides key lessons about how to build effective partnerships with key stakeholders to address GBV

Step 4. Design or adapt a GBV prevention intervention

GBV prevention programming is most effective when integrated from the outset, rather than added later. While developing a theory of change, programmes should consider the types of GBV they are seeking to prevent and the most appropriate evidence-based approaches to doing so. Efforts could include a combination of different approaches. GBV prevention approaches include but are not limited to:

- **Community mobilisation:** Engage whole communities to shift harmful norms around gender and violence. These often involve facilitated discussions, community action groups, and working with local leaders and male community members on addressing inequitable social norms.
- **Couples/household programmes:** Work with couples/households to strengthen communication, challenge harmful gender norms, resolve conflict without violence, and make joint decisions about family life and finances.
- **Edutainment:** Use media and storytelling to raise awareness, challenge harmful attitudes, and spark discussion about gender inequality and violence. Often facilitated by facilitated discussion groups.
- **Parenting programmes:** Support parents to build safe, non-violent home environments. Often include exploration of non-violent discipline and positive parenting techniques.
- **School-based programmes:** Work with students, teachers and parents to promote respectful relationships and challenge harmful gender norms through dedicated curricula and school-based action groups.

REMEMBER: Many effective GBV prevention approaches already exist. Adapting proven, evidence-based interventions to the local context is often more effective and cost-efficient than developing new approaches from scratch. Where appropriate, programmes should identify existing GBV prevention interventions and work with local WROs, GBV prevention experts, and where possible, individuals involved in the design of the original intervention, to adapt these to the new context. Adapting a programme well takes time, resources and engagement with a range of stakeholders. It is also key to building buy-in and ensuring the intervention is effective, safe and tailored to the context.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: A regenerative farming project run by Rare in Colombia worked with youth participants (aged 15-27) from local youth platforms, to explore issues around GBV, gender roles and emotional management, within agricultural settings.[51] The young people initially found it challenging to express themselves in group settings, highlighting the importance of tailoring the approach to promote youth engagement. The programme developed creative, collective learning approaches such as digital storytelling to overcome these barriers and foster more open and reflective dialogue.

For more information please jump to the CASE STUDY

Designing/adapting for sustainability

When planning for sustainability, it is important to consider both whether the programme's **impacts** will endure over time and whether key **elements** (e.g. activities, structures and partnerships) can continue beyond the period of external support.

- **Sustainable impacts** are positive behaviours and beliefs that continue after a programme has ended. For example:
    - Couples continue to make joint decisions around sustainable water management and the use of income from climate-smart agriculture efforts.
    - Local government officials continue to consider GBV in the development of climate and environmental policy and financing.
    - Communities continue to support women's employment as wildlife rangers.

Achieving sustainable impacts requires well-designed, context-specific programming that reflects the needs of local populations and is delivered in partnership with local WROs and GBV prevention experts to ensure quality, relevance, and long-term effectiveness.

- **Sustainable elements** are aspects of a project, programme or initiative that continue beyond the period of external support. For example:
    - A woman's fishing cooperative continues to operate after a programme has ended
    - Women continue to hold leadership positions within a forestry management committee.
    - GBV service providers continue to regularly visit rural communities engaged in regenerative agriculture.

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Maximising sustainable elements requires early and continued investment in local ownership and capacity. This may include building partnerships with local organisations and service providers, strengthening the capacity of communities to lead and manage activities independently, and supporting communities to access alternative funding to enable self-sustaining initiatives.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: A wetlands conservation programme in Uganda took a collaborative approach to adapting evidence-based GBV-prevention programming to strengthen relevance, effectiveness and support for interventions.[52] This was a partnership between the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), the Ministry of Water & Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, and Pallisa District Government. They brought together key stakeholders including local community members, leaders, service providers and research institutions to adapt a proven GBV community mobilisation prevention approach called "SASA! Together!" to the wetlands context. The initiative uses multiple strategies, including working with couples and households and engaging the wider community, to prevent GBV.

A programme representative said:

"Bringing different stakeholders together to adapt a well-established GBV prevention programme has ensured it aligns with best practice, fits the local context and meets everyone's needs. Collective adaptation has also helped ensure everyone feels buy-in for this intervention."

For more information please jump to the CASE STUDY

FURTHER RESOURCES

Evidence-based programmes to prevent violence against women. Prevention Collaborative, 2022 VIEW RESOURCE	This brief introduces a range of GBV prevention strategies that have been effective at preventing GBV in different regions globally.
Adapting Curriculum-Based Violence Prevention Programmes Prevention Collaborative, 2022 VIEW RESOURCE	This guidance note shares steps for adapting a curriculum for GBV prevention.
The IPV-ADAPT + Framework: How to Adapt Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Programs Equality Insights Lab and Sexual Violence Research Initiative, 2022 VIEW RESOURCE	This framework shares steps for adapting a GBV prevention programme.
The Prevention Triad Prevention Collaborative, 2022 VIEW RESOURCE	This tool helps design GBV prevention efforts with a view to maximising and sustaining positive impacts.
Practice Based Learning Brief on Adaptation, UK-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Helpdesk, 2026 VIEW RESOURCE	
Mainstreaming GBV into the Al Murunah + programme VIEW RESOURCE	This resource provides detailed steps and lessons from the Al Murunah + programme on how to integrate GBV prevention into a climate or environmental programme

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Step 5. Apply best practice in programme implementation

It is crucial that GBV prevention programmes are implemented in line with best practice. GBV prevention experts and women's rights organisations can help ensure that programmes are implemented safely and effectively and identify potential issues and adjust as necessary. Key considerations for safe and effective implementation include but are not limited to:

- **Alignment with other project components:** GBV prevention activities should be coordinated with other parts of the project to ensure everyone can participate safely and the interventions are effective. For example:
    - Session schedules should avoid busy times like harvest so both men and women can attend.
    - GBV prevention activities should happen before any transfer of assets to help prevent economic abuse.
- **Training and support to facilitators:** It is essential that facilitators are carefully selected, trained, supervised, and supported to ensure they are delivering the intervention safely and in line with best practice.
    - **Selection:** Programmes should select facilitators with gender-equitable views that are aligned with the aims of the GBV prevention intervention.
    - **Training**: Facilitator training should include opportunities for critical self-reflection, where they can explore and transform harmful beliefs. It should also involve practical training on how to navigate challenging conversations with different groups of people.
    - **Supervision:** Programmes should appoint supervisors with GBV prevention expertise to ensure that facilitators follow best practice, with clear procedures for addressing any behaviour that could cause harm or undermine the aims of the programme.
    - **Support:** Programmes should establish peer-support and mentoring mechanisms that promote facilitator resilience, collective care and self-care, and joint learning.
- **Pilot and adjust interventions:** Programmes should pilot the intervention within communities, with enough time to receive feedback from community members and facilitators, and to adjust as needed based on this feedback.

EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE: A regenerative agriculture project run by Rare in Colombia engaged psychosocial support teams for discussions around GBV within agriculture.[53] They guided sensitive discussions on gender norms, power dynamics and family relationships with a 'do no harm' approach.

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Step 5. Monitor and evaluate impact on GBV prevention and climate outcomes

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) in GBV prevention programmes is essential for understanding progress and improving future work. It is important to develop realistic indicators, recognising that changes in social norms take time and may not be fully visible within a single project cycle. Proxy indicators can help track progress in the short term. Documenting and sharing lessons learned is crucial, as this knowledge strengthens future programming and helps ensure interventions are more effective and context-appropriate.

Example proxy indicators include:

- % of women reporting meaningful participation in household decisions around agricultural production, climate adaptation or income use.
- % of women participating in climate governance and resource management committees.
- % of women self-reported confidence to share opinions in household and community decision-making.
- % of couples reporting joint decision-making on livelihoods.
- % of men who regularly participate in household chores.
- % of women who can travel independently without needing permission or accompaniment.
- % of community members who agree that men should share responsibility for household chores.
- % of community members who agree that women should be able to work outside of the home and earn an income.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Doing Violence Prevention Well: Matching Aspirations with Funding Timeframes, UN Women and the Prevention Collaborative VIEW RESOURCE	This resource provides examples of prevention programming that would be suitable for different timeframes, ranging from 1 year to 5+ years.

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Section 4:

Sectoral Deep Dives for Climate and Environmental Programming



This section brings together case studies from across the climate and environmental sectors to show how programmes can address GBV through their work. Each section:

- Outlines why integrating GBV considerations is essential for achieving sustainable and equitable sector outcomes.
- Provides illustrative examples of how sectors could address GBV through GBV risk mitigation, strengthening GBV response and GBV prevention.
- Platforms real-world case studies demonstrating how organisations and practitioners have incorporated GBV considerations into their efforts.

Together, these examples offer concrete insights and evidence to support the development of more context-specific, effective and gender-responsive approaches.

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Disaster risk reduction

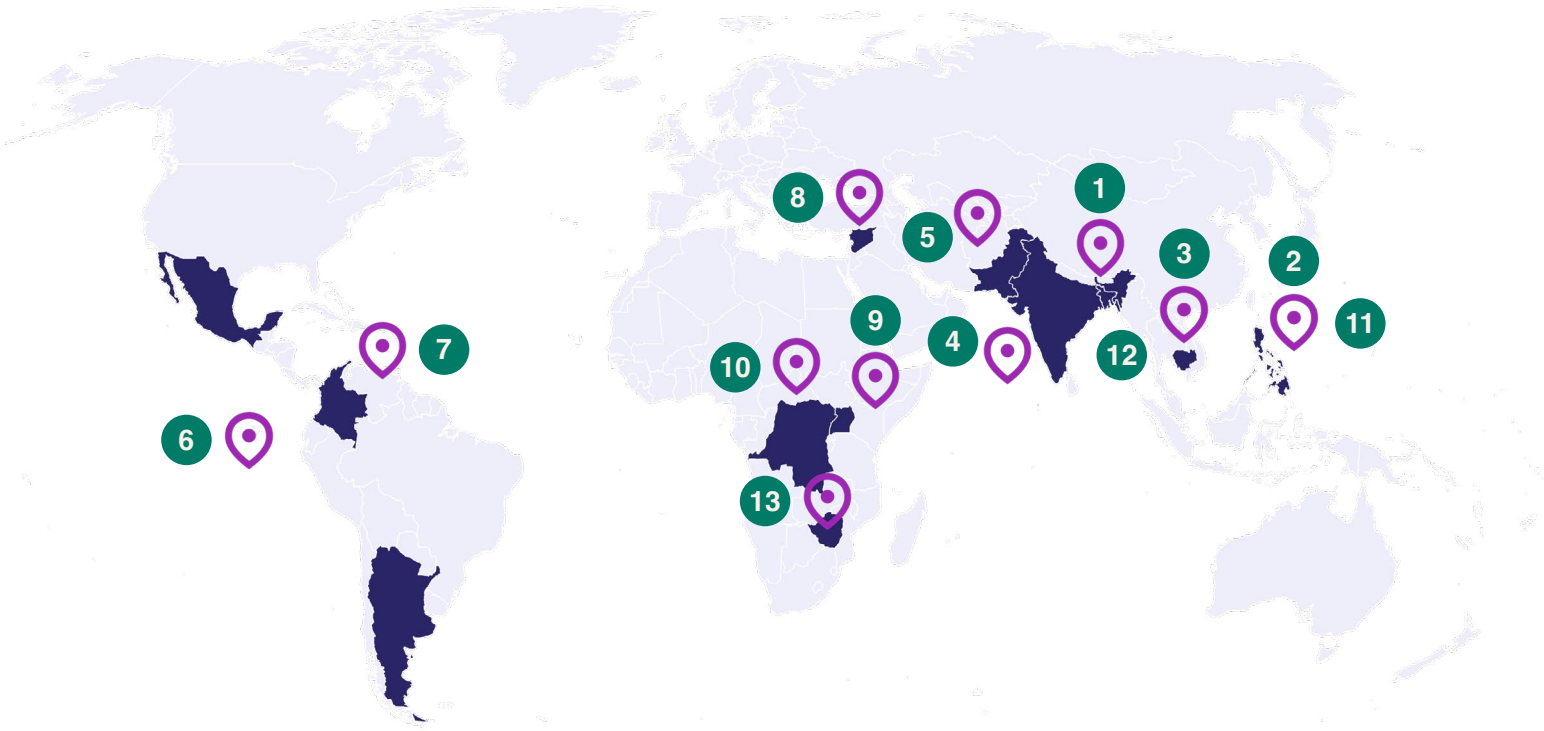
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Blue economy: How to address GBV through blue economy programming

Key takeaway: Women's participation is critical to sustainable fisheries, water governance and marine conservation, but GBV can prevent women from participating safely and meaningfully. Women facing intersecting forms of discrimination may experience heightened risks and additional obstacles to participation. As a minimum standard, assess and mitigate GBV risks that may limit participation in fisheries, aquaculture, marine conservation and water governance. Work with local women and marginalised groups to identify barriers and appropriate solutions, such as safer travel arrangements, monitoring unintended impacts of conservation measures and creating safer spaces for participation where appropriate.

Why address GBV through blue economy projects

Women are key agents of change in protecting marine ecosystems, promoting sustainable fishing practices, eliminating pollution and waste, and building communities resilient to water-related crises. In 2024, women accounted for approximately 40% of all those engaged in the aquatic value chain.[54] In 2021, they comprised 85% of fish processors and traders in Nigeria, 60% of fish traders in Ghana, and are responsible for as much as 60% of fish processing and marketing along the coast of Togo.[55] While women are increasingly recognised as critical actors in fisheries monitoring, governance, and community stewardship, they are also at significant risk of exposure to GBV from intimate partners, fisherfolk, community members, fish buyers, and others along the value chain, which can prevent their safe participation in these efforts and their uptake of sustainable fishing practices. [56] This is exacerbated by declining fish stocks, leading to an increase in women being pressured into exchanging fish-for-sex.[57]

Addressing GBV through blue economy projects, can help create conditions that support stronger, more sustainable and more equitable environmental and economic outcomes.[2] While the evidence base establishing a direct causal link is still emerging, the likely benefits of addressing GBV are widely recognised by those working at this intersection. For example, efforts to address GBV can:



2 For blue economy projects focusing on offshore wind, please also see the following sections on clean energy and climate-smart infrastructure.

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- **Support better project design and results** by enabling women to participate safely and fully in blue economy initiatives, leading to more inclusive decision-making and stronger development outcomes.[58]
- **Contribute to more inclusive ecosystem management** by ensuring women can access training finance, technology, and natural resource governance processes.[59] Women's knowledge and participation can contribute to the sustainable management of freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems.[60]
- **Support more resilient fisheries and value chains** by supporting the women who play critical roles in processing, trading, and marketing aquatic products.[61] In many regions, women are central actors in sustaining fisheries-based livelihoods and food security.[62]
- **Enhance community stewardship and compliance** by empowering women to engage in natural resource governance, fisheries management, and conservation efforts,[63] potentially supporting the long-term sustainability of marine and freshwater resources.[64]
- **Help increase uptake of sustainable livelihoods** by removing barriers that prevent women from accessing employment, markets, leadership opportunities, and entrepreneurship within blue sectors.[65] This can diversify household incomes and contribute to local economic growth.[66]
- **Contribute to household resilience to water-based climate shocks** by encouraging more shared and equitable decision-making within households, improving access to resources and enabling women and men to respond collectively to environmental risks.[67]

How to address GBV through the blue economy

There are a range of practical actions you can take to address GBV within the blue economy. Please refer to the **decision tree** in **Section 3: Climate and Environmental Programming** to identify the most appropriate approach for your programme, taking into account the available time, resources, and operating context. You can then use the accompanying high-level guidance to identify practical actions for:

MINIMUM STANDARD

Mitigating GBV risks associated with programme activities

+

GOOD PRACTICE

Strengthening GBV response services and referral pathways for survivors

+

GREATER AMBITION

Integrating GBV prevention approaches into blue economy efforts

REMEMBER: Effective GBV activities should always be informed by meaningful consultation with local women, who are best placed to identify context-specific risks and solutions, and aligned with global best practice.

The boxes highlight illustrative example activities that blue economy projects could consider for addressing GBV. This list is not exhaustive.

GBV RISK MITIGATION

- Establish community protection committees with strong women's representation to monitor unintended social impacts of anti-illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing measures, including increases in domestic violence, harassment, or economic exploitation.
- Establish community-based safety networks and buddy systems for women travelling to and from fishing/harvesting grounds, landing sites, and markets, particularly during early morning or evening hours.
- Provide targeted livelihood support for women in fishing households during seasonal closures or enforcement campaigns, reducing the risk that women are blamed for lost income associated with conservation measures.
- Develop women-only access periods, zones, or organised fishing activities where appropriate and locally supported, creating safer spaces for women to participate in fishing and associated economic activities.

+

STRENGTHENING GBV RESPONSE

Coordinate with local service providers to facilitate greater reach and access of GBV services for remote fishing communities.

Use women-only fishing or marine agriculture cooperatives as entry points for sharing information on local GBV support services.

+

GBV PREVENTION

Facilitate recurring community dialogues with women, men, youth, fisherfolk, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and local government to discuss women's participation in fisheries, aquaculture, coastal tourism, and natural resource management.

Establish targets, mentorship programmes, and leadership training to increase women's representation in fisheries management committees, marine protected area boards, water user groups, and tourism associations. Engage communities including local leaders and male community members to reduce backlash against women in marine and coastal management leadership.

Partner with local women-led groups to support government agencies to integrate gender equality and GBV prevention into fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and marine conservation policies and strategies.

Case Study: Supporting community resilience by combating GBV in Bangladesh's mangroves

In Bangladesh, rising sea levels are causing salination, reducing fish stocks, and damaging in-land fishing and agricultural food production. Mangrove forests are also being degraded by salinity and harmful fishing practices. This is having a significant impact on biodiversity, carbon capture, and local communities whose livelihoods depend on fish for most the year.

Badabon Sangho, a women's rights organisation (WRO) and grantee of the Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature (OCEAN),[3] is implementing the Badabon Sangho Mangrove Forest Initiative which supports sustainable fishing and mangrove conservation to address these issues.

Women make up the majority of fisherfolk in the area and Badabon Sangho estimates that over 70% of women fisherfolk are at risk of GBV. GBV poses a significant barrier to the programme's environmental objectives by limiting women's ability to participate safely and effectively in sustainable fishing practices, conservation activities and community decision-making. It also impacts community resilience by negatively impacting women fisherfolk's livelihoods.

Women and girls face a range of GBV risks including sexual exploitation by fish buyers, violence when travelling to fresh water, and intimate partner and family violence. These are exacerbated by declining fish stocks, salination and economic insecurity. Recognising the importance of addressing GBV to support the initiative's aims, Badabon Sangho integrated GBV as a core component of the programme.

Addressing GBV in practice

The programme combines risk mitigation, strengthening GBV response and GBV prevention through:

- **Strengthening infrastructure.** The programme has installed over 200 freshwater tanks to reduce the need for long journeys to fresh water, during which women face heightened GBV risks.
- **Supporting access to GBV response services for women fisher folk**. The programme hosts monthly courtyard sessions to raise awareness of survivor services and improve survivor access to support. Community-based paralegal volunteers provide legal information and connect survivors to services. This includes targeted support for women and girls living with disabilities to access secure reporting tools. Badabon also supports survivors to access legal aid, healthcare, psychosocial support and police reporting, while covering transport and other costs to reduce barriers to those seeking justice and protection.

3 OCEAN is a UK Government competitive challenge fund running to 2030 that supports coastal communities to take action to reduce poverty and ocean degradation through grants to civil society organisations.

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- **Advocating for stronger GBV response services:** Recognising the lack of services available to women fisherfolk, Badabon advocates for stronger GBV services in sessions with government stakeholders. They also share examples of GBV from their work in the Legal Aid Committee.
- **Establishing women-led fisherfolk cooperatives.** These cooperatives manage a savings and loans system, providing access to loans in off-fishing seasons where GBV risks are higher. Loans support repairs and daily expenses, reducing reliance on fish buyers and vulnerability to exploitation and violence. However, this pilot initially faced violent backlash from community members, highlighting the importance of conducting GBV risk assessments and establishing mitigation measures. One way this backlash was addressed is through community learning sessions.
- **Community learning sessions on the drivers and impact of GBV.** The programme uses discussion spaces and events, such as the Mangrove Festival to host community-based sessions on GBV. Women-only groups are given a safe space to learn about their rights, support services, and opportunities to participate in advocacy, while men and community leader groups learn about the negative impacts of GBV. Discussions with men and community leaders helps build support and buy-in for women's participation and engagement in activities.



Fisherfolk women going to the river to fish. (Source: Badabon Sangho)

- **Capacity building on GBV in disasters.** Badabon trains youth to support GBV survivors in disaster preparedness efforts.

As one OCEAN representative explained "Responding to the GBV risks identified by women in the programme has helped build trust and provide access to the support they need, ensuring that women are better able to participate in the programme activities."

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Case Study: Combatting IUUF in the Visayan Sea, Philippines, through empowered fisher alliances

The Visayan Sea is one of the Philippines' most important fishing grounds, yet illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF) continues to deplete fish stocks and deepen poverty among small-scale fishers. As declining fish stocks and income loss increase household stress, they can also heighten the risk of GBV, particularly for women and children. Implemented by the NGOs for Fisheries Reform (NFR) through the OCEAN grants programme, this programme supports fisher alliances and local governments to improve fisheries management while strengthening community resilience.

The programme integrates GBV risk mitigation and response into its community engagement to support safer and more inclusive fisheries governance.

Addressing GBV in practice

- **Conducting GBV risk assessments:** Needs assessments are conducted by Barangay LGU personnel through the guidance of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer (MSWDO). They aim to identify vulnerable groups and locations and develop measures to reduce the risk of GBV.
- **Development of GBV referral pathways:** Partnerships with local actors strengthen referral pathways, monitoring and survivor support. Key partners include Barangay and Municipal Local Government Units (LGU), Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices (MSWDOs), academia, and Gender and Development (GAD) focal points. Cases are monitored monthly, evaluated quarterly and reviewed annually.
- **Capacity strengthening on GBV response:** Staff, co-managers, and community champions are trained on survivor-centred GBV response. A Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Helpdesk was set up in the community, with trained Barangay Local Government Unit (LGU) personnel monitoring, assisting and referring cases.
- **Awareness raising of support services:** The programme has integrated information about types of GBV and key support services available to survivors into GEDSI and PSEAH trainings with municipal, social welfare offices and academic institutions. This means they are better equipped to refer survivors to services.

As one OCEAN representative explained

"Identifying GBV risks faced by women fisherfolk, and responding to these risks, has helped to build trust with women community members, and improved their access to services that can help them build resilience in the face of environmental degradation and climate change."

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Case Study: Addressing GBV to promote inclusive water governance in Cambodia

Overharvesting, habitat destruction, altered water flows, and illegal fishing practices have led to a dramatic decline in fish stocks across Cambodia's rivers.[68] Many communities rely on fishing for their livelihoods so declining fish populations directly threaten their income, food security and resilience. These challenges are exacerbated by drought and extreme flooding, which damage ecosystems and can undermine food production by leading to the salinisation of agricultural land.[69]

Oxfam in Cambodia seeks to strengthen inclusive water resource management in Stung Treng and Ratanakiri provinces to protect river ecosystems, reduce illegal and destructive fishing practices, and promote more equitable distribution of resources. They also focus on building community resilience to climate shocks by supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Inclusive water governance increases the diversity of voices and expertise in decision-making processes, helping to ensure that decisions better reflect the needs of whole communities. This includes supporting women and marginalised groups to engage in conservation efforts. These include raising awareness of sustainable fishing practices and local regulation, participating in river patrols to monitor compliance, and accessing sustainable livelihoods.

Consultations with women in participating communities identified GBV as a major barrier to participation. Intimate partner violence, community backlash, and restrictive gender norms limited women's involvement in community activities and leadership roles, particularly where participation challenged traditional expectations of women's behaviour or required time away from the home. These risks were especially pronounced for women engaged in activities such as river patrols and reporting illegal fishing practices.

In response, Oxfam in Cambodia, together with Banteay Srei and the Culture and Environment Preservation Association, and funded by NORAD through the IUCN RISE Grants Challenge, established the Safer Landscapes, Stronger Voices project. This works across 20 communities to develop locally-led, co-created GBV risk mitigation strategies that enable safer participation in water management and environmental governance.

Key activities include:

- **Awareness-raising:** The project delivered GBV training, developed by a local women's rights organisation, to more than 150 community leaders, members, and local authorities. Through participatory workshops, participants increased their understanding of GBV, its impacts on individuals, communities, and conservation outcomes, and identified practical actions to promote safer, violence-free communities.
- **Social norms engagement:** Through "transformative masculinities" workshops, run by local WROs, men were encouraged to reflect on gender

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norms, power dynamics, and harmful behaviours. These sessions promote non-violent conflict resolution and encourage equitable attitudes towards women's participation in conservation efforts and water management.

- **GBV risk mapping and mitigation planning:** A GBV risk module has been integrated into existing environmental vulnerability and risk-mapping training. This includes training communities to identify GBV risks using a survivor-centred approach to data collection, understanding where risks occur, who is most affected, and how risks can be mitigated. The project then works with communities to develop tailored GBV risk mitigation plans.
- **Ongoing technical support:** The project provides continued guidance to support the implementation of GBV risk mitigation plans, ensuring that communities can adapt approaches as needed.
- **Peer support groups and community focal points:** The project has established peer-support groups for women to enable them to access support and solidarity from other women in the community. These are facilitated by local WROs and community GBV focal points who are trained to provide trauma-informed, survivor-centred support to survivors of GBV. Their role is to support survivors to navigate referral pathways and can offer immediate psychological first aid.

Although still in its early stages, the project recognises that reducing GBV risks is essential to enabling women's participation in water governance and resource management. By creating safer conditions for engagement, the programme aims to increase the inclusion of diverse perspectives within decision-making, strengthen community ownership, and improve the effectiveness and equity of natural resource management. The project believes that this in turn will contribute to more resilient communities and ecosystems.



Participants in a workshop. (Source: Oxfam in Cambodia)

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Clean energy: How to address GBV through clean energy initiatives

Key takeaway: Women's participation is essential to achieving equitable and sustainable energy transitions, but GBV can prevent women, particularly those facing intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion, from accessing opportunities safely and meaningfully. Start with GBV risk mitigation. Identify and address GBV risks that may prevent women from accessing energy services, participating in consultations and training, or entering energy sector jobs and leadership roles. This could include safe consultation processes, contractor codes of conduct, accessible reporting mechanisms, and energy infrastructure designed with women's safety in mind.

Why address GBV through clean energy projects

Addressing GBV is crucial for ensuring women's meaningful participation in clean energy efforts, whether related to renewable energy generation, electricity access, clean cooking solutions, energy efficiency or energy sector employment.[70] Women play a critical role in household energy use as they are typically the primary household energy procurers and users,[71] and women can make important contributions to energy governance and the adoption of clean energy technologies.[72] However, concerns about violence and backlash can limit women's participation in clean energy programmes and their ability to benefit from new opportunities created by the energy transition.[73]

Women seeking employment, training or leadership roles in traditionally male-dominated energy sectors may face harassment and other forms of intimidation that can limit their participation.[74] Although the increasing representation of women in senior leadership positions within the clean energy sector reflects strong progress, women still account for only around one-fifth of the energy workforce.[75] Growth in women's participation has largely stagnated, particularly as the fastest job growth in the sector is occurring in technical and skilled trades roles, such as welders and electricians, where women represent less than 5% of workers.

Women may also be excluded from household and community decision-making related to energy access and investment. Women and children are disproportionately affected by inadequate access to clean cooking fuels and technologies, which can have significant impacts on health, safety and livelihoods.[76] These barriers risk reducing the uptake of clean energy solutions, limiting women's access to economic opportunities, and undermining efforts to achieve equitable, inclusive, and effective energy transitions.

Addressing GBV through clean energy projects can enable safe participation and can help create conditions for stronger, more sustainable and more equitable energy transitions.[77] While the evidence base establishing a direct causal link is still emerging, the likely benefits of addressing GBV are widely recognised by those working at this intersection. For example, efforts to address GBV can:

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- **Support better project design and results** by enabling women to safely participate in the planning, implementation, and oversight of clean energy initiatives,[78] helping to ensure that solutions better reflect the needs of energy users.[79]
- **Help create enabling conditions for the uptake and sustainable use of clean energy technologies** by ensuring women can safely access information, training, financing and decision-making processes related to clean energy adoption.[80]
- **Expand equitable access to jobs, skills and leadership opportunities** by reducing barriers that can prevent women from participating in renewable energy and clean cooking value chains.[81]
- **Contribute to household and community resilience** by promoting more equitable decision-making regarding energy resources, technologies and investments.[82]
- **Support a more just and inclusive energy transition** by helping to ensure that the benefits of clean energy investments are shared more equitably and do not reinforce existing gender inequalities.[83]

How to address GBV through clean energy projects

There are a range of practical actions you can take to address GBV within clean energy programmes. Please refer to the decision tree in **Section 3: Climate and Environmental Programming** to identify the most appropriate approach for your programme, taking into account the available time, resources and operating context. You can then use the accompanying high-level guidance to identify practical actions for:

MINIMUM STANDARD

Mitigating GBV risks associated with programme activities

+

GOOD PRACTICE

Strengthening GBV response services and referral pathways for survivors

+

GREATER AMBITION

Integrating GBV prevention approaches into clean energy projects

REMEMBER: Effective GBV activities should always be informed by meaningful consultation with local women, who are best placed to identify context-specific risks and solutions, and aligned with global best practice.

The boxes on the following page highlight illustrative example activities that clean energy projects could consider for addressing GBV. This list is not exhaustive.

GBV RISK MITIGATION

- Conduct gender-sensitive assessments to identify GBV risks associated with energy access, energy infrastructure, training programmes and employment opportunities.
- Require contractors, suppliers and workers to adhere to codes of conduct addressing GBV, sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, alongside clear accountability measures.
- Recruit and support female staff, trainers, technicians and community outreach workers to increase women's safe participation in consultations, training and technical roles.
- Establish confidential and accessible complaints, feedback and grievance mechanisms for workers, trainees and community members affected by clean energy projects.
- Schedule consultations, training activities and community engagement sessions at times and locations that are safe and accessible for women and girls.
- Ensure energy infrastructure, training facilities and service delivery points are designed and managed in ways that support women's safety and accessibility.
- Where mining of critical minerals disrupts access to natural resources for local communities, establish mechanisms or build infrastructure that mitigates these impacts, for example, by building wells or providing clean fuel sources for communities.
- When designing hydrogen demonstration projects, collaborate with local WROs or spaces where it is safe for women to gather, to advertise and run women-only consultations, led by female facilitators, to gather community feedback.

STRENGTHENING GBV RESPONSE

- Partner with local GBV service providers to ensure referral pathways are available and accessible in project areas, including remote energy project sites.
- Support access to local GBV response services by covering essential costs, such as transport to healthcare, psychosocial support, legal aid or other survivor support services.
- Train project staff, contractors, technicians and community facilitators on safe and ethical approaches to receiving and referring GBV disclosures.
- Use energy access points, community meetings, cooperatives or customer engagement activities to disseminate information about available GBV support services where safe and appropriate.
- Ensure project grievance mechanisms include survivor-centred procedures for responding to GBV-related complaints.
- Collaborate with local women's organisations as entry points for sharing information on GBV support services and referral pathways.

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GBV PREVENTION

- Facilitate community dialogues with women, men, community leaders and energy sector stakeholders on women's participation in energy access, employment, leadership and decision-making.
- Promote women's leadership and representation within energy committees, utility governance structures, renewable energy cooperatives and community energy initiatives.
- Engage men and boys to address harmful gender norms and reduce backlash associated with women's participation in energy-related employment, entrepreneurship and leadership.
- Support government agencies, utilities and private sector actors to integrate gender equality and GBV prevention into energy policies, regulations and investment frameworks.
- Partner with local women's organisations to promote women's influence over household and community energy decisions.
- Develop mentorship, technical training and recruitment initiatives that increase girls' and women's participation in technical, skilled and leadership roles within the clean energy sector.

Case study: Integrating GBV risk mitigation into an electric vehicle (EV) charging pilot in India

As India expands its electric mobility sector, concerns about safety can limit women's participation as EV drivers and reduce their access to the benefits of clean transport.[84] To better understand these barriers, UK PACT partnered with eDRV, BSES Yamuna Power Limited and the Council on Energy, Environment and Water to pilot a utility-led managed EV charging initiative.[85] The project sought to generate gender-disaggregated evidence on the e-mobility market and inform more inclusive clean energy policies and infrastructure planning.

Addressing GBV in practice

To better understand and respond to barriers faced by women EV drivers, the project:

- **Assessed women's EV charging needs through targeted stakeholder engagement**. By engaging charging point operators, fleet operators and women EV drivers, the project was able to identify the specific needs, experiences and safety concerns of women using EV charging infrastructure.
- **Collected gender-disaggregated evidence** on charging behaviours. In the absence of existing gender-disaggregated data, the project gathered evidence on women's participation in



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the e-mobility sector and how safety concerns affected women's charging behaviours. This included identifying that women were less likely to benefit from lower-cost overnight charging tariffs due to concerns about personal safety. Findings were used to inform gender-inclusive policy recommendations for utility companies, regulators, and central and state governments.

- **Identified how safety concerns affected women's access to clean energy services.** Research found that women's primary concern when using public charging stations was personal safety, while many also reported lacking the information and knowledge needed to feel confident entering the EV market.
- **Tested practical measures to improve women's access to EV charging points,** including establishing safe waiting areas and ensuring gender-balanced teams at pilot charging stations and during outreach activities.

Ideas for action: managing GBV risks in mining and critical minerals programmes

Mining and critical minerals projects can create economic opportunities and support the transition to a low-carbon economy. However, project activities may also create or exacerbate GBV risks if these are not identified and managed. Funders, programme managers and implementing partners could consider the following actions to address GBV risks in these contexts:

- **Integrate GBV into environmental and social risk assessments** during project design and implementation, alongside consideration of labour, community health and safety, and environmental risks.
- **Assess how project activities may increase risks of violence against women and girls**, including through changes to access to land, water, transport routes, livelihoods, or housing.
- **Work with local WROs and GBV specialists** to identify context-specific risks and develop appropriate mitigation measures.
- **Establish safe, accessible and survivor-centred grievance mechanisms** for workers, contractors and community members, with clear referral pathways to specialist support services.
- **Train project staff, contractors and security personnel** on safeguarding, prevention of SEAH and appropriate responses to disclosures.
- **Monitor GBV risks throughout the project lifecycle** and adapt mitigation measures as circumstances change.

Examples of potential GBV-related risks and responses

- **Water and natural resource impacts:** If mining activities affect access to water sources, women and girls may need to travel further to collect water, potentially increasing their exposure to harassment or violence. Projects could invest in community water infrastructure or support alternative water access arrangements to mitigate these risks.
- **Influx of workers:** The arrival of a predominantly male workforce can increase risks of sexual harassment, exploitation or intimate partner violence. Mitigation measures might include worker codes of conduct,

community engagement, awareness raising and strengthened reporting mechanisms.

- **Land acquisition and compensation processes:** Where land is registered in men's names, women may be excluded from compensation or decision-making. Projects can address this by promoting inclusive consultation processes and ensuring women have opportunities to participate in discussions about land and benefit sharing.
- **Employment and training initiatives:** Women entering traditionally male-dominated mining roles may face workplace harassment or backlash from colleagues or community members. Projects can establish anti-harassment policies, confidential reporting channels and targeted support for women workers.
- **Community decision-making and benefit sharing:** Women's participation in mining governance committees may be restricted by social norms or safety concerns. Projects can work with women's groups and community leaders to address barriers to participation and promote inclusive decision-making.

Addressing GBV risks can help mining and critical minerals programmes do no harm, strengthen community trust, improve women's participation in project activities and decision-making, and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable development outcomes.

Climate-smart infrastructure: How to address GBV through climate-smart infrastructure projects

Key takeaway: Women, particularly those facing intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion, cannot fully access, use or participate in climate-smart infrastructure if they face violence, harassment or unsafe conditions, undermining the effectiveness, inclusiveness and sustainability of climate investments. As a minimum standard, conduct GBV risk assessments and integrate safety and accountability measures, including safe design features, worker codes of conduct, accessible complaints mechanisms, and safe, inclusive participation of women and girls in project planning and implementation.

Why address GBV through climate-smart infrastructure projects

Addressing GBV is crucial for supporting women's meaningful participation in climate-smart infrastructure efforts, whether related to water systems, renewable energy, housing or public transport. Concerns about safety and the risk of violence in public spaces, transport systems and housing may deter women from accessing and benefitting from infrastructure services, undermining the effectiveness and inclusivity of these investments.

For example, in Bhopal, India, 88% of surveyed women commuters experienced harassment on public transport, with 40% experiencing it on a regular basis.[86] Such experiences can discourage women from using public transport, leading them to rely on private vehicles or limiting their mobility altogether by walking or avoiding travel. This not only restricts their access to opportunities but can also reduce the environmental benefits of green transport initiatives. Similarly, women may be less likely to pursue employment or training opportunities in climate-smart infrastructure if they perceive these spaces as unsafe.



Addressing GBV through climate-smart infrastructure can support safe participation and help create conditions for more equitable and durable development outcomes. While the evidence base establishing a direct causal link is still emerging, the likely benefits of addressing GBV are widely recognised by those working at this intersection. For example, efforts to address GBV can:

- **Support better project design and results** by enabling women to safely participate in planning, implementation and oversight of infrastructure investments, helping to ensure infrastructure solutions are more inclusive and responsive to community needs.[87]
- **Contribute to more effective and sustainable infrastructure** by ensuring women's needs, priorities, and local knowledge are reflected in design and maintenance.[88] This may contribute to greater use and long-term viability.
- **Increase equitable access to jobs and training** in infrastructure sectors by reducing barriers that limit women's participation in technical and skilled work across infrastructure sectors, including water infrastructure, housing and energy systems that support adaptation and resilience to climate impacts.[89]
- **Support access to climate-resilient services** by ensuring women can safely use services that support adaptation and resilience to climate impacts.[90]
- **Contribute to community resilience to climate impacts and stronger community ownership** by promoting more inclusive decision-making and shared responsibility for infrastructure management and use.[91]

How to address GBV through climate-smart infrastructure projects

There are a range of practical actions you can take to address GBV within climate-smart infrastructure programmes. Please refer to the **decision tree** in **Section 3: Climate and Environmental Programming** to identify the most appropriate approach for your programme, taking into account the available time, resources and operating context. You can then use the accompanying high-level guidance to identify practical actions for:

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GOOD PRACTICE

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+

GREATER AMBITION

Integrating GBV prevention approaches into climate-smart infrastructure projects

The boxes below highlight illustrative example activities that climate-smart infrastructure projects could consider for addressing GBV. This list is not exhaustive.

REMEMBER: Effective GBV activities should always be informed by meaningful consultation with local women, who are best placed to identify context-specific risks and solutions, and aligned with global best practice.

GBV RISK MITIGATION

- Develop a Gender Action Plan (GAP), including a SEAH Prevention and Response Action Plan, and a risk register with clear mitigation strategies and assigned responsibilities, with oversight from a gender specialist supported by independent monitoring.
- Conduct safety audits with women and girls from the earliest design phases of transport systems, public spaces, housing developments, water points and energy infrastructure to identify and address safety concerns.
- Integrate safety features into infrastructure design, such as adequate lighting, clear sightlines, accessible reporting mechanisms, gender-responsive sanitation facilities and safe transport access routes.
- Require contractors and workers to adhere to codes of conduct addressing GBV, sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, alongside clear accountability measures.
- Establish confidential and accessible complaints, feedback and grievance mechanisms for workers and community members affected by infrastructure projects.
- Schedule consultations, training activities, and community meetings at times and locations that are safe and accessible for women and girls.
- Develop women-only spaces, facilities or services where appropriate and locally supported, such as women-only transport carriages, to support safe uptake of climate-smart infrastructure.

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STRENGTHENING GBV RESPONSE

- Partner with local GBV service providers to ensure referral pathways are available and accessible in project areas, including remote infrastructure sites.
- Support access to local GBV response services by covering essential costs, such as transport to healthcare, psychosocial support, legal aid or other survivor support services.
- Train project staff, contractors, community facilitators, and relevant government partners on safe and ethical approaches to receiving and referring GBV disclosures.
- Use infrastructure service access points, such as community centres, transport hubs, or water user groups, to disseminate information about available GBV support services where safe and appropriate.
- Ensure project grievance mechanisms include survivor-centred procedures for responding to GBV-related complaints.
- Collaborate with local women's organisations as entry points for sharing information on local GBV support services.
- Partner with local women-led groups to train infrastructure workers, contractors and community representatives to identify and safely refer cases of GBV.
- Deliver awareness-raising activities on women's rights, reporting mechanisms and available GBV support services through infrastructure-related outreach, consultations and community engagement activities.

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GBV PREVENTION

- Facilitate community dialogues with women, men, community leaders, workers and local authorities on women's participation in infrastructure planning, employment, and governance.
- Partner with local women-led groups to support government agencies to integrate gender equality and GBV prevention into climate-smart infrastructure projects.
- Promote women's leadership and representation in infrastructure committees, water user associations, transport management bodies, housing committees, and energy governance structures.
- Engage men and boys to address harmful gender norms and reduce backlash associated with women's increased participation in infrastructure-related employment, training, land ownership and decision-making.
- Support government agencies, utilities, and infrastructure providers to integrate gender equality and GBV prevention into infrastructure policies, standards, and investment frameworks.
- Develop mentorship, training and recruitment initiatives that increase girls' and women's participation in technical, skilled and leadership roles within infrastructure sectors.

Case study: Addressing GBV through climate-resilient housing efforts in Pakistan

In the aftermath of the 2022 floods in Pakistan which damaged 1.8 million homes, the Government of Sindh partnered with the World Bank to launch the Sindh Floods Emergency Housing Reconstruction Project (SFEHRP).[92] This project supported owner-driven, climate-resilient housing reconstruction, recognising that women's participation is critical to disaster resilience and recovery through their local knowledge and community networks.

An initial project assessment rated Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) and Violence Against Children (VAC) risks as "substantial," posing a barrier to women's safe participation and community recovery. Flood-related displacement and economic stress had increased the risks of early and forced marriage and sexual violence. Additionally, women participating in training or receiving land titles as part of housing reconstruction support faced risks of male resistance and backlash. SEAH risks committed by construction workers were also identified, particularly where women and girls were living in damaged or temporary shelters. All risks were compounded by low literacy rates and limited awareness of women's rights, reporting mechanisms and GBV support services.

Addressing GBV in practice

To address these risks, the project developed a Gender Action Plan (GAP), including a SEAH Prevention and Response Action Plan, and a risk register with clear mitigation strategies and assigned responsibilities, with oversight from a gender specialist supported by independent monitoring. GBV risk mitigation measures included but were not limited to:

- **Supporting women at risk of backlash through community-based land adjudication processes** to demonstrate property entitlement where legal documentation was lost.
- **Raising awareness of the importance of women's land titleship** through policy dialogues and engagement with men and women from affected communities.
- **Including female trainers** in training efforts to improve women's skills in reconstruction and reduce the risk of backlash and violence by other participants and male trainers.
- **Organising flood-awareness sessions** for women in safe locations to ensure women could access life-saving information without risk of backlash.

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Case study: Promoting use of public transport by improving women's safety

Transport accounts for 37% of all emissions in Latin America, 27% of which comes from people using private cars.[93] Strengthening public transport systems could reduce the number of vehicles on the road and have a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions and air quality.

However, GBV remains a major barrier to its use. In some Latin American countries, up to 60% of women report experiencing sexual or physical violence while using public transport.[94] Making public transport safer for women could increase its use, reduce reliance on private cars and contribute to lower emissions.

Addressing GBV in practice

The Inter-American Development Bank's Transport Gender Lab (TGL) supports efforts to address GBV on public transport[95] across 11 Latin American cities through practical measures, including:

Mapping safety data on public transport networks for municipal authorities: In Bogotá, the SafetiPin mobile application maps how safe areas are using georeferenced data collected through the app.[96] This data includes photos from official night-time patrols and information shared by volunteer public transport users. This data informs a safety rating based on factors such as lighting, visibility and security presence, providing an evidence base for municipal authorities to target investments and programmes to improve women's safety across the public transport network.[97]

Strengthening reporting mechanisms and access to support: In Mexico City, the Vive Segura app enables users to report incidents, access emergency support through in-app alerts, and connect with legal and psychological services.[98] Safety points in transport stations[99] and emergency alert systems installed within transport spaces further strengthen response to incidents.[100] Emergency buttons allow passengers to alert the transport system, enabling transport police to trace the incident and apprehend the perpetrator. They can also be activated silently by drivers, notifying the Control Unit, which can track the vehicle and dispatch public security patrols to assist the victim-survivor.

Implementing awareness-raising campaigns: In Bogotá, campaigns delivered through social media and transport networks promote reporting mechanisms and challenge harassment and violence.[101]

Training transport staff to improve responses to harassment: In Mexico City, dedicated female personnel have been assigned to manage women-only spaces and respond to incidents of sexual violence.[102] In Buenos Aires, frontline staff receive training on legal frameworks, company policies, reporting pathways and how to respond appropriately to reports of GBV.[103] These sessions also encourage self-reflection on harmful behaviours.

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Improving infrastructure to strengthen safety: In Buenos Aires, expanded use of cameras and GPS tracking has improved monitoring across the network.[104] In Mexico City, women-only carriages have been introduced,[105] alongside upgrades to lighting, pathways and surveillance systems.

Climate-smart and sustainable agriculture: How to address GBV through climate-smart and sustainable agriculture programmes

Key takeaway: Women play a critical role in climate-smart and sustainable agriculture, but violence, harassment and backlash can prevent them from accessing training, resources, livelihood opportunities and decision-making processes, limiting the uptake and effectiveness of climate-resilient agricultural practices. These barriers are often compounded for women facing intersecting forms of discrimination, who may experience heightened risks and additional obstacles to participation. As a minimum standard, assess and mitigate GBV risks associated with project activities, including risks linked to women's participation, increased workloads, travel, income generation and access to resources, and establish safe and accountable mechanisms within agricultural groups, training activities and community programmes.

Why address GBV through climate-smart and sustainable agriculture

Women play a crucial role as drivers of change in sustainable agriculture, comprising 50% or more of the agricultural workforce across much of the Global South,[106] with women's participation rising to 76% in Sub-Saharan Africa.[107] Through their contributions to food production, natural resource management and community livelihoods, women play a vital role in strengthening food security, climate resilience, and ecosystem stewardship. However, GBV by intimate partners, community members, supervisors and co-workers across farms, plantations and agribusiness operations can prevent them from accessing training on climate-smart agricultural techniques, climate-resilient crop varieties, water management practices and sustainable livelihoods. A study in Ethiopia found that 86% of female horticultural workers had experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace, while research from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Nepal, and Tanzania indicates that intimate partner violence is widespread among smallholder farming households. [108]

Addressing GBV can help create conditions for stronger, more sustainable and more equitable environmental and economic outcomes. While the evidence base establishing a direct causal link is still emerging, the likely benefits of addressing GBV are widely recognised by those working at this intersection. For example, efforts to address GBV can:

- **Support project effectiveness and adoption of climate-smart practices** by enabling women to participate safely and meaningfully in agricultural training, farmer groups, decision-making processes, and on-farm activities.[109] This can help ensure that climate-smart technologies and practices are accessible to and adopted across farming households.
- **Contribute to agricultural productivity and sustainability** by ensuring women can safely access land, inputs, extension services, finance, and natural resource management opportunities.[110],[111] As women play a critical role in agricultural production, reducing barriers to their participation may improve farm performance and support more sustainable resource use.[112]
- **Help create conditions for greater uptake of climate adaptation and sustainable livelihoods** by reducing barriers that prevent women from accessing new agricultural opportunities, diversifying income sources, and adopting climate-resilient farming practices.[113]
- **Support inclusive natural resource management and positive environmental outcomes** by supporting women's participation in decisions related to land use, soil conservation, water management, agroforestry, and other climate-smart practices.[114] More inclusive decision-making may lead to more effective and sustainable management of natural resources.
- **Contribute to household resilience to climate and economic shocks by** promoting more equitable household decision-making around farming, income, resource use, and adaptation strategies.[115] Households that make decisions jointly are often better able to manage risks and respond to changing environmental conditions.
- **Reduce the risk of unintended negative consequences from agricultural interventions** by addressing potential backlash, conflict, or violence that can arise when livelihood opportunities, income, resources, or household roles change.[116] This can help ensure that project benefits are sustained and do not come at the expense of women's safety and wellbeing.

How to address GBV through climate-smart and sustainable agriculture

There are a range of practical actions you can take to address GBV within climate-smart and sustainable agriculture. Please refer to the **decision tree** in **Section 3: Climate and Environmental Programming** to identify the most appropriate approach for your programme, taking into account the available time, resources, and operating context. You can then use the accompanying high-level guidance to identify practical actions for:

MINIMUM STANDARD

Mitigating GBV risks associated with programme activities

+

GOOD PRACTICE

Strengthening GBV response services and referral pathways for survivors

+

GREATER AMBITION

Integrating GBV prevention approaches into climate-smart agriculture

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The boxes below highlight illustrative example activities that climate-smart agriculture projects could consider for addressing GBV. This list is not exhaustive.

REMEMBER: Effective GBV activities should always be informed by meaningful consultation with local women, who are best placed to identify context-specific risks and solutions, and aligned with global best practice.

GBV RISK MITIGATION

- Integrate analysis of GBV risks into project risk processes.
- Evaluate whether new climate-smart or regenerative practices increase women's labour burden, require travel to distant fields, or create situations where women may be exposed to harassment or violence.
- Select training and demonstration sites that can be reached safely without requiring women and girls to travel long distances or through isolated areas.
- Monitor whether project benefits or income opportunities are creating household conflict or backlash and adapt programming accordingly.
- Establish GBV codes of conduct for producer groups, savings groups, cooperatives, and farmer field schools.
- Engage with communities and local leaders to reduce backlash against women's participation in regenerative agriculture initiatives.

STRENGTHENING GBV RESPONSE

- Train agricultural extension workers and community facilitators on safe GBV referral. This can be integrated into existing training programmes.
- Include brief information on available GBV support services and reporting mechanisms during climate-smart agriculture trainings, particularly for women's groups and mixed-gender livelihood activities.
- Village savings and loans associations (VSLAs), farmer cooperatives, and producer groups can provide trusted spaces where women can access information about support services and referral pathways.
- Climate-smart agriculture projects often work in areas with limited service provision. Projects can coordinate with local service providers to conduct outreach visits to underserved communities or share information about mobile services and helplines.
- Where farmers receive information through SMS, WhatsApp, or digital advisory services, projects can include information on GBV helplines and support services alongside climate and agricultural messaging.

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GBV PREVENTION

- Pair climate-smart agriculture efforts with activities that address household power dynamics and promote joint decision-making, equitable control of income, and non-violent conflict resolution.
- Work with traditional leaders, local authorities and communities to address discriminatory practices that limit women's ownership, inheritance or use of land.
- Ensure access to resources such as water are equitably distributed, including to female-headed households.
- Ensure benefit-sharing mechanisms promote women's control over and access to project benefits.
- Facilitate participatory dialogues, theatre and storytelling to challenge norms around access to water, land ownership, resource control, and violence against women.

Case Study: Integrating GBV prevention into regenerative agriculture through social norms change in Colombia

Colombia's transition to sustainable and regenerative agricultural systems is constrained not only by technical and economic barriers, but also by entrenched social norms.[117] In rural areas, gender inequality and high levels of GBV undermine household stability, decision-making and community cohesion.[118] These dynamics limit the uptake of climate-resilient practices and the ability of households to adapt and innovate.

In response, the UK PACT programme, funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), partnered with environmental NGO Rare to integrate GBV prevention and a GEDSI approach into a regenerative agriculture programme in Colombia. Alongside technical agricultural training, the programme embedded GBV prevention through behavioural science, peer-to-peer learning, and community-led engagement,[119] recognising that resilient farming systems depend on healthy, gender-equitable household and community dynamics.

Addressing GBV in practice

The regenerative agriculture training modules were developed and delivered by Rare's social and behaviour change team, which included professionals with experience providing psychosocial support and case management for women affected by GBV, as well as experience collaborating with GBV specialist organisations. Municipal social development representatives served as co-facilitators during trainings, enhancing the contextual relevance of the modules.

The intervention followed a preventive, gender-transformative and community-based approach, engaging women, men and young people through workshops on positive masculinities, emotional management, shared household

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responsibilities and social norm change. Activities applied rights-based and 'do no harm' principles, ensuring safe, confidential and voluntary participation, while strengthening local GBV referral pathways.

Workshops linked GBV prevention to the programme's agricultural outcomes, highlighting how household dynamics directly influence productivity and resilience. For example, the programme:

- **Integrated training on emotional management for violence prevention alongside skills for conducting soil analysis and designing fertilisation plans**. Interactive, game-based learning helped participants navigate and resolve conflict in personal, productive and community settings. Linking agricultural training with emotional management and GBV awareness built the social foundations needed for resilient farming systems.
- **Explored the social, economic and productive value of unpaid care work in the context of sustainable and regenerative agriculture.** Participatory learning sessions and workshops enabled participants to reflect on the equitable distribution of these tasks and their direct relationship with the sustainability of productive agricultural systems.
- **Took a gradual, reflective learning approach to address resistance and discomfort when engaging communities on GBV.**[120] Discussions challenged deeply rooted beliefs and initially created discomfort. Framing change as a process of unlearning supported openness and sustained engagement over time.
- **Created safe spaces for dialogue to enable a shift from defensiveness to critical reflection on social norms**.[121] Structured discussions allowed participants to reflect on mental load and relationship dynamics, leading to greater recognition of behaviours that support both family well-being and productive outcomes. Creating safe spaces for gradual dialogue also reduced the risk of resistance and retraumatisation.
- **Provided ongoing follow-up through digital channels and farm visits**. This supported sustained behaviour change and practice adoption.[122] Monitoring indicates improvements in regenerative practices, more equitable distribution of unpaid work and strengthened social relations, with participants recognising the benefits for both productivity and well-being.
- **Offered continuous, personalised support from expert psychosocial teams to build trust and promote inclusivity.**[123] Psychosocial support teams facilitated conversations on GBV during workshops, group sessions and follow-up visits with farming households. They guided sensitive discussions on gender norms, power dynamics and family relationships with a 'do no harm' approach, ensuring confidentiality, voluntary participation and mitigated retraumatisation risks. Teams also adapted activities to participants' needs (e.g. reading support for participants with low literacy) and supported the identification of risks and referral pathways where required.
- **Engaged local leaders to build buy-in and sustainability for GBV prevention and the GEDSI approach.** Training municipal leaders on GBV, masculinities, GEDSI and referral pathways enabled them to co-facilitate training sessions alongside programme teams and promoted

formal agreements to integrate GBV prevention into local governance and resource allocation. Although competing government responsibilities sometimes slowed implementation, the ongoing engagement of local leaders sustained commitment and local ownership.

As one representative from Rare shared,

"I believe we've seen much stronger adoption of regenerative agriculture because we didn't just focus on the technical training. By tackling GBV and gender inequalities, more women were able to participate and apply what they learned. When both women and men have the knowledge and a voice in household decisions, families are better equipped to make choices that improve their livelihoods and build resilience over the long term."



Psychosocial support session, (Source: Rare)

Case Study: Addressing GBV to strengthen community resilience to climate change in Syria

Since 2020, prolonged drought and extreme heat, combined with conflict, political instability, infrastructure destruction and an economic crisis, have severely undermined agricultural livelihoods, food security and community resilience in Syria.[124] In response, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) launched the Building Local Resilience in Syria (BLRS) project to strengthen community resilience to climate shocks through sustainable agricultural livelihoods, irrigation systems to improve climate resilience, and early warning systems for climatic risk anticipation.

An initial gender analysis identified economic GBV by intimate partners and early marriage as major barriers to community resilience and women's participation in the project. It also found that climate change itself heightens GBV risks. In response, the project integrated GBV prevention and risk mitigation throughout its design and implementation. As one BLRS project lead explained, "We wanted to make sure that women could safely and sustainably access the BLRS support that we provided."

The Syria BLRS evaluation documented reductions in economic and emotional GBV. Such changes are likely to support the capacities that underpin climate resilience, including wellbeing, agency, and economic security, although wider climate resilience outcomes were not directly assessed by the evaluation.

Addressing GBV in practice

The project addressed GBV in a variety of ways, including the following:

- **Establishing strategic partnerships with GBV experts:** The project established a partnership with UNFPA to provide GBV response services and brought in technical assistance from the FCDO-funded VAWC Helpdesk to ensure the project was designed effectively and safely. Under the BLRS project, FAO Syria identified various protection related risks within the agri-food systems, with particular focus on GBV risks and the corresponding mitigation measures. This informed the FAO Syria Protection Risk Analysis (PRA) which also supported GBV risk mitigation under the BLRS project. Furthermore, capacity-building activities were delivered by the FAO Protection Specialist to enhance staff understanding and application of protection and GBV principles.
- **Establishing minimum standards on addressing GBV:** FAO, under the BLRS project, established five Gender Minimum Standards (GMSs) to embed gender considerations and GBV mainstreaming within all planning, execution, and evaluation processes.
- **Conducting GBV risk assessments for each project component and developing tailored approaches to mitigate these risks:** The project conducted quarterly GBV risk assessments and developed mitigation measures in collaboration with women, including those with disabilities. An accessible community feedback mechanism (CFM) was developed to

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ensure project participants could report instances of violence and seek support. Additionally, all facilitators and implementation teams were trained in GBV referral pathways to direct survivors to safe and accessible support services. Key GBV risk mitigation measures included the following:

- **The Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and climate-smart agriculture (CSA) component identified risks of backlash against women's participation.** As community-based learning platforms, FFS provided an entry point for promoting women's meaningful participation in agriculture, strengthening social cohesion, and addressing barriers linked to GBV**. To mitigate these risks, the programme:**
- **Built community buy-in:** Conducted sensitisation sessions with community leaders and male household members to highlight the benefits of women's participation for household and community resilience, creating space for dialogue and questions.
- **Increased female facilitation:** Ensured 30-40% of FFS facilitators were women, helping create safer and more accessible learning environments.
- **Reduced care-related barriers:** Set up childcare support so women could attend FFS training without risking accusations of neglect that could lead to violence.
- **Designed safe livelihoods interventions:** Worked with women to identify the skills and agricultural livelihoods that they felt safest engaging in.
- **The irrigation component of the project identified risks of GBV linked to water access and rights. To mitigate these risks, the project:**
- **Promoted equitable water access**: Trained local water user associations (WUAs) on equitable water governance to ensure fair access for women, men, people with disabilities (PWDs), and diverse social groups, strengthening social cohesion and minimising conflict.
- **Dedicated support to female-headed households:** Provided rainwater harvesting to support households (50% of which were female-headed) with food production and income generation. This aimed to build resilience and reduce reliance on harmful coping strategies that increase GBV risks and expose women to risks of exploitation.
- **Trained government institutions:** The FAO Water Team under BLRS trained the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Energy on gender mainstreaming, GBV and addressing SEAH.
- **Establishing a multi-level GBV prevention and response approach under VAWG pilots in three governorates:** In addition to GBV risk mitigation, the project implemented a dedicated GBV prevention strategy across community and household levels, and the strategy was designed and implemented by GBV specialists.
- **At the community level,** the project conducted community sensitisation through Dimitra Clubs using gender-transformative approaches. This included engaging young men and adolescent boys and working with families around child marriage. The project also engaged local leaders, opinion leaders and influencers, including the Ministry of Agriculture, to build understanding of how tackling GBV helps strengthen community resilience.
- **At the household level,** the GBV specialists delivered an adaptation of the International Rescue Committee formulated Economic and Social Empowerment (EA$E) discussion series. Through participatory

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modules, the curriculum challenges harmful social norms and promotes communication, joint decision-making and non-violent conflict resolution at the household level. It was framed around strengthening healthy household dynamics to boost agricultural productivity.

Reflecting on the GBV components, a BLRS lead explained,

"We have seen through the Syria case that intentionally integrating GBV and social empowerment is crucial because it builds more long-lasting community resilience."



FAO VAWG prevention activities in rural Damascus discussing the impact of climate change as one of the common challenges affecting the community. (Source: FAO Syria).

Conservation and reforestation: How to address GBV through conservation and reforestation initiatives

KEY TAKEAWAY: Women are critical stewards of forests, land and natural resources, but violence, safety concerns and unequal power dynamics can prevent them from participating in conservation, reforestation and nature-based solutions, undermining environmental outcomes. These barriers can be particularly severe for Indigenous women and other individuals facing intersecting forms of discrimination, who may face additional obstacles to accessing natural resources, participating in governance processes and influencing decision-making. As a minimum standard, assess and mitigate GBV risks linked to resource access, land and tenure arrangements, conservation livelihoods, restoration activities and governance structures, and establish safe, accessible and gender-responsive participation and grievance mechanisms.

Why address GBV through conservation and reforestation

Nature-based solutions (NbS), including through conservation and reforestation, are an important part of climate action, with studies estimating that they could provide 30% of the cost-effective mitigation needed to stabilise warming to below 2°C by 2030.[125] Women's participation in these efforts is crucial to their effectiveness.[126] The Vietnam Women's Union supported local women to plant and restore mangroves as natural sea defences, helping to protect productive soil and conserve shrinking mangrove ecosystems.[127] The initiative resulted in the planting of over 12,000 mangrove seedlings around Southeast Asia's largest lagoon,[128] leading to an estimated $2.30 return for every $1 invested.[129] Further, a survey of 440 forest users in Indonesia, Peru and Tanzania found that when at least half of decision-makers were women, more trees were conserved.[130] In South Africa, the unarmed Black Mambas women-only ranger group used a peace-based enforcement approach, achieving a 76% reduction in rhino poaching between 2013-2016.[131]

Women are critical stewards of natural resources but GBV from intimate partners and community members risks preventing their uptake of sustainable livelihoods, silencing their voices in decision-making, and excluding them from jobs in conservation and restoration efforts. For example, 42% of women surveyed in Cambodia and Laos cited safety concerns as the greatest barrier to their participation in natural resource management.[132]



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Addressing GBV can support more effective and equitable conservation outcomes. While the evidence base establishing a direct causal link is still emerging, the likely benefits of addressing GBV are widely recognised by those working at this intersection.[133] For example, efforts to address GBV can:

- **Support locally led and contextually relevant conservation efforts** by reducing barriers that prevent women from safely participating in programme design, implementation, and governance.[134] This is particularly important given the significant role that women, including informal workers, often play in natural resource management and conservation activities.
- **Encourage uptake of sustainable livelihoods and conservation practices** by enabling women to safely access training, resources, and economic opportunities related to conservation, restoration, and climate-smart livelihoods.[135] This may increase household uptake of sustainable alternatives and reduce reliance on environmentally harmful practices.
- **Strengthen natural resource governance and stewardship** by supporting the meaningful participation of women in decision-making on land, forests, and natural resources, leading to more inclusive and effective management of conservation initiatives.[136]
- **Contribute to household resilience to climate and environmental shocks** by fostering more equitable household decision-making and resource management, potentially enabling families to respond more effectively to livelihood and climate-related stresses.[137]
- **Reduce the risk of unintended harm from conservation interventions**[138] by identifying and addressing ways in which changes to land use, resource access, employment, or benefit-sharing could increase vulnerability to violence and undermine project outcomes.

Conservation, reforestation and GBV prevention: Many conservation initiatives rely on sustained behaviour change, whether reducing unsustainable resource use, improving natural resource management, or encouraging the adoption of sustainable livelihoods. Because these efforts already use approaches that seek to influence attitudes, behaviours, and social norms, they can provide a natural platform for integrating GBV prevention activities. Conservation and restoration programmes, particularly those lasting two years or more, are often well placed to address the harmful gender norms and power imbalances that drive violence which undermines women's participation in projects and their environmental objectives.

How to address GBV through conservation and reforestation

There are a range of practical actions you can take to address GBV within conservation and reforestation programmes. Please refer to the **decision tree** in **Section 3: Climate and Environmental Programming** to identify the most appropriate approach for your programme, taking into account the available time, resources, and operating context. You can then use the accompanying high-level guidance to identify practical actions for:

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MINIMUM STANDARD	GOOD PRACTICE	GREATER AMBITION
Mitigating GBV risks associated with programme activities	+ **Strengthening GBV response services and referral pathways** for survivors	+ **Integrating GBV prevention approaches** into conservation and reforestation

The boxes below highlight illustrative example activities that conservation and reforestation projects could consider for addressing GBV. This list is not exhaustive.

REMEMBER: Effective GBV activities should always be informed by meaningful consultation with local women, who are best placed to identify context-specific risks and solutions, and aligned with global best practice.

REMEMBER: Indigenous peoples play a key role in protecting their territories and forests, drawing on knowledge, practices and Indigenous governance systems developed and passed down through generations. Strengthening Indigenous governance systems and supporting the effective participation of Indigenous women can help ensure climate interventions are locally grounded, culturally appropriate, and responsive to barriers, including GBV, that limit women's participation and influence in environmental decision-making.

For example, in the Guaraní autonomous territory of Charagua Iyambae, Bolivia, Indigenous women hold important knowledge of forest resources, food security, traditional medicines and ecosystem management through their roles in gathering, processing and caring for natural resources, particularly the cupesi fruit. However, despite formal opportunities for participation, restrictive gender norms and male-dominated environmental decision-making spaces have limited their influence. To address this, Fundación Natura Bolivia is working with the local Indigenous governance institutions to strengthen women's leadership and representation, while supporting women's advocacy for legal protections for the cupesi tree, a key forest resource linked to women's livelihoods and knowledge. This has contributed to a gender-responsive environmental governance framework, the Charagua Iyambae Statute, which calls for gender parity in regional governance bodies and women's leadership in local political spaces.

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GBV RISK MITIGATION

- Conduct GBV risk assessments and safety audits to identify risks associated with resource access, land tenure, restoration activities and participation in conservation governance. Where appropriate, use participatory or community-led approaches.
- Assess how women, girls and Indigenous peoples access and use natural resources, and design restoration and carbon activities to avoid restricting access to essential resources, which could increase travel distances and exposure to violence.
- Engage with local communities to reduce backlash against efforts to increase women's representation in forest committees, restoration committees, and governance structures.
- Integrate GBV safeguards into environmental and social management plans and third-party certification processes.
- Avoid unnecessary labour influx by hiring tree planters, foresters and conservation technicians locally wherever possible.
- Conduct gender-sensitive land tenure assessments before site selection and establish gender-sensitive grievance mechanisms for disputes over land, inheritance and resource rights.
- Create women-only spaces to support women's participation and access to restoration-related livelihoods such as seed collection, nursery management, agroforestry and monitoring.

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STRENGTHENING GBV RESPONSE

- Coordinate with local GBV service providers to improve outreach to rural and forest communities.
- Support mobile services or periodic outreach visits in isolated project areas.
- Disseminate information on local helplines and support services at nurseries and planting sites or as part of sustainable livelihoods packages for women.

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GBV PREVENTION

- Pair sustainable livelihoods, agroforestry, or restoration activities with activities that address household power dynamics and promote joint decision-making, equitable control of income, and non-violent conflict resolution.
- Support women's collectives, producer groups or cooperatives linked to restoration and natural resource management.
- Work with traditional leaders, local authorities and communities to address discriminatory practices that limit women's ownership, inheritance or use of land.

- Ensure benefit-sharing mechanisms promote women's control over and access to project benefits.
- Facilitate participatory dialogues, theatre and storytelling to challenge norms around land ownership, resource control, and violence against women.
- Disseminate information on local helplines and support services at nurseries and planting sites or as part of sustainable livelihoods packages for women.

Case Study: Addressing GBV to enable women's sustained participation in alternative livelihoods that support wetland restoration in Uganda

Wetlands are important carbon sinks that help store carbon and protect the environment by storing floodwater, improving water quality, and providing homes for wildlife, among other benefits. In response to rising temperatures and fluctuating rainfall due to climate change, a 2019 wetland restoration programme in Eastern Uganda tried to preserve the wetlands by encouraging women farming on the land to find alternative sustainable livelihoods. These included giving women livestock and helping them connect with local landowners who could rent them land.

However, gender inequalities and GBV limited women's ability to engage in the intervention. Some husbands forcefully took livestock from women, while some landowners abused women working on their land. Feeling unsafe, many women returned to farming the wetlands to safely grow food for their families. The programme unintentionally harmed women, broke community trust, and failed to stop the farming that was damaging the wetlands. Addressing GBV from the outset could have helped protect both women and the wetlands.

Building on these lessons, in 2024 the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP) partnered with the Ministry of Water & Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, and Pallisa District Government to develop a 3.5-year GBV prevention intervention to complement wetlands restoration in Uganda and improve women's uptake of sustainable livelihoods. This is funded by the UK Government through the What Works II initiative.

Addressing GBV in practice

The programme's efforts to address GBV included the following:

- **Household-level discussion series:** The project works with intimate partners at the household level to promote equitable decision-making around sustainable livelihoods, income and resource use. By improving communication and shared decision-making, households are better equipped to manage climate and environmental stresses linked to wetland restoration, reducing tensions that can contribute to violence against women.

- **Community-level discussions:** The project trains male and female community activists to lead GBV prevention activities, challenge harmful norms, and encourage women's participation in climate resilience and wetland restoration initiatives. Awareness raising activities reached more than 6,200 people, strengthening understanding of the links between GBV, climate change, and environmental pressures. Discussions highlighted how drought, declining agricultural yields, wetland access restrictions, and income insecurity can fuel household conflict and violence, building support for gender-equitable and climate-resilient responses.
- **Capacity strengthening for climate and GBV stakeholders:** Building senior climate stakeholders' understanding of the links between GBV and climate has been key to gaining support for the intervention. Training and evidence generated through the project have increased government commitment to institutionalising GBV-responsive approaches, creating a foundation for scaling this model across wetland restoration initiatives in Uganda. At the same time, helping GBV experts understand the nature of conservation has allowed the prevention approach to be better adapted to the environmental context.
- **Strengthening referral pathways:** In addition, training for referral network members improved survivor-centred support and strengthened local systems for responding to GBV. Participants enhanced cross-referral mechanisms, challenged survivor-blaming attitudes, and improved case management practices, helping ensure that women affected by violence can access appropriate support while participating in community development and wetland restoration activities.
- **Monitoring, evaluation and learning to strengthen quality programming and support scale up.** Makerere University and the Equality Institute are evaluating the approach using a quasi-experimental approach to assess changes in social norms, knowledge, attitudes and practices related to GBV and climate at the community and institutional levels. Evaluating GBV prevention interventions linked to conservation helps generate evidence showing the benefits of addressing GBV in these contexts, which can inform and improve future programmes and support scaling up. Ongoing monitoring and learning also allow the intervention to adapt in real time based on what is working.

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"Integrating GBV prevention into wetland restoration is important for Pallisa. Environmental recovery cannot be sustainable if it ignores the safety, rights, and wellbeing of the people who depend on wetlands. As climate change and degradation strain household resources, women and girls face heightened risks of violence and exploitation. By making restoration gender responsive and guided by 'do no harm,' we protect vulnerable groups, strengthen women's participation in decision-making, and ensure wetlands deliver lasting benefits for the whole community."

District Natural Resource Officer, Pallisa District

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"As we restore wetlands, let us also restore dignity by integrating GBV prevention into every decision and action. This is not a departmental task but a ministry-wide responsibility. I pledge to engage senior management so that these skills reach the highest levels of leadership, ensuring GBV integration becomes central to our mission."

Commissioner for the Wetland and Environmental Protection Department, Ministry of Water and the Environment



Women and men engage in GBV prevention workshop focused on shared decision-making, non-violence, and positive communication. (Source: CEDOVIP)

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Case Study: Addressing GBV to promote inclusive forest management, DRC

Tanganyika Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) faces significant environmental degradation driven by conflict over land, agriculture, pastoralism, and access to natural resources. Many of the lands and forests in the programme area are managed by Indigenous communities, whose livelihoods depend heavily on sustainable access to forests, forage, cultivation areas, and agroforestry systems.

Tearfund, in partnership with Congo Initiative and the Initiative des Femmes Entrepreneurs pour le Développement Durable (IFEDD), seeks to strengthen the sustainable and equitable management of land and forest resources through the IUCN RISE Grants Challenge, funded by NORAD.

This programme aims to promote sustainable land and forest management among Indigenous communities, reduce environmental degradation driven by unsustainable agricultural and pastoral practices, strengthen community governance systems to reduce conflict over natural resources, and support agroforestry to enhance biodiversity and strengthen community resilience. It recognises that women play a critical role in agriculture, forest management, and natural resource stewardship, yet discriminatory social norms and GBV often limit their access to land, leadership positions, and community decision-making structures.

Addressing GBV is critical to achieving the programme's goals because it enables women's full and meaningful participation in these efforts.

Addressing GBV in practice:

The programme integrates GBV risk mitigation into its climate and natural resource management activities through a community-led approach supported by GBV specialists and local partners.

- **Community-led GBV risk assessments:** The programme conducts comprehensive GBV risk assessments to identify how women, girls and other vulnerable groups may be exposed to violence while accessing natural resources. This analysis includes identifying how climate change exacerbates existing gender vulnerabilities, as shifts in gender roles, such as the need to travel further for water or firewood due to environmental stress, can significantly increase exposure to violence.
- **Safety audits and community perception mapping:** The programme conducts consultations with women and girls, including those with disabilities, and men and boys from Indigenous communities to identify where people feel unsafe. This could include forest areas, water points, pathways, and markets.
- **Community-owned risk mitigation plans:** The programme works with communities to co-design practical mitigation plans based on GBV risk assessments and safety audits. These could include installation of solar lighting along high-risk pathways, improvements to water access points to reduce travel distances, or other locally identified measures to reduce risks of GBV.

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- **Strengthening inclusive leadership and governance systems:** The programme is also working with local leaders and officials to ensure that GBV considerations are integrated into natural resource governance. This includes training community leaders on GBV risk mitigation within forest management and advocating for women's greater participation within these governance systems.

The programme adopts Tearfund's Transforming Masculinities approach as a foundational element for addressing the social norms that drive both environmental inequality and GBV. By integrating this approach, the programme demonstrates a commitment to long-term systemic change, using insights from community assessments to tackle the underlying drivers of inequality and violence.

By reducing GBV risks and addressing barriers to women's participation, the programme seeks to create more inclusive systems of environmental governance. When women are able to participate safely and meaningfully in decision-making processes and leadership, communities can benefit from their knowledge, experience, and leadership in managing natural resources.

"We know that GBV has a detrimental impact on the lives and livelihoods of women and girls. It also has a wider impact on their ability to participate in forest governance. This project is essential in order to mitigate risks for women and girls and work together for a sustainable protection of the environment."

Poppy Anguandia, DRC Country Director, Tearfund



Participants gather for the project launch in Kalemie, Tanganyika. (Source: Tearfund)

Disaster risk reduction: How to address GBV through disaster risk reduction efforts

KEY TAKEAWAY: Climate-related disasters can increase GBV risks, while GBV can prevent women from participating in disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts, undermining community resilience. These risks and barriers are often heightened for Indigenous women and other individuals facing intersecting forms of discrimination, who may face additional challenges accessing information, services, decision-making processes and support during disasters. As a minimum standard, assess and mitigate GBV risks across disaster planning, evacuation, shelter, relief distribution and early warning systems, and establish safe, accessible complaints mechanisms and referral pathways before disasters occur.



Why address GBV through disaster risk reduction projects

Addressing GBV through disaster risk reduction efforts is essential to ensuring that climate-related disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM) keep whole communities safe and do no harm. Climate-induced disasters increase the risk of GBV,[139] while GBV may prevent women from engaging in disaster preparedness activities due to injury, stigma and risk of backlash.[140]

Women often hold valuable knowledge about local risks, natural resources, community networks and household coping strategies that can strengthen disaster preparedness and resilience.[141] Yet women are often excluded from disaster planning and decision-making processes.

A 2024 Australian study also found that, for every $1 invested in women's participation in disaster risk management and climate action, there is a corresponding benefit of $4.40.[142]

Addressing GBV through DRR and DRM projects can contribute to stronger, more resilient approaches to climate disasters. While the evidence base establishing a direct causal link is still emerging, the likely benefits of addressing GBV are widely recognised by those working at this intersection. For example, efforts to address GBV can:

- **Enable women and girls, including GBV survivors, to engage in disaster preparedness and response activities**, ensuring they can access the skills and resources needed to keep themselves, their families and wider communities safe during disasters.[143]

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- **Contribute to more inclusive disaster preparedness and planning** by ensuring women's perspectives, needs and local knowledge are incorporated into risk assessments, contingency planning and early warning systems.[144]
- **Strengthen access to life-saving services during emergencies** by maintaining referral pathways, information sharing and support services for GBV survivors before, during and after disasters.[145]
- **Support the safety and effectiveness of emergency response efforts**[146] by integrating GBV considerations into evacuation procedures, shelters, relief distribution systems and disas`ter response mechanisms, including ensuring that women and girls can safely access shelters, food distribution points and evacuation transport.
- **Contribute to community resilience to climate-related shocks** by supporting inclusive decision-making and ensuring all community members can contribute to preparedness, response and recovery efforts.[147]
- **Support more effective recovery and adaptation** by reducing barriers that prevent women from accessing assistance, rebuilding livelihoods and participating in long-term resilience-building initiatives.[148]

How to address GBV through disaster risk reduction projects

There are a range of practical actions you can take to address GBV within disaster risk reduction work. Please refer to the **decision tree** in **Section 3: Climate and Environmental Programming** to identify the most appropriate approach for your programme, taking into account the available time, resources and operating context. You can then use the accompanying high-level guidance to identify practical actions for:

MINIMUM STANDARD	+	GOOD PRACTICE	+	GREATER AMBITION
Mitigating GBV risks associated with programme activities		**Strengthening GBV response services and referral pathways** for survivors		**Integrating GBV prevention approaches** into disaster risk reduction

The boxes on the following page highlight illustrative example activities that disaster risk reduction projects could consider for addressing GBV. This list is not exhaustive.

REMEMBER: Effective GBV activities should always be informed by meaningful consultation with local women, who are best placed to identify context-specific risks and solutions, and aligned with global best practice.

GBV RISK MITIGATION

- Conduct gender-sensitive risk and needs assessments that directly consult women and girls from local communities and identify GBV-related risks during preparedness, response and recovery planning.
- Integrate GBV considerations into evacuation plans, shelters, relief distribution systems and early warning mechanisms to ensure women and girls can access services safely.
- Establish confidential and accessible complaints, feedback and grievance mechanisms that remain operational during disasters and emergencies.
- Include GBV risk mitigation measures within disaster preparedness exercises, simulations, contingency planning processes and post-simulation exercise reviews.
- Ensure women and girls have access to safe spaces during and after disasters where they can access information, support and referral services.
- Recruit and support female staff, volunteers and community focal points to increase women's safe participation in preparedness and response activities.

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STRENGTHENING GBV RESPONSE

- Partner with local GBV service providers to map and strengthen referral pathways before disasters occur, ensuring services remain accessible during emergencies.
- Support access to GBV response services by covering essential costs such as transport to healthcare, psychosocial support, legal assistance, shelter and other survivor services.
- Train disaster response teams, community volunteers and relevant government partners on safe and ethical approaches to receiving and referring GBV disclosures.
- Establish or strengthen safe spaces that can provide psychosocial support, information and referral services for survivors during crises.
- Disseminate information on available GBV support services and referral pathways through disaster preparedness activities, shelters, community networks and early warning communication channels.
- Work with local women's organisations and community groups to identify survivors who may require support and facilitate safe access to services.

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GBV PREVENTION

- Facilitate community dialogues with women, men, community leaders and disaster management actors on GBV risks during climate-related disasters and the importance of women's participation in DRR.

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- Promote the leadership and meaningful participation of women, particularly from Indigenous communities, within disaster management committees, preparedness planning processes and community resilience initiatives.
- Engage men, boys and community leaders to challenge harmful gender norms and reduce backlash associated with women's participation in disaster preparedness, response and recovery activities.
- Support government agencies and disaster management authorities to integrate GBV prevention and gender-responsive approaches into DRR policies, plans and systems.
- Partner with local women's organisations to strengthen community-based protection networks and women's participation in disaster governance and climate adaptation.
- Conduct awareness-raising activities on women's rights, GBV risks and available support services before, during and after disasters.

Case study: Indigenous women's solidarity networks strengthening GBV response in disaster risk reduction efforts in the Philippines

The Philippines was ranked the most disaster-prone country globally in 2024.[149] Indigenous women are disproportionately impacted by these disasters, including facing increased risks of GBV. Despite this, they are often excluded from DRR preparedness and response efforts, leaving them more vulnerable during disasters and less able to keep themselves and their families safe.

The Equality Fund supports LILAK Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights to strengthen Indigenous women's participation in the DRR space. LILAK's work shows that Indigenous women hold vital knowledge that can strengthen disaster anticipation, response and recovery systems and ensure that whole communities remain safe in the face of climate-induced disasters.

Addressing GBV in practice

Through the BABAYEnihan Women-to-Women Solidarity programme, LILAK integrates GBV into climate-induced disaster preparedness and response by:

- **Ensuring Indigenous women are consulted during rapid and comprehensive needs assessments:** Needs assessments often engage the 'head-of-household,' typically assumed to be male. Consulting Indigenous women during these assessments helps identify gendered risks including those related to GBV. It also helps identify risks faced by other members of the community beyond the immediate family.
- **Including Indigenous women in DRR preparedness and planning.** LILAK engages Indigenous women in DRR planning efforts to review plans and map individual and community needs. This has revealed critical gaps in emergency packs, which excluded essential items for women such as

dignity kits, 'VAW desks' (local mechanisms through which people can submit complaints and seek redress for VAW) and information related to GBV response services. Women identified that dignity kits should include menstrual supplies and hygiene, and a malong, a traditional cloth used by Indigenous women that can help provide privacy in shared sleeping and sanitation spaces.

- **Mapping support and services for GBV survivors:** To address gaps in services, LILAK established the "Web of Care", a support and protection mechanism that maps organisations and government agencies responsible for GBV response and shares this information with survivors. It also identifies networks at local and national levels that can be mobilised quickly following disasters for support.
- **Training environmental human rights defenders to provide support to GBV survivors:** LILAK also builds the capacity of environmental human rights defenders on GBV response during disasters. This helps them to signpost GBV survivors to healthcare and psychosocial support services and to accompany them in accessing justice. Training includes documenting cases of violence, supporting reporting at police stations, preparing legal complaints and connecting survivors with lawyers and survivor support services.
- **Establishing safe spaces for survivors to access services and raise awareness of GBV:** Following Typhoon Paeng, LILAK facilitated the establishment of community kitchens near shelters where women could prepare food and herbal medicines. These kitchens became safe spaces where women could speak openly about their experiences of violence and be referred to GBV support services. LILAK's teams of environmental human rights defenders also used these spaces to monitor and document GBV. For example, they shared anonymous cases with media outlets to highlight the impact of GBV on women facing climate-induced disasters and the need for more dedicated protection and support services.
- **Training Indigenous young women as community journalists through the programme UMALOHOKAN:** Media coverage of typhoons and disasters can overlook the underlying factors that make Indigenous women and their communities particularly vulnerable. Following Typhoon Paeng in 2022, UMALOHOKAN helped bring national attention to the displacement of Indigenous communities from their ancestral lands to make way for resort developments, forcing many to settle in flood-prone areas. Their reporting prompted a Senate investigation. Although the investigation was subsequently halted and community leaders, including Indigenous women journalists, faced threats and harassment, they have continued their advocacy. Through documenting and sharing these experiences, they draw attention to systemic inequalities and strengthen calls for more inclusive, Indigenous women-led, gender-responsive disaster preparedness and response efforts, including measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence during disasters.

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Case Study: Supporting communities at risk of flooding in Cambodia by integrating GBV into DRR efforts

Oxfam in Cambodia supports communities to manage water resources near flood-prone waterways along the Mekong River basin.[150] As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen community resilience to flood risks, the programme supported a comprehensive DRR simulation exercise in Kratie province. This exercise, led by Oxfam in collaboration with local authorities, NGOs and community groups, aimed to enhance the capacity of local communities to effectively respond to and manage the risks associated with flooding.

Addressing GBV in practice

The programme integrated GBV into this exercise through a variety of activities:

- **Simulation scenarios and role-playing of realistic disaster scenarios**: The programme brought community members together to plan and rehearse responses to flooding emergencies. As part of this process, community groups mapped nearby GBV response services, established referral pathways for survivors, and identified responsible groups to provide initial support and first aid until survivors could access formal services.
- **Setting up gender-sensitive evacuation facilities**: This included establishing temporary shelters with facilities designed to ensure the safety and privacy of women and girls.
- **Community mobilisation and awareness:** The programme conducted awareness raising on disaster preparedness and GBV services, with a focus on educating women and girls about their rights.
- **Gender-sensitive training and capacity building**: The programme trained local disaster response teams to address gender-specific needs, including providing interim support to GBV survivors, during emergencies.
- **Hosting feedback and evaluation sessions to assess the exercise's effectiveness:** Gathering feedback enabled the programme to incorporate inputs from participants to refine the disaster response plan and improve future efforts.

Lessons highlighted that integrating GBV considerations into these efforts:

- **Improved awareness and preparedness**. Community members, especially women and girls, reported a better understanding of disaster risks and the steps they can take to protect themselves and their families.
- **Enhanced capacity to address GBV.** The exercise strengthened the capacity of local disaster response teams to recognise and respond to GBV during disasters, contributing to a safer environment for women and girls.
- **Increased participation of women in disaster risk management (DRM) planning**. Women's active involvement in the exercise demonstrated their critical role in disaster management and the importance of their inclusion in decision-making processes.
- **Strengthened community resilience.** By incorporating gender and GBV considerations into the DRM simulation, the exercise contributed to building a more resilient community that is better equipped to handle the challenges posed by climate-induced disasters.

Case study: Embedding GBV risk mitigation and response in UNFPA Zimbabwe's drought response

In Zimbabwe, increasingly erratic rainfall patterns linked to El Niño[151] have contributed to more frequent and severe droughts.[152] Zimbabwean authorities declared a nationwide state of disaster due to severe impacts on production, food security, nutrition, education and access to drinking water.[153] These pressures have been compounded by economic and public health challenges, with women, young people and the elderly disproportionately affected.

Drought conditions also heighten the risk of child marriage and GBV, driven by factors such as increased distances travelled to access water, loss of livelihoods and rising household stress linked to resource scarcity.

With support from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), UNFPA Zimbabwe integrated GBV and SEAH risk mitigation and response into the broader humanitarian drought response, using a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach adapted to eight district-level contexts.

Addressing GBV in practice

The programme prioritised strengthening **community-based GBV and SEAH risk mitigation**. A network of 46 safe spaces was established, reaching approximately 300,000 women and girls. These spaces provided psychosocial support alongside integrated empowerment activities, recognising the link between financial vulnerability and exposure to GBV.

To address critical barriers to accessing services, particularly transport constraints, UNFPA introduced a **mobile shuttle system**. This initiative, led by trained counsellors, enabled survivors to access multi-sectoral support, including health, legal and shelter services, while also providing follow-up care and referrals. This approach significantly expanded access to live-saving services in remote and underserved areas.

The programme also updated and strengthened **GBV referral pathways**, improving coordination and ensuring more effective access to key services for survivors.

Capacity building formed a central component of the response. UNFPA delivered training on GBV and SEAH risk mitigation to actors across sectors, including food and nutrition, livelihoods, education and WASH. This supported the mainstreaming of GBV across the humanitarian response.

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Community-level awareness-raising further reinforced these efforts. Targeted information campaigns disseminated through community sessions, farmer field schools and text message notifications sent to the mobile phones of farmers increased awareness of GBV risks, available services and referral pathways. Collaboration with FAO enabled GBV messaging to be embedded across climate and agricultural programming.



Participants in a workshop to understand what GBV services are available during emergencies. (Source: UNFPA Zimbabwe)

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