

# Mainstreaming Gender Equality for Climate Resilience and Water Security:

Addressing gender gaps and challenges through  
gender transformative approaches.



# Introduction

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Eswatini is experiencing adverse climate change impacts. These climate variabilities have exposed the vulnerability of key sectors such as water, agriculture, health, energy, biodiversity, and ecosystems. The adverse impacts continue to overburden the poorest and most vulnerable groups of our population in particular rural women. Women are commonly responsible for household care roles that include sourcing and producing food, collecting water, and gathering wood for cooking and heating. With climate change, such gender roles and tasks are becoming more difficult while exposing women and girls to greater risks. Addressing existing gender inequalities between men and women has great potential to build resilience and leading to sustainable practices at community level. Integrating gender considerations through understanding and considering differing needs, priorities, access to resources, roles, power and engaging women and men equally at all levels of climate planning and implementation can ensure more effective mitigation and adaptation outcomes and ensure that women and men have equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from climate action.

Eswatini through the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs (MTEA) as the National Designated Authority (NDA) to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is committed to mainstreaming gender equality in its climate change programming and project pipeline to address existing gender gaps (inequalities, discrimination,

stereotypes) in Eswatini. The MTEA working with the Joint River Basin Authorities – Project Board (JRBA-PB) and technical assistance from the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWPSA) through a GCF funded readiness project conducted a Gender Analysis Study that is an equivalent of a gap study of gender mainstreaming in climate change and water security sectors. This study further informed the development of a Gender Action Framework (GAF) for Eswatini which aims to ensure that advanced and prioritised project ideas included in the country's project pipeline addresses gender related concerns and proactively promotes gender equality. The GAF further aims at building the capacity of the NDA and implementing partners to effectively mainstreaming gender equality and women empowerment in the climate action programme and project lifecycle. The process included conducting various stakeholder consultations and interviews with different stakeholders from government, non-government, Civil Service Organisations (CSO) and other gender related groups.

This technical brief presents an overview of gender gaps in Eswatini relating to climate change and water security. It further outlines relevant actions in addressing the identified gender gaps and institutional capacity building interventions which the MTEA and relevant stakeholders can adopt to ensure gender balance in climate resilience.



# Key Messages

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Key government stakeholders through the Department of Gender and Family Issues (GFI) under the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO) should facilitate gender mainstreaming in all sectors to ensure change in personal attitudes, practices, and institutional norms and culture.



Gender responsive planning and budgeting needs to be integrated within government, academia, private sector, and NGOs to ensure equitable participation and realisations of equal benefits from climate related interventions between men and women.



Gender equality is critical for ensuring sustainable water security and for building climate resilience by all. There is need for revision of legislation, policies, strategies, and programmes to promote gender equality interventions in climate change and water security.



Integration of Science, Technology, and Innovation programmes by delivery partner agencies to ensure women participation through adoption of women friendly technologies.



Mandated institutions including the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs and Ministry Natural Resources and Energy need to strengthen capacities to ensure information and knowledge management capacity in the contexts where climate change and water security programmes and projects are implemented.



The Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs and implementing partners should establish and strengthen institutional capacities to ensure gender responsive programming.



# Why Gender equality in water security for climate resilience?



The Kingdom of Eswatini is one of the most vulnerable countries affected by climate change within the Sub-Saharan region. This has led to direct impact of water resources (unavailability of water, flooding, declining water quality), energy and infrastructure (reduced hydropower potential), agriculture (increased crop loss, food insecurity), ecosystems (loss of biodiversity) and human health (increased transmission of climate-sensitive diseases). Women have been identified as more susceptible to these climatic conditions. Water security assurance particularly is increasingly becoming a significant challenge in the face of climate change. The World Food Programme (WFP) Gender Analysis Report of 2019 estimated that approximately 64% of women in the rural households of Eswatini have access to improved water sources including piped water, which makes a significant number of women headed households to have access to safe drinking water. However, the water stress because of incessant drought episodes that are induced by climate change, has a disproportionate impact on women and girls who spend more time collecting water, particularly during drought onsets. This exposes the vulnerable groups especially women and children to high

risk associated to water access. In such events, women and children walk over long distances to access water for domestic purposes which exposes them to other gender-based violence such as sexual abuse.

Climate change is not gender neutral; thus, it induces differentiated impacts between women and men. Women and men make differentiated contributions and have differentiated access to the benefits derived from climate action. Women have limited capacity to effectively operate certain technologies used to mitigate climate change impacts and in particular water security interventions. This is further exacerbated by the gendered household caring roles and responsibilities between men and women, which makes women and girls to spend a disproportionate amount of time household chores and spend limited time conducting productive and income generating activities. According to the World Food Programme study, women and girls spend an average of 30 minutes in each water collection trip to the nearest source. This is a burden for women and children who could use the time for other household chores and income generating activities.

The impacts of climate change on water security further affects issues of sanitation and health amongst women. Heavy rainfall and flooding can damage water sources and sanitation facilities, carry runoff and waste into streams and lakes and cause pollution into water sources. The lack of proper sanitation facilities can also impact women's safety. Women are forced to use open fields or other outdoor spaces as makeshift toilets, which can leave them vulnerable to sexual harassment, assault, or

even animal attacks. Moreover, the absence of adequate sanitation affects the dignity of women and girls particularly in menstrual hygiene management (MGM). Not only do women and girls have different physical needs from men, but they also have greater needs for access to adequate sanitation facilities for their dignity. It is therefore imperative for water security polices and strategies to consider a gendered perspective to be effective in addressing gender gaps in the sector.

## Main Gender Inequality Issues and Gaps in Water Security Sectors

The assessment applied relevant analysis frameworks, to ensure that the right balance of information is generated and reviewed to arrive at meaningful conclusions. The Feminist Policy Critical Analysis Framework, which was used to analyse the quality of the relevant laws/legislation, policies, strategies, programme of action and action plans. In addition, the Gender Equality Continuum (GEC) categories were used to assign ratings to each resource document based on the literature review findings (Figure 1). Lastly, the inputs from the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and stakeholder consultation workshop, were analysed using the Gender Inequality Problem Tree (GIPT) to adequately inform the assessment.





Some of the key findings were that: there is a need to mainstream gender into legislation, policies, and strategies as some of these are gender exploitive and gender blind for climate resilience and water security. Notably, some stakeholders and institutions do not clearly have policies that adequately facilitate gender equality mainstreaming. The study further acknowledged that the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs and implementing partners in both government and private sector, lack the necessary tools to effectively conduct Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) and this renders climate change and water security budgets being gender blind. Furthermore, some technologies used for climate change related interventions do not accommodate the needs and concerns of women and there is greater need to adopt technologies that are gender inclusive. This can be achieved through integrating Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) in climate interventions, particularly in the water security sectors. The study also found that persisting gender biased attitudes and beliefs perpetuates stigma against the value of contribution of women which impedes women's participation in key climate change and water security decision making.

**The summary of gender gaps that were identified in the gender analysis study are the following;**

- Climate change programmes and projects are partially mainstreaming gender equality in that these do not outline commitments, targets and indicators for gender equality and women empowerment actions.
- Resource mobilisation proposals are gender neutral, and they do not reflect gender differentiated participation, inclusion and benefits of projects and programmes. Project sustainability planning was found to be gender neutral too.
- Lack of sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) to support gender mainstreaming in the programme and project lifecycle.

- Gender blind/unaware Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) plans and frameworks resulting to gender blind/unaware programme and project performance reporting.
- Limited sharing of gender differentiated data and information due to lack of information sharing portals.
- Gender blind/unaware laws/legislation in all the relevant sectors affected by climate change.
- Gender blind/unaware development policies that reflect no attempt to address gender inequalities.
- Gender aware policies that acknowledge gender differences but does not sufficiently address gender inequalities.
- Partially gender mainstreaming policies, programmes, strategies and action plans that however do not focus and transform harmful gender norms and practices.
- Gender neutral strategies and programmes that contain vague, erratic and insubstantial effort in mainstreaming gender equality.
- Limited gender responsive planning, budgeting and reporting by implementing partners.
- Gender neutral organisational/corporate and policies, procedures and systems.
- Limited staff training and institutional capacity development on gender mainstreaming.
- Limited gender equality education, sensitization and awareness raising targeting programme and project end-beneficiaries.
- Limited gender differentiated information on harmful gender practices and attitudes affecting climate change programming.
- Limited scientific solutions, technology and innovation (STI) that accommodate women and girls available and accessible to women.

# Actions and Steps to be taken by Government Partners in Gender Equality Mainstreaming in the Climate Change and Water Security.

The government, private sector, implementing partners from the various ministries and other relevant stakeholders such as traditional/community leaders and beneficiary communities have a significant role to play in ensuring that the actions to address the gender gaps are taken into consideration. Elaborate training, education, awareness raising, and sensitization campaigns will have to be undertaken to stimulate technical capacities and mobilise the needed leadership support, in challenging existing harmful traditions, cultural norms, stereotypes and biases that perpetuate stigma, gender inequality and discrimination. Considering the identified gaps, a Gender Action Framework has been developed which outlines targeted actions that will be implemented to ensure that gender equality and women empowerment considerations

are integrated into climate finance project pipelines for climate change and water security sectors in Eswatini. This will further ensure that gender considerations are prioritised in the design, development, implementation, operation, and maintenance of these projects particularly in the water security sectors. The implementation of the proposed actions will advance gender mainstreaming and capacity to mitigate climate change action in the water sectors. There is a need for intentional and concerted efforts amongst key stakeholders including government, non-governmental organisations, private sector, academia and other relevant partners to implement these actions to ensure that the identified gender gaps are addressed through the implementation of the developed Gender Action Framework.



The table below shows the gender actions prioritised from the Gender Action Framework (GAF) by the national stakeholders to ensure integration of gender in climate finance for Eswatini.

<b>1</b> Governance	Monitoring of the implementation of the Gender Action Framework focusing on the action items, indicators and the allocated responsibilities for implementing partners.
	Stakeholder mapping to be conducted which include clarification of roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders.
	Gender parity in governance structures and decision-making positions/processes.
	Development and/or revision of climate change legislation, policy, strategies, programmes and plan of actions to integrate meaningful commitments, targets and indicators on gender responsive programming in climate change and water security programmes and projects.
<b>2</b> Competences and Capacity Development	Undertake a Gender-disaggregated capacity needs assessments taking into consideration the other marginalized groups.
	Develop gender mainstreaming training materials and conduct training for the NDA and implementing partners' staff.
	Build the gender transformative capacity of NDA and implementing partners by training them on gender transformation as it relates to agriculture, climate change and water sector.
	Ministries to nominate gender focal points that will be trained and provide continual technical support to staff to ensure that skills and knowledge are transferred to the respective institutions effectively.
<b>3</b> Resource Allocation, Accessibility and Budgeting	DPMO to promote the development of gender responsive planning and budgeting tools, training and their application by respective ministries, departments and implementing partners.
	DPMO to promote gender-responsive budgetary processes within government, private sector and non-governmental organizations targeting GCF implementing partners.
	Mobilize and allocate funding to support gender interventions for the NDA and key stakeholders.
<b>4</b> Operational Procedures	Integrate gender into organizational policies and guidelines.
	Develop and implement gender responsive guidelines for project selection, appraisal and monitoring and evaluation.
<b>5</b> Knowledge Generation and Communications	Conduct stakeholder engagements where all genders and marginalized groups are given an equal platform to provide feedback on project activities.
	Develop and implement strategies for gender and culturally responsive communication for climate action.
	Coordination of the collection and analysis of data by the NDA on gender inequality causes, and advanced impacts in the contexts where climate change and water security programmes and projects are implemented.
	Document and communicate best practices and results in the application of the GAF and implementation of the project activities.



# Conclusion

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The government through the Department of Gender and Family Issues under the Deputy Prime Minister's Office does have a gender strategy and action plan for mainstreaming gender equality in all development sectors of the economy. However, the gender analysis uncovered that the Department lacks the adequate financial, material and human resources to implement the comprehensive strategy and action plan. It is therefore recommended that support be provided to the Department of Gender and Family Issues by relevant sectors and partners to ensure that the implementation of the strategy is expedited to address the gender equality mainstreaming capacity gaps that currently exist. It is further critical for the government to ensure that gender is integrated into the education curriculum at all levels and practices by facilitating the empowerment of women and men through providing comprehensive gender equality

education and building capacity to project and programme beneficiaries.

Gender biases often induce discriminatory practices hence it is fundamental for the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs and stakeholders to strengthen information and knowledge management to ensure gender mainstreaming for example through, staff trainings, information sharing portals etc. Furthermore, men and women ought to be visible and seen to be participating in planning, decision-making and implementation of projects, therefore capacity on gender sensitive programming and project management needs to be strengthened. This promotes the empowerment of women and men, breaking the glass ceiling narrative thus allowing equal opportunities for both men women in the workplace.





