

# REDEFINING 'BUSINESS AS USUAL' WITH A GENDER LENS

Designing and implementing gender-sensitive climate services projects for funders and implementers



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## KEY MESSAGES

- Being gender-blind when designing climate services results in services that do not provide equitable benefits to women and men. Therefore, gender-sensitive project design and implementation are necessary to ensure equitable benefits from climate services.
- Gender sensitivity is required at all stages of the project cycle: from needs assessment to intervention design to implementation to monitoring, evaluation and learning
- Funders need to acknowledge and action the importance of gender-sensitive design in calls for proposals. This could be achieved through adopting Development Assistance Committee (**DAC**) gender markers
- Implementers need to have high-level commitment and be prepared to dedicate adequate resources (time and expertise) to ensure project and programmes are delivered in a gender-sensitive way



## GLOSSARY

### **GENDER-BLIND APPROACHES:**

Such approaches do not recognise gender differences. Given a starting point of gender inequality, gender-blind approaches may inadvertently reinforce those inequalities. Hence, climate services projects should never be gender-blind.

### **GENDER SENSITIVE:**

Taking into account gendered roles and norms and modifying activities accordingly to ensure equal opportunities for participation and benefits by women and men – but without addressing the underlying causes of inequality. At a minimum, climate services projects need to be gender-sensitive.

### **GENDER RESPONSIVE:**

The explicit inclusion of activities to promote women's empowerment and promote equality through addressing the root causes that give rise to inequality. Ideally, climate services projects should aim to be gender-responsive.



## OUTLINE OF WISER AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

The Weather and Climate Information Services for Africa (WISER) programme aims to increase the resilience of African people and enhance economic development in response to weather and climate-related shocks. Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and fund managed by the Met Office UK, WISER's goal is to improve the generation and use of weather and climate information across the Sahel and East Africa. Phase 2 of the programme was implemented from 2017 to 2021 through 12 projects. The aim was to develop new and improved climate services for regional, national and sub-national use, based on the specific needs identified through co-production approaches, and to enhance the capacity and capability of regional and national weather and climate service providers.

The programme Fund Managers organised an internal online learning event from 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 to distil key learning from the design, delivery and results of projects and the programme overall. The event was attended by 90 participants from the 12 WISER Phase 2 projects. The participants ranged from scientists/producers, practitioners/intermediaries, researchers/knowledge managers, decision-makers/users, and donors. The event reflected on four thematic areas of learning to inform future project and programme design for weather and climate information services:

- 1 Programme functions
- 2 Approaches
- 3 Climate service and products outcomes
- 4 Programme/project impacts

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Better integration of gender into project design and implementation increases the likelihood of climate services providing equitable benefits to people regardless of their gender, age and ability. To ensure this takes place, projects need to be gender-sensitive at a minimum and, ideally, gender-responsive, which requires certain approaches and activities to be undertaken at different stages of a project life cycle. This brief highlights what needs to be done at different stages of the project life cycle to integrate gender and the resources that need to be in place to enable effective gender-sensitive design and implementation, with illustrations from WISER and a number of different initiatives.

## 2 THE CURRENT STATE OF 'BUSINESS AS USUAL'

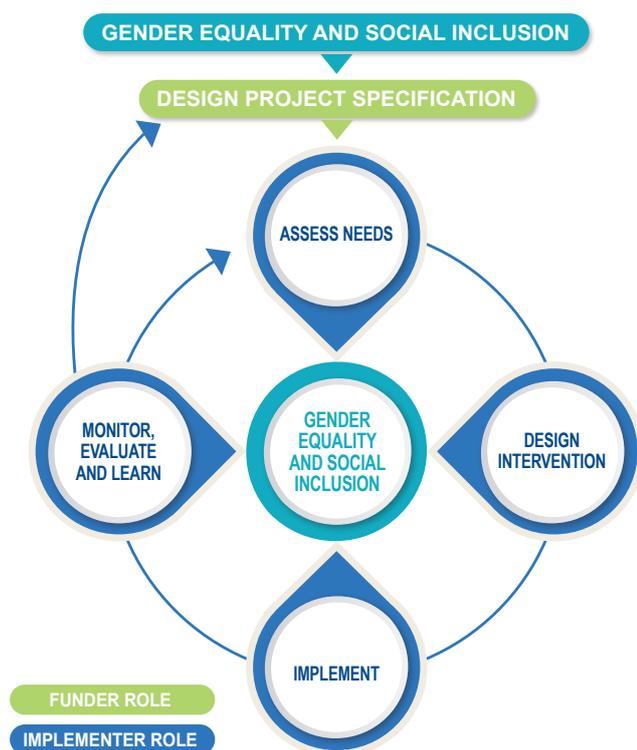
Existing evidence shows that there are gender differences in both access to, and use of, climate information. Not taking this into account risks producing climate services that preference one gender over the other, thereby contributing to inequality.

In East Africa (Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda) and West Africa (Senegal), men have greater access than women to climate information on a variety of scales, from weather forecasts to seasonal forecasts, as well as early warning for floods, droughts and pests (Gumucio et al., 2019). This is partly the result of a failure to consider how the different roles and responsibilities that men and women assume in society leads to them having different access to climate information. Transmitting information in public meetings may exclude women who are less likely to attend such gatherings. Relying on the mobile phone network also preferences men, who typically have higher ownership of such technology, and greater literacy to be able to read messages in official languages. Experiences from the WISER Weather Wise and Uganda national projects also indicate that the women were less likely to receive climate information through daytime radio broadcasts, as they were often working in the fields or tending to household duties.

Even when women are able to access climate information, gender norms and roles often mean they are limited in their ability to use it. Women typically have less access to resources, so even with the knowledge from a seasonal forecast that it will likely be a low rainfall year, they may not have the funds to purchase early maturing seeds, for example. Likewise, within agriculture, men and women often farm different crops, or are involved at different stages within the cropping cycle (e.g. in planting or harvesting), which means that what climate information is useful also differs.

### 3 REDEFINING 'BUSINESS AS USUAL' THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

Integrating gender requires redefining 'business as usual' at all stages of the project cycle, from conception through to learning (see Figure 1). The WISER programme was not originally designed to be gender sensitive or gender responsive. This resulted in projects not always having the expertise and knowledge to integrate gender considerations into the co-production of climate services. Since it is not yet the norm for a gender lens to be applied within weather and climate information services (WCIS) projects, funders need to provide a 'nudge' in the call documentation by reminding of the need for proposals to consider how their climate services will be designed to equitably meet the needs of people, regardless of their gender, age and ability. This increases the likelihood of gender being considered and integrated into the co-production of climate services projects from inception. Once projects have been awarded, the responsibility shifts to implementers, with oversight from the Fund Manager or coordination unit that typically oversees programme-wide monitoring, evaluation and learning.



**FIGURE 1** How gender fits into the project life cycle, according to different roles of funders and implementers

#### 3.1 Assess needs

Applying a gender lens to needs assessment means making an effort to understand the gendered nature of roles and responsibilities, and what this means for what climate information is required, and how it should be delivered.

Needs assessment should therefore apply a gender-sensitive methodology – meaning that explicit attempts are made to consult with both men and women. To be effective, this needs to take into account gender norms. For example, it is not enough to hold a stakeholder meeting with men and women, because even if women attend, gender norms mean that they are likely to defer to men to do the speaking. Instead, gender-disaggregated discussions need to be organised, and these should be sensitive to the gendered nature of routines in terms of timing and location. Identifying and partnering with women's organisations can provide entry points to understanding the context and gender norms and practice, as well as facilitating the process of organising such gender-disaggregated discussions (Gumucio and Scwager, n.d.).

An inclusive approach to consultation, which recognises a diversity of information needs and communication preferences, is also essential for other marginalised groups, for example, people with disabilities. Awareness of project team members of diversity increases the likelihood that opportunities for inclusion will be proactively sought. This is particularly critical at the needs assessment stage, because gender-blind approaches at this stage can 'lock in' approaches and outputs that reinforce inequalities. Such needs assessment should take place as early as possible: either in an inception phase or, if possible, at design phase.

#### CASE STUDY 1

##### IDENTIFYING GENDERED CLIMATE INFORMATION NEEDS

To determine the nature of climate information needs among sugar outgrower (contract) farmers in Malawi, the Future Climate For Africa (FCFA) team conducted four interviews with women and four interviews with men to get an overview of climate information access and use (Henriksson et al., 2020).

Information from these interviews was used to inform the design of a questionnaire which sampled equal numbers of men and women from the outgrower scheme, stratified according to the four phases of scheme establishment. As far as possible, interviews and surveys were conducted by researchers of the same gender as the participants to put them at ease.

## DESIGNING GENDER-SENSITIVE DELIVERY OF CLIMATE SERVICES

Recognising gender norms, WISER projects designed a variety of different delivery mechanisms to ensure both women and men had equitable access to climate services. The Rwanda national project, **Iteganyagihe Ryacu**, and Weather Wise used radio listeners’ clubs to reach people without their own radios, and Weather Wise distributed solar radios to women pastoralists. Radio programmes were also timed to coincide with when men and women were most likely to listen to the radio. The use of radio to disseminate information orally also meant it could be accessed by people with visual disabilities.

Focus group discussions by both the Developing Risk Awareness through Joint Action (**DARAJA**) project and **Iteganyagihe Ryacu** were held locally and designed to ensure opportunities for participation by women and men. In DARAJA, the Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) project team had female staff to interact with women. DARAJA’s innovative project activities with art provided opportunities for youth and children to participate by using their talents to create awareness on weather.

In many cases, there is a Fund Manager or coordinating unit that acts between a funder and an implementer. The Met Office, UK was WISER’s Fund Manager. Fund Managers or coordinating units may play a role in programme-wide monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning throughout the project and programme life cycle. Towards the beginning, they have a role in ensuring that commitments to gender equality are explicit in the theory of change and logframe and indicators at both levels. During implementation, they may play a supporting role in providing the training and technical expertise required to ensure gender-sensitive implementation and effective integration of gender in monitoring and evaluation. Both during and towards the end of the life cycle, they also have a key role to play in documenting and sharing innovative practices and, in particular, communicating them to the funders so that future design can take them into account.

In FCFA, the coordinating unit played a role in operationalising gender commitments in monitoring and evaluation. As guidance for the implementing consortia to inform their own design process and highlight reporting requirements, the unit took the programme’s theory of change and logframe and identified ways in which gender and the inequality of marginalised groups could be integrated throughout (see Figure 2).

STATEMENT (SUMMARY)	OUTPUTS	FCFA RESPONSE
Research to improve understanding of climate	OUTPUT 1	Collect data on number of women contracted under Pillar 1 (climate science) of Future Climate for Africa
Co-produced pilot studies to demonstrate integration of climate information in decision-making	OUTPUT 2	Each consortium must produce a statement on the role of gender in their pilot studies, to be revisited annually.
Tools and products to support integration of climate information in decision-making	OUTPUT 3	Output 3 calls for ‘evidence of gender consideration’ in the production of user relevant climate information products. When producing programmatic knowledge products, the Coordination, Capacity development and Knowledge Exchange (CCKE) unit is to take into consideration the potential impact on gender inequality.
Capacity development of African users and producers of climate information	OUTPUT 4	Disaggregate number of African researchers and user groups by gender. Ensure capacity development activities target women.
Impact case studies	OUTPUT 5	Gender and inclusion are areas of change for potential impact case studies. Impact case studies only became an output requirement in 2017.

**FIGURE 2** Spectrum of co-production approaches

Source: CCKE, (2017) ‘Future Climate For Africa’s approach to gender and marginalised groups’.

## 3.2 Design intervention

Having gathered information on the nature of the information needs of men and women (and other marginalised groups, as appropriate), it will be possible to design an intervention that will serve those needs and ensure equitable benefits. In some cases, this may mean actively targeting multiple modes of delivery to ensure that information can be communicated according to gender preferences: for example, combining 'push' modes of delivery through mass distribution of text messages with more personalised delivery routes through locally-defined networks.

Ensuring that the gender lens has been applied from the very beginning to determine these needs means that, at the stage of writing the proposal, it will be possible to be explicit about including gender equality commitments in the aims, objectives and theory of change. These can then be used, in turn, to translate the theory of change into the logical framework and indicators, where gender-disaggregation is important to monitor the differential progress. This is different to designing a project in a 'business as usual', gender-blind way, then merely disaggregating indicators, as this might increase participation but reinforce inequitable benefits to the gender that was given preference in design (typically men).

As well as integrating gender into the project activities, at the stage of designing the intervention the proposal development team need to concretise their own internal commitments to gender equity. Ideally, this should include a gender action plan which outlines guidelines of good practice principles and/or commitments to gender equity and inclusivity in recruitment and workplace practices (often complementing and augmenting existing organisational commitments). Supporting this process may require appointing responsibility for oversight, and/or ensuring that appropriate technical expertise is available within the team to provide gender training and support for the design and implementation of gender-sensitive methods.

## 3.3 Implement

When gender has been effectively implemented in project design, and institutional arrangements established with appropriate technical expertise and resourcing, the implementation phase involves putting these plans into action. At this stage, training in gender-sensitive methods may be required for the project teams to ensure that plans are rolled out effectively and equitably.

Having gender integrated in the project management framework (aims, objectives, theory of change, logical framework and indicators), and having appropriate technical expertise, helps to ensure implementation of a gender-sensitive plan. However, commitment from project leadership can be pivotal in determining the extent to which 'business as usual' is transformed into 'business unusual'. Project leads set the tone for the project team and can encourage embracing new ways of 'seeing and doing' to enable inclusivity. This might include proactively targeting young women members of the team for mentoring, taking on leadership opportunities and accessing opportunities such as conference presentation.

In order to ensure equitable benefits of climate services for women and men, it is necessary to consider the timing and locations of activities, and to recognise and find ways to overcome gender constraints. Women may be initially reluctant to participate in the process of climate service design, as to do so would challenge their own beliefs around their expected behaviours. They may assume that this is not something in which they should be involved. In this case, stepwise provision can be made for awareness raising and confidence building. Similarly, recognising and planning to overcome the constraints of gender roles is important. For example, in **Weather Wise**, to ensure the participation of women with children, the project budgeted for the women to bring a family member to training opportunities, enabling them to fully participate.



## CASE STUDY 3

### ENSURING EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION WITHIN PROJECT TEAMS

In the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (**CARIAA**) programme, the same efforts that were made to ensure participation of diverse groups in research conducted was mirrored within the research teams undertaking the process (CARIAA, 2018). Encouraged by funder-mandated reporting requirements to disaggregate authorship, which served as a reminder to project teams to provide opportunities to marginalised groups, CARIAA provided training in researching gender to project teams and encouraged women and early-career researchers to take a lead in producing project outputs (O'Neill, 2020).



## CASE STUDY 4

### ENSURING EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION AMONG CLIMATE SERVICES RECIPIENTS

In Kenya, the Gender Power (**GPOWER**) initiative targets young and old women in Homa Bay County, providing them with the knowledge and skills to effectively use climate information to make informed decisions and to adjust their farming strategies to minimise risk of loss due to climate conditions (World Meteorological Organization (WMO), n.d.). Throughout implementation, community involvement – including partnership with local institutions – was key, which increased trust in the process. Also key was the sensitisation of both men and women as to why equitable participation is important.

### 3.4 Monitor, evaluate and learn

If gender has been effectively considered through needs assessment and project design, and is reflected in the aims, objectives and theory of change, it is likely to be easy to integrate into the logframe and indicators that are used to monitor and evaluate the project. At a minimum, indicators should be gender disaggregated. Failing to do this renders invisible any differences that may exist between women and men and runs the risk of overlooking opportunities to redress inequities in participation and inequalities in outputs. It is also possible to require disaggregation for other factors, such as disability and age, to incentivise inclusion.

It is important to provide opportunities for structured reflection among team members and target audiences for climate services, to determine whether attempts at inclusion are sufficiently ambitious and whether they are effective. This could take the form of qualitative data from interviews or reflection sessions, but should focus on identifying where blind spots are reinforcing barriers to inclusion, and working together to identify how they can be overcome, through adaptive management and revisiting the theory of change and logframe, if necessary.



## CASE STUDY 5

### BUILDING ON REFLECTION TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

In one of the projects within the FCFA programme – the African Monsoon Multidisciplinary Analysis 2050 – the collection of gender-disaggregated data and regular reflection enabled some degree of course correction. At the start of the project, women typically comprised only a quarter of participants in stakeholder engagement workshops (see **Technical Report 7**). Recognising the inequity in participation, the team proactively identified and sent invitations to women decision-makers, promoting their engagement to ensure greater inclusion. A group of women parliamentarians was invited and participated in the end-of-project workshop. (Visman et al., 2019). In activities planned for 2021, a gender and inclusion module is being integrated within training for national and local government decision-makers on the use of a GeoPortal, which provides climate information to support agricultural planning in Senegal.



Source: Beth Mackay



## RECOMMENDATIONS

If 'business as usual' in climate services projects is to be redefined to be more inclusive of gender and other marginalised groups, both funders and project implementers have key roles to play.



### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS TO DESIGN GENDER-SENSITIVE PROJECTS

**Mandate gender-sensitive design in call documentation to ensure that projects provide equitable benefits.**

Highlighting the importance of gender and inclusion in call documentation is essential as it signals commitment, which is then taken on board in the process of project design. While it may be possible to mandate gender-disaggregated indicators in a project that has not been designed to be gender sensitive, as identified in WISER, trying to retrofit projects in this way is rarely as successful. Instead, mandating that a gender lens is applied from the very start has a greater scope to provide equitable benefits and may lead to the resulting climate services being gender-responsive by changing the nature of gender norms, roles and relations. Similarly, this takes a step towards ensuring that projects bring in gender expertise from the outset.

**Provide adequate time and resourcing to enable new norms for design and implementation.**

Integrating gender and being inclusive should not ultimately be more expensive. However, the process of redefining 'business as usual' may entail additional costs in the short term as norms and practices are adapted. Costs may include making technical expertise available for gender training of project teams and recipients of climate services, or applying gender-sensitive methods, or carrying out these methods, given that it can require simultaneous effort for men and women.

Applying gender-sensitive methodologies may require additional time, and this should be factored into the design process to ensure that goals remain realistic. Donors can ensure resources are available within budgets, and mandate implementers to consider where they may be required by specifying a budget line for them.

**Assess proposals with a gender lens (i.e. ensuring gender-sensitive design, an appropriate team and plan for implementation).**

Proposal evaluations should actively consider the extent to which a gender lens has been applied to design and whether appropriate resourcing has been allocated. Such considerations provide a check on the effectiveness of these two mechanisms and provide an additional incentive to project teams at the design stage.



### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTERS TO APPROPRIATELY INTEGRATE GENDER IN PROJECTS

**Ensure high-level commitment among project leadership in order to redefine 'business as usual'.**

Project leaders set the tone for their teams. Thus, leaders who show commitment to the integration of gender and inclusion motivate their team members to redefine 'business as usual'. Similarly, inclusive project teams 'lead by example' when promoting design and use of inclusive climate services.

**From the start of the proposal, integrate gender development into the aims, theory of change, methods and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework in order to be gender-responsive.**

Integrating gender from the needs assessment stage makes gender differences visible and thus increases the likelihood of designing a project that addresses them. Attempting to retrofit projects that have already been conceptualised may increase access to the climate services, but will not necessarily ensure that those climate services are meeting the information needs of women and men. Integrating gender from the start offers greater opportunities to be gender-responsive and to contribute to shifting gender norms, roles and relations.

## Dedicate appropriate resources to support internal (gender training) and external (awareness-raising) processes and activities.

Since gender-blindness predominates, it is essential to ensure that resources are in place to redefine this norm. Projects should create new norms that lead to equity within the teams as well as among the target audience for the climate services. Resources may include technical assistance to support gender-sensitive methods and analysis; training for the team in such methods and dedicating appropriate resources towards raising awareness and training within target communities to ensure gender norms do not undermine success.

## Dedicate appropriate resources and time within the MEL framework for reflective learning and documentation.

The most effective way of signalling commitment to gender and social inclusion is to ensure it is mainstreamed in project management. This can take place through making sufficient time for structured reflections and learning in the context of the theory of change, which could take place quarterly or annually (or both, to different depths). Resources should be made available to ensure that the reflective process provides access for gender and marginalised groups to actively take part in the learning process. In conjunction with adaptive management, such reflection provides opportunities for course correction and lays down the stepping stones that lead to the mindset change required to redefine 'business as usual'.

## ENDNOTES

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