



PACIFIC
WOMEN
LEAD



Climate and disaster resilient gender programming

A guide for Pacific Women Lead partners



About Pacific Women Lead

Pacific Women Lead is a portfolio of regional investments supported by the Australian Government to advance gender equality in the Pacific (\$170 million over 5 years, 2021–26). The program is ambitious in its intent to take a Pacific-led, intersectional and transformative approach to promoting gender equality in the region. It is focused on delivering development outcomes for women and girls in all their diversity and bringing new emphasis to strengthening regional action and architecture in support of gender equality. This guidance note will continue to inform programs in the next phase of Pacific Women Lead. For more information about the program go to the [Pacific Women Lead website](#).

About the consultants

This guide was supported by [Talanoa Consulting](#), a small, multi-disciplinary consultancy firm based in Suva, serving Fiji and the Pacific Islands. Their work focusses on the intersection of priority Pacific issues including climate change, disaster risk reduction and resilience, gender equality and women's economic empowerment, environmental conservation, natural resource management, and small business and social enterprise development.

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1. Introduction

This guidance note has been developed to support partners across the Pacific Women Lead portfolio to integrate climate and disaster resilience considerations into gender equality programming. It offers simple, low- or no-cost entry points for incorporating climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience considerations into existing activities.

The advice contextualises the Australian Government's *Good Practice Note on Integrating Climate Change into Development Assistance for Implementing Partners* for the Pacific Women Lead program. It identifies principles and entry points for integrating climate and disaster resilience into gender programming based on Pacific Women Lead's outcome and sub-outcome areas.

1.1 Policy and program context

This guidance aligns with Pacific regional priorities, including the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*, which sets out a long-term regional vision for a resilient, secure and prosperous Pacific where communities are able to withstand the impacts of climate change and disasters. It also aligns with the *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific 2017–2030*, which calls for integrated approaches to climate change adaptation, disaster risk management and sustainable development across the region.

The information in this guidance note is also informed by the Australian Government's *Outcomes at the Nexus* handbook, which highlights the interconnections between climate change, gender equality and disability equity and rights across development programming. The handbook emphasises the importance of addressing these issues together to achieve effective and sustainable development outcomes.

Consistent with Pacific Women Lead's approach to Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), the guidance complements *Australia's International Gender Equality Strategy* and supports action across all five priority areas.

The guidance should also be read alongside *Australia's International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy* and the *Disability equity and rights in Australia's international development program – good practice note*, which emphasise accessible and inclusive approaches across development programming.

Together, these frameworks reinforce the importance of integrated approaches that strengthen gender equality outcomes while building climate and disaster resilience.

1.2 Climate and gender context in the Pacific

The Pacific region faces intensifying climate threats – rising seas, extreme weather, ocean warming, and coastal erosion – that are disrupting food systems, freshwater access, infrastructure, and cultural heritage. These changes are reshaping lives, economies, and governance across the region.

Climate impacts deepen existing inequalities faced by women and girls in all their diversity. These impacts intersect with gender, age, disability, geography, and identity – creating additional barriers for women, girls and gender-diverse people who may also experience discrimination or exclusion based on factors such as caregiving responsibilities, remoteness and ethnicity. Livelihoods in agriculture, fisheries, informal markets and tourism are often the first to be affected. As resources become more constrained and systems come under stress, unpaid care burdens increase and risks of gender-based violence often escalate in crisis settings.

1.3 Principles for good practice climate integration in gender programming

The following principles support the integration of climate and disaster resilience considerations into gender programming under Pacific Women Lead.

Principle 1: Identify climate and disaster risks, impacts and opportunities

Identify the climate and disaster risks that affect the communities you work with and the delivery of program activities. This may include considering exposure to hazards such as floods, cyclones, droughts and heat stress, as well as potential impacts on livelihoods, services and infrastructure. Drawing on community experience, traditional knowledge and local leadership can help ensure that risk identification reflects Pacific contexts and realities.

Principle 2: Analyse differential impacts

Climate and disaster risks do not affect everyone equally. To help identify the needs and priorities of women, girls and people with disability, analyse climate impacts through the lens of GEDSI analysis.

Principle 3: Align with national and regional resilience efforts

Align your work with national and regional approaches to climate change and disaster risk management. This includes considering priorities outlined in national climate policies, such as National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as regional frameworks including the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific. Alignment helps ensure programs complement government priorities and contribute to broader resilience efforts.

Principle 4: Empower women as agents of resilience and adaptation

Women play critical roles in preparing for, responding to and adapting to climate and disaster risks. Programs should support women's leadership, knowledge and participation in community resilience efforts and decision-making processes. Empowering women as advocates and agents of change can strengthen locally led responses to climate challenges.

Principle 5: Monitor climate and disaster risks, resilience outcomes and adaptive capacity

Monitor and capture how climate and disaster risks affect program activities, communities and outcomes over time. Tracking resilience outcomes and climate-related risks can support learning, adaptation and improved program design as conditions change and for the future.

1.4 How to use this guidance note

This resource is intended as a starting point for Pacific Women Lead partners and grantees to consider practical ways to strengthen women's resilience to climate impacts while advancing gender equality within their existing programs. It can be used to:

- identify which climate and disaster risks are most relevant to your activities
- incorporate climate and disaster considerations into existing activities, using the principles and entry points as inspiration, and
- support discussions with other partners, local communities, and government agencies about climate-resilient approaches.

This guidance is not prescriptive. We encourage partners and grantees to select the most relevant principles and entry points, and to apply them in ways that are culturally grounded, locally led, and reflective of lived experiences.

Where this guidance refers to women and girls, it should be understood as referring to women and girls in all their diversity. Experiences of gender inequality are shaped by intersecting factors including sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), disability, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, geography, indigeneity, and migration or displacement status.

Recognising these intersecting forms of exclusion is important for ensuring that activities are inclusive and responsive to diverse experiences, which in turn will ensure that activities are more effective.



2. Entry points by outcome area

2.1 Women's leadership promoted

Women and girls' voice

Why climate change matters

Women, girls, and gender-diverse people across the Pacific are disproportionately affected by climate change – but they are also at the forefront of building inclusive climate resilience. Their knowledge, lived experiences, and community leadership are essential to shaping climate responses that serve everyone.

For Pacific Women Lead partners, promoting women's leadership in climate change and disaster resilience can begin with simple actions that elevate existing voices and create space with current gender equality programs and initiatives.

Entry points

- **Support women's representation, participation and leadership in local planning processes**, such as disaster preparedness, resource management, and climate adaptation committees, supporting them to incorporate a climate-lens to their advocacy and leadership roles.
- **Empower young women from underrepresented communities** to engage in climate planning – such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes – and STEM-related fields.
- **Integrate climate themes into existing leadership and mentoring programs**. For example, invite local meteorological or disaster officers to present at regular women's group meetings to discuss early warning systems and demystify technical climate information.
- **Document and share women's climate leadership stories** through national, regional and global convenings, community gatherings, digital platforms, or advocacy campaigns.
- **Create peer learning spaces** for women leaders to exchange strategies and experiences related to climate resilience.
- **Identify climate champions in your existing networks**. Designate existing women leaders as Climate and Gender Champions to act as a bridge between local women's groups and municipal disaster management offices.

Pacific feminist civil society

Why climate change matters

The Pacific feminist movement continues to grow in depth and influence, offering a powerful platform for advancing gender equality in the context of climate change. Feminist organisations play an important role in bringing community perspectives, lived experiences and traditional knowledge into discussions about climate and disaster resilience.

Collaborations between feminist organisations, climate actors and government bodies can strengthen joint campaigns, community-led research and advocacy for equitable climate finance. Supporting intergenerational knowledge-sharing rooted in Pacific cultures also deepens climate dialogue and strengthens feminist responses to climate and disaster risks.

Entry points

- **Partner with climate actors and environmental networks** to coordinate advocacy, amplify gendered climate perspectives and ensure that climate finance considers the specific needs of women, men and gender-diverse individuals.
- **Advocate for inclusive representation for feminist groups** in climate-related decision-making bodies, ensuring diverse women's voices are heard at all levels.
- **Support grassroots women's groups to access climate finance** by mobilising resources and channelling them through existing networks.



Pacific women played a central role in a landmark climate justice case at the International Court of Justice to secure states' obligations to address climate harm and protect human rights. Image © SPC

2.2 Women's rights realised

Women and adolescent girls' health

Why climate change matters

Climate change and disasters can disrupt access to essential health services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Extreme weather events, displacement and damage to infrastructure can interrupt service delivery and limit safe access to care for women and girls.

Gender and health programs should consider how climate and disaster risks may affect the planning, development and delivery of essential services. Integrating climate and disaster resilience considerations into health-related programming can help ensure that SRHR services, mental health support and counselling remain accessible during times of disruption. This may include considering the resilience of health infrastructure, planning for service continuity during disasters, and supporting surge capacity to respond to increased demand for care.

Entry points

- **Integrate SRHR services into disaster preparedness planning:** Ensure SRHR services are integrated in disaster preparedness and response plans, and plan for continuity and surge.
- **Integrate climate-health education into outreach:** Add information about climate-related health risks (such as heat stress and waterborne diseases) to existing women's health workshops, youth sessions and SRHR outreach materials, including guidance on managing heat stress during pregnancy and maintaining water safety after flooding.
- **Support community health workers as climate responders:** Resource community health workers, many of whom are women, to strengthen frontline health services and community resilience during climate and disaster events.
- **Support mobile health outreach:** Collaborate with local providers to deliver SRHR and mental health services via mobile clinics during climate and disaster-related disruptions.
- **Conduct inclusive relocation planning:** Consult women and girls in all their diversity (including those with disability) in the design of planned relocation sites, ensuring accessible health facilities and privacy in SRHR services.
- **Map climate-sensitive health risks:** Engage communities to identify vulnerabilities (such as flood-prone or inaccessible clinics) and co-develop local solutions.
- **Strengthen supply chain management:** Plan for potential supply chain disruptions caused by extreme weather and disasters, including risks of stockouts of essential medicines, contraceptive supplies and menstrual hygiene products.
- **Address changing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs over the life course:** Plan for the impacts of climate change on water safety, sanitation and accessibility, ensuring WASH services respond to the changing needs of women and girls.
- **Integrate mental health and psychosocial support:** Ensure gender-responsive mental health services are included in health programming and disaster response, recognising the psychological impacts of climate-related stress, displacement and loss on women, men, children and communities.

Women's safety

Why climate change matters

Climate-related stressors, displacement and disasters often increase risks of gender-based violence (GBV), particularly where protective systems are already under strain. Women's safety programs should consider how climate and disaster risks may affect the delivery of GBV prevention and response services. Integrating climate and disaster resilience into these programs can help ensure that referral pathways, prevention campaigns, and community-based protection strategies remain functional during crises.

Women's crisis centres play a critical role in providing frontline support, protection and referral services. Ensuring these services remain operational and accessible during disasters is an important component of climate-resilient GBV programming.

Entry points

- **Embed climate and disaster risk into GBV analysis:** Consider how climate-related stressors – such as displacement, loss of livelihoods, overcrowded shelters or resource scarcity – may increase risks of gender-based violence and affect access to support services.
- **Facilitate dialogue around climate and GBV:** Create safe spaces for women to explore how climate stressors intersect with GBV risks and co-design community protection strategies.
- **Integrate climate considerations into GBV case management:** Include questions in intake and case management processes about climate-related stressors (such as crop loss, water scarcity, workloads or displacement) and how these may affect household dynamics and safety. Include climate considerations into national GBV surveys (e.g. Family Health and Safety Studies or prevalence studies) to generate the evidence base for advocacy.
- **Strengthen climate preparedness of GBV service providers:** Assess whether service providers have integrated climate and disaster preparedness into their business plans, operations and staff training, to ensure these services remain accessible during times of disaster and emergency.
- **Ensure safe and accessible emergency shelters:** Assess whether evacuation centres and temporary shelters provide safe, private and accessible spaces for women and girls, including those with disability.
- **Strengthen communication channels for GBV support during crises:** Work with women's organisations, service providers and National Disaster Management Authorities to ensure information about safety and available services is shared through channels such as radio, SMS and community networks during climate and disaster events. This information needs to be readily accessible for people with disability.
- **Support youth-led awareness on climate and safety:** Engage young women in developing outreach materials and digital content that raises awareness of climate-related safety risks and how to access GBV support services.

Women's economic empowerment

Why climate change matters

Climate change disproportionately affects women's livelihoods – particularly in farming, fishing, informal markets, and tourism. Supporting women's economic resilience includes advocacy for women's leadership in climate finance, budget processes, and the transition to sustainable economies.

Climate change also intensifies unpaid care work. Increased care responsibilities can reduce opportunities for education, paid work, and participation in economic life. Women's economic empowerment programming should consider both livelihoods and the unequal distribution of unpaid care, recognising that strengthening care systems is an important part of building resilient communities and economies.

Entry points

- **Support climate-smart savings groups:** Encourage women's savings and loan groups to incorporate climate resilience goals – such as emergency funds, and investments in drought-resistant crops, or water storage.
- **Add climate components to existing skills training:** Integrate climate adaptation and resilience into vocational programs (such as sustainable farming, eco-friendly crafts, solar technology maintenance, traditional disaster-preparation techniques to preserve plants, seeds and food). In existing entrepreneurship or micro-finance training, add a module on continuity planning to help women-led small businesses prepare for shocks such as through securing stock and keeping digital records.
- **Facilitate market resilience mapping:** Collaborate with women vendors and entrepreneurs to assess how climate-related events affect formal and informal markets and co-design protective strategies (such as shaded stalls, mobile vending).
- **Promote women-led green enterprises:** Support small-scale initiatives in eco-tourism, agroecology, and circular economy that reflect Pacific cultures and community priorities.
- **Apply a gender-climate lens to care work:** Use time-use studies and participatory storytelling to reframe climate change as a care crisis and highlight how climate impacts intensify unpaid care burdens – and advocate for infrastructure that eases them.
- **Champion women's leadership in climate finance and impact investments:** Advocate for women's participation in budget processes and equitable access to climate funding and impact investment at all levels.
- **Prioritise climate-resilient livelihoods for women with disability:** Support equitable access to agricultural inputs, water resources, insurance and other resources needed to strengthen resilience to climate and disaster risks.
- **Strengthen women's decision-making over natural resources:** Support women's leadership in managing household and community resources – such as land, water, forests, and fisheries – to improve climate resilience, ensure equitable access, and enhance sustainable livelihoods.

2.3 Regional effectiveness and gender mainstreaming

Pacific ownership and regional effectiveness

Why climate change matters

Collaboration between Pacific governments, civil society organisations and regional agencies strengthens understanding of how climate and disaster risks affect gender equality outcomes. Sharing knowledge, coordinating efforts and supporting locally led approaches helps ensure that responses reflect the lived realities of Pacific communities.

Strengthening Pacific ownership of gender and climate discussions – including through regional policy dialogue and partnerships – supports more coordinated, inclusive and resilient approaches to development across the Pacific.

Entry points

- **Share community-level evidence and stories:** Use insights from gender equality work to ensure regional climate and resilience policy and funding priorities are informed by women's and girls' lived experiences of climate and disaster impacts.
- **Collaborate with regional climate organisations, gender-focused civil society organisations and Organisations of People with Disability:** Build joint advocacy platforms and campaigns for inclusive climate action that is grounded in Pacific priorities.
- **Integrate climate perspectives into regional gender policy platforms:** Use regional gender forums, networks and policy processes to highlight how climate and disaster risks affect gender equality outcomes and program delivery.
- **Advocate for gender-responsive climate finance:** Promote flexible, long-term funding for women's organisations and feminist movements.
- **Support intergenerational knowledge-sharing platforms:** Develop and utilise platforms rooted in Pacific cultures that deepen climate dialogue and feminist action.



Gender mainstreaming

Why climate change matters

Gender mainstreaming efforts need to consider how climate and disaster risks shape development outcomes. Integrating climate and disaster resilience considerations into gender mainstreaming processes can help ensure that national and regional policies, programs and planning mechanisms remain responsive to emerging risks. This includes drawing on evidence about how climate impacts affect diverse women and men differently, supporting inclusive decision-making, and ensuring accountability mechanisms – such as gender-responsive budgeting and reporting – consider climate-related challenges and opportunities.

Entry points

- **Ensure climate and disaster risks are considered in gender policy dialogue:** Use regional consultations and working groups as an opportunity to highlight how climate and disaster risks may affect gender equality commitments and programming.
- **Build partnerships between gender and climate actors:** Collaborate with regional climate organisations and women's organisations to strengthen shared analysis and coordinated advocacy on climate and gender priorities.
- **Strengthen the meaningful participation of women with disability:** Work in partnership with Organisations of People with Disability to ensure the perspectives and priorities of women with disability are reflected in planning and decision-making.
- **Incorporate climate considerations into gender policy and planning processes:** Draw on gender analysis, community evidence and emerging climate insights to inform gender equality strategies, policy dialogue and regional platforms.
- **Strengthen accountability and monitoring mechanisms:** Encourage gender equality frameworks, reporting processes and regional commitments to consider how climate and disaster risks may affect progress on gender outcomes.



Women being trained in geospatial science learn to use data and mapping to strengthen climate resilience and disaster preparedness. Image © SPC

3. More information and resources

Key resources

Outcomes at the Nexus: A handbook for developing inclusive program outcomes that address the intersection of gender equality and climate change. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. [Available on the DFAT website.](#)

Good Practice Note on Integrating Climate Change into Development Assistance for Implementing Partners. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. [Available on the DFAT website.](#)

Case studies

The following case studies provide examples, drawn from Pacific Women Lead programming, that illustrate how organisations have responded to climate risks in practice.

Regional advocacy for climate justice

Pacific women played a central role in a landmark climate justice case at the International Court of Justice, leading advocacy and amplifying lived experiences to secure global recognition of states' obligations to address climate harm and protect human rights. [Read the full case study.](#)

Community-led governance for climate resilience

Governance training under the Vakatawa Noke initiative is strengthening community-led decision-making in informal settlements in Fiji, embedding women's leadership in planning and governance processes that support climate adaptation, disaster preparedness and resilient local development. [Read the full case study.](#)

Adolescent girls' leadership in climate decision-making

Adolescent girls across the Pacific are moving beyond token representation to actively shape regional decision-making spaces, bringing lived experience and inclusive perspectives to climate change policy, advocacy and responses. [Read the full case study.](#)

Women in geospatial science for climate resilience

Women across the Pacific are being trained in geospatial science and mapping technologies, enabling them to collect and use environmental data to inform climate adaptation, disaster preparedness and natural resource management in their communities. [Read the full case study.](#)

Women-led disaster response and early warning systems

In Vanuatu, women leaders are driving community-based climate and disaster preparedness through locally led early warning systems and response networks, strengthening resilience to increasingly frequent and severe climate-related disasters. [Read the full case study.](#)

Bringing global gender commitments closer to climate realities

Tuvalu's participation in the Pacific CEDAW Technical Cooperation Session brought global gender equality commitments closer to Pacific contexts, highlighting how climate change intensifies gender inequalities and strengthening locally grounded responses to climate justice and women's rights. [Read the full case study.](#)

Women-led renewable energy for climate justice

The Solar Skiff initiative showcases how Pacific women are leading innovative, low-emissions transport solutions, using solar-powered vessels to strengthen sustainable livelihoods, climate adaptation and gender-equitable access to marine resources. [Read the full case study.](#)

Inventory of gender and climate resources

An inventory of key gender and climate resources is available on the Pacific Women Lead website to help partners plan, implement, and mobilise support for inclusive climate and disaster resilient initiatives. [Access the inventory of gender and climate resources.](#)





Annex 1: Glossary

This glossary defines key terms used in the guidance note. Definitions draw from DFAT guidance and other relevant sources, and may evolve as language and practice develop.

Mitigation: the limitation or reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the atmosphere or enhancement of GHG capture. This includes efforts to limit emission sources and activities to remove emissions from the atmosphere through natural processes of greenhouse gas capture (such as rehabilitating forests) or technical solutions (such as direct air capture).

Adaptation: maintaining or increasing resilience of human or natural systems to climate change by building capacity to adapt to, or absorb, climate change stresses and shocks. This includes activities intended to reduce exposure to climate change or minimise potential impacts. Adaptation is best understood as a process rather than an outcome, because the climate continues to change and there are many unknown consequences.

Resilience: the capacity to tolerate shocks or disturbance and to recover and rebuild to a better new normal. Resilience has economic, social, health and ecological dimensions. It requires diversification of livelihoods and the ability to adapt when external conditions change, and to respond to new opportunities.