



# Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Change Adaptation

NCAI TECHNICAL REPORT



Nature for Climate  
Adaptation Initiative



In partnership with  
**Canada**

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## Nature for Climate Adaptation Initiative

The [Nature for Climate Adaptation Initiative \(NCAI\)](https://www.ncai.iisd.org/) seeks to increase the knowledge and capacity of civil society to design and deliver nature-based solutions that are socially inclusive, gender responsive, and that enhance biodiversity and ecosystem resilience to change.

## Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Change Adaptation

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Photo: iStock

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## Summary

- The impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises on people’s livelihoods and opportunities differ greatly based on their gender and other intersecting identity factors. Populations that face systemic marginalization and discrimination are often disproportionately affected.
- International actors and scientific bodies, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, acknowledge the importance of incorporating gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) measures within nature-based solutions (NbS) programming to enhance climate adaptation.
- Equity-deserving groups have unique and specialized knowledge concerning climate adaptation and biodiversity loss prevention that should be respected and leveraged in NbS initiatives through meaningful engagement processes.
- This technical report identifies emerging practices for mainstreaming GESI in NbS programming while recognizing the importance of enabling policies and systems for adaptation, biodiversity, and gender equality.

## About This Technical Report

This technical report provides contextual information and recommendations to help plan, design, and implement NbS for adaptation that advance GESI while enhancing resilience, biodiversity, and ecosystem integrity. It contributes to the nascent field of gender-responsive and inclusive NbS by offering general recommendations, tools, and applicable case studies to provide practitioners with a tangible perspective on the concepts discussed. It first introduces the context and rationale for a gender-responsive approach to NbS for adaptation. It then provides an analytical frame for GESI in NbS programming. Finally, it identifies entry points and offers advice for integrating GESI considerations into the NbS project cycle, supported by a series of case studies.

Global Affairs Canada’s Partnering for Climate initiative (P4C) has committed to the International Union for Conservation’s Global Standard for NbS (2020b), which emphasizes the importance of “inclusive, transparent, and empowering governance processes” for local communities and stakeholders (Government of Canada, 2023d, para. 80). The objectives of the International Union for Conservation of Nature Global Standard are well aligned with Global Affairs Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy, which aims to “support the poorest and most vulnerable and to amplify the voices—as well as the traditional and ecological knowledge—of all groups” (Government of Canada, 2023d, para. 81). Projects funded by the P4C program are required to integrate at least one gender equality outcome (Government of Canada, 2022b). Informed by these policy directives, as well as emerging promising practices from the field of NbS, this report provides civil society organizations implementing P4C projects, as well as other



interested actors working on NbS programming, with guidance on how to consider gender and other intersecting identity factors that are grounded in a human rights-based approach at each stage of their NbS projects. Looking beyond NbS projects, the application of a GESI lens should become “business as usual” within all facets of climate adaptation and resilience planning, processes, and practices.

### About the Nature for Climate Adaptation Initiative

The Nature for Climate Adaptation Initiative strengthens the knowledge and capacity of civil society organizations to design and implement NbS for climate change adaptation through three key tools:

- a self-paced, accessible [e-learning course](#) developed in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and International Union for Conservation of Nature;
- an online [learning space](#) with technical guidance, resources, case studies, and events focused on GESI and biodiversity co-benefits; and
- targeted virtual and in-person learning exchange opportunities that foster a community of practice around NbS for adaptation.

This report was developed through a review of relevant literature, discussions with experts, and a review of case studies. It is part of a compendium of resources developed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development for the Nature for Climate Adaptation Initiative, which is supported by Global Affairs Canada. The resources include an introductory [guidance note](#) that provides an overview of basic terminology and concepts behind NbS for adaptation (Lo et al., 2022) and a [technical brief](#) that provides guidance on enhancing biodiversity co-benefits from the implementation of NbS for adaptation (Lo & Rawluk, 2023).

The term “NbS for adaptation” is taken to be synonymous with ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and adaptation-focused NbS. This report assumes some familiarity with NbS, EbA, NbCS, and related terminology, which are covered in more detail in the introductory guidance note and e-learning course. For consistency, we use “NbS for adaptation” or “NbS” for brevity.



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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 The Need for a Gender-Responsive Approach to Nature-Based Solutions for Adaptation

Communities and ecosystems across the globe are experiencing the negative impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss, which are compounded by the effects of increasing socio-economic inequality. All people depend on nature for the ecosystem services that it provides, such as carbon sequestration; clean air, food, and water; and cultural and recreational benefits (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). Those most reliant on healthy ecosystems for their livelihoods, such as women and Indigenous Peoples, are also most vulnerable to the concurrent crises of climate change and biodiversity loss (Convention on Biological Diversity [CBD], 2020b; Forest Peoples Programme et al., 2020; United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2022a). Moreover, it is widely understood that, for adaptation initiatives to be effective and sustainable, they must consider gender and social inequalities (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], 2015, 2016), as climate change impacts individuals differently depending on intersecting identity factors such as gender, sexuality, age, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, nationality, and ability, among others (Adaptation Fund, 2022; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2022b).

Due to historical and cultural gender and social norms, women and girls, men and boys, and gender-diverse people have differentiated roles in the access, use, and management of natural resources. For example, women typically face increased barriers that limit their participation in the employment sector, thus contributing to their likelihood of experiencing poverty. Women also undertake a disproportionate balance of responsibility for securing food and water due to traditional gender roles, which results in increased dependency on natural resources (UNEP et al., 2020). These norms are dynamic and context specific, varying across and within countries and communities. Gender and social norms can lead to the inequitable distribution of benefits from ecosystem services and can result in the development of different forms of specialized ecological knowledge that are not always valued equally (International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN], 2021a). To be impactful and equitable, nature-based solutions (NbS) for adaptation initiatives must be designed to consider these differences in roles, responsibilities, and knowledge while also tackling discriminatory norms and practices. The recognition and involvement of equity-deserving groups as active agents of change within the implementation of NbS for adaptation is essential, given their complex and diverse relationships with nature.

NbS that are designed to be responsive to differences based on gender and other intersecting identity factors present an opportunity to address unique climate change adaptation needs. NbS can enable populations that face socio-economic, cultural, and political barriers to build their adaptive capacity, realize their rights, and participate in adaptation decision making while also strengthening the resilience of the ecosystems that sustain their livelihoods (Dazé & Terton,



2021). This report presents key considerations to ensure that NbS for adaptation meaningfully target gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) issues and engage with diverse individuals and groups to achieve more sustainable impacts within communities.

## 1.2 GESI and NbS in International Policy

Many governments are considering how NbS can help them achieve various global targets simultaneously. The IPCC's *Sixth Assessment Report on Climate Change* (2022) first indicated that equity and justice should be considered key climate change adaptation concepts, underscoring that these principles cannot be advanced without attention to the adaptive capacity and differentiated risks experienced by vulnerable people (IPCC, 2022b). In December 2022, the 15th Conference of the Parties to the CBD culminated in a landmark agreement to protect biodiversity worldwide, acknowledging its importance for future generations and the survival of our planet (UNEP, 2022b). Following the conference, the Chair of Working Group I to the CBD submitted a Draft Gender Action Plan that recognized the importance of “advancing efforts to achieve gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment to ensure the effective implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework” (CBD, 2022b, p. 1).

Key to the successful implementation of these commitments is the full and effective engagement of equity-deserving groups through national-level strategies such as national adaptation plans (NAPs) and national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs). While adaptation planning processes represent powerful platforms for advancing GESI and Indigenous sovereignty, according to an analysis by the NAP Global Network, just over half of NAP documents submitted as of the end of September 2023 identified women as stakeholders in adaptation planning processes (NAP Global Network, 2023). Furthermore, an analysis of NBSAPs developed by countries under the CBD showed that less than half referred to gender or women at all (CBD, 2020a). Moreover, women are often positioned as vulnerable groups within NAPs and NBSAPs, discounting their vital and often unique knowledge and capacities (CBD, 2018; NAP Global Network, 2023). Regarding the involvement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in international biodiversity policy, an analysis by the Secretariat of the CBD has determined that, although there has been some improvement in the inclusion of references to Indigenous Peoples and local communities in national biodiversity reporting, there is no evidence that they have participated in NBSAP processes (Forest Peoples Programme et al., 2020). More progress must be made toward making these processes more inclusive to accelerate gains for equitable adaptation and climate justice.



## 2.0 Making the Case: Why consider GESI in NbS for adaptation programming?

### 2.1 The Benefits of Mainstreaming GESI in NbS for Adaptation

Integrating GESI considerations into an NbS project is essential, given the complex and pressing nature of the climate and biodiversity crises and the way they interact with social and gender inequalities. For the Partnering for Climate initiative’s implementing partners, the urgent nature of considering gender-responsive climate action is highlighted by the Feminist International Assistance Policy, where support is stated for the “rights of people living in developing and fragile states, whose basic needs are threatened by the effects of climate change ... [including] all marginalized and vulnerable individuals, such as Indigenous people, migrants, and people with disabilities ... [as well as] women and girls” (Government of Canada, 2022a, para. 14). Equitable access to and control over the benefits of NbS for these individuals is also emphasized under the Feminist International Assistance Policy. These actions and considerations are important in NbS projects, as intersectional discrimination can not only increase the vulnerability of some groups, such as women and girls, but can also exclude these same groups from climate action, further exacerbating climate harm (Adaptation Fund, 2022).

Sustainable agriculture that secures land health through improved management practices is an example of an NbS that could address a selection of societal challenges, such as food security, climate change, and biodiversity loss (IUCN, 2021b). Inclusive land management practices that identify underlying inequalities and address barriers for equity-deserving groups can also be instrumental in furthering GESI. For example, women play important roles in managing soil fertility and ensuring both household and global food security, which includes substantial contributions of unpaid labour (Salcedo-La Viña et al., 2023). However, they only made up approximately 38% of the agricultural workforce (agricultural employment and off-farm agricultural food systems employment) in 2019 (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], 2023) and accounted for less than 15% of agricultural landowners in 2018 (FAO, 2018). Additionally, women’s access to extension services remains significantly lower than that of men (FAO, 2023). Therefore, recognizing gender differences and securing both land rights and access to natural resources management services for women are crucial to supporting sustainable land management and integrated adaptation actions (IPCC, 2019). This is equally important when working with Indigenous groups, as they have and continue to steward their traditional territories, which make up approximately 40% of protected areas worldwide (Townsend et al., 2020).

Regarding adaptation efforts overall, research has shown that attention to gender considerations improves effectiveness (Dazé & Church, 2019; Dazé & Dekens, 2017; Global Gender and Climate





Alliance, 2016; Huyer, 2016; IPCC, 2019; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2016). Case studies that point to the tangible benefits of incorporating an intersectional, gender-responsive approach within NbS programming are now emerging. In Rwanda, a project that sought to improve women’s land ownership also resulted in greater investments in soil conservation (Ali et al., 2014). In the Amazon, securing land rights for Indigenous men and women contributed to a reduction in deforestation (Ding et al., 2016). Though these NbS projects did not specifically address climate risks, they are helpful in illustrating the importance of incorporating a GESI lens in NbS for adaptation initiatives. Identifying and addressing the structural barriers that create power asymmetries and dispossession for marginalized groups can result in more equitable outcomes, as well as biodiversity co-benefits.

Leveraging a rights-based approach within adaptation programming with a focus on women’s empowerment has also been shown to achieve related objectives, such as household food security (Dazé & Terton, 2021). This approach is substantiated by evidence from assessments of natural resources management programming. For example, studies in India and Nepal showed that the forest management groups that included women “showed better resource governance and conservation outcomes” (IUCN, 2020a, para. 9; Leisher et al., 2016), highlighting the positive spillover effects of greater diversity and more equitable participation in natural resource governance. Similar trends have been observed in Tanzania regarding water resource management, where the greater involvement of women has resulted in water systems with better functioning and expanded access (Lecoutere et al., 2015).

NbS interventions that are developed to be gender-responsive and socially inclusive also create conditions for justice and the protection and advancement of human rights. The Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (FEBA) notes that key elements of climate justice in NbS include the integration and recognition of international and national human rights principles and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. In this way, NbS initiatives that are grounded in climate justice can be designed and implemented with fundamental human rights principles in mind, such as non-discrimination, transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and meaningful participation (GIZ & FEBA, 2022). In biodiversity conservation, embracing these principles and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples requires a conceptual shift from the conservation of natural areas without human interference to “rights-based collaborative approaches that support and promote community-led conservation and customary sustainable use and that celebrate the mutual relations between nature and culture” (Forest Peoples Programme et al., 2020, p. 36).

## 2.2 Challenges and Risks

To date, the gendered aspects of NbS design and implementation remain relatively underexplored, and the benefits of NbS are often communicated as benefits to the household without the examination of intrahousehold power dynamics (Salcedo-La Viña et al., 2023). NbS initiatives that are not gender responsive or socially inclusive may encounter risks in their programming, such as maladaptation and/or the worsening of socio-economic inequalities, and pose risks to conservation success. At a local level, existing gendered power dynamics



can undermine gains where women experience barriers to participation. Other critical factors include the distribution of power and assets, socio-economic and gender roles and norms, and the individual attributes of women according to intersecting identity factors (Salcedo-La Viña et al., 2023). With insufficient attention to gender and social issues in NbS projects, implementing partners may also inadvertently exacerbate existing risks, such as the risk of increased gender-based violence (GBV). For example, without detailed gender considerations, enhancing the participation of women in reforestation and sustainable forest management practices to strengthen forest resilience may expose them to an increased risk of GBV. This is because women often encounter violence, such as rape, physical abuse, and/or verbal and sexual harassment, when collecting or managing forest resources due to traditional beliefs about gender roles in many cultures (Castañeda Camey et al., 2020; Wan et al., 2011).

Men also experience environmental impacts in specific ways, as researchers have noted that “men’s mental health may be particularly vulnerable to environmental changes that affect the places and resources critical to masculine identities, especially those closely tied to livelihoods,” even increasing suicide rates compared to women (Natalia, 2011; Norgaard et al., 2017; World Health Organization, 2014; Vinyeta et al., 2016, p. 4). For example, in an Indigenous community in the United States, declining salmon stocks left men feeling “anger, grief, guilt, and shame,” as their traditional masculine roles as fishermen and their ability to supply food to their families and community were being compromised due to environmental changes (Norgaard et al., 2017, p. 8). Similarly, men are more prone to risk-taking behaviour during natural disasters and more vulnerable to accidents if the environments where they carry out traditional hunting and fishing activities become more unpredictable due to climate-induced issues, such as thinning sea ice (Ford & Smit, 2004; McBeath & Shepro, 2007; Vinyeta et al., 2016). A gender-responsive approach requires an examination of socio-cultural and economic expectations of men to address existing gender-based gaps (IUCN, 2021a).

Despite policy commitments and wide recognition from the adaptation community that GESI mainstreaming and equitable stakeholder participation are essential to addressing climate change and biodiversity loss, there is limited evidence that GESI considerations have been systematically integrated into NbS programming. In an analysis of research articles on NbS, only 8% addressed gender at all, and only half of those (4%) mentioned gender more than twice (Hagedoorn et al., 2021). The same study demonstrated that NbS evaluations often fail to account for differences in benefits accrued by men vis-à-vis women and other equity-deserving groups and do not examine barriers to participation and decision making (Hagedoorn et al., 2021). To address this gap, the following section describes what a gender-responsive and socially inclusive approach to NbS might look like, including the foundational elements and key concepts linked to GESI.



## 3.0 Foundational Elements of GESI in NbS

Several GESI frameworks have been designed to guide climate adaptation efforts, including for NbS programming. The following three foundational and interconnected elements that comprise a gender-responsive approach within NbS for adaptation are common to many of these frameworks (Dazé & Terton, 2021).

### **1. Recognizing Gender and Social Differences in Needs and Capacities to Implement NbS for Adaptation**

Differences in gender and intersecting identity factors regarding roles, knowledge, and the realization of rights mean that different gender and social groups have varying needs and capacities in relation to NbS. These differences must be acknowledged and addressed in NbS interventions through targeted actions, as well as the implementation of equity measures so that no one is left behind. These actions and measures may include addressing time poverty challenges and the gendered division of labour; improving access to natural resources required for sustainable livelihood strategies; addressing access to assets, finance, or specialized training to implement NbS; or providing more accessible climate science and information, among others.

Differences in needs and capacities are best understood through an intersectional gender analysis that considers how various identity characteristics, such as age, economic status, ability, education, ethnicity, gender, geography, language, racialization, religion, sex, and sexual orientation, among others, inform the experiences, barriers, and inequalities that particular groups or individuals face (Government of Canada, 2023b). For the design of gender-responsive and inclusive NbS for adaptation, the analysis must also incorporate an assessment of environmental stressors, climate-related vulnerabilities, and risks experienced by diverse gender and social groups.

### **2. Facilitating Equitable Participation and Influence in NbS for Adaptation Decision-Making Processes**

Decision making for NbS includes planning and implementation strategies, as well as natural resource governance. Across all decision-making processes and mechanisms, efforts are required to ensure equity and the inclusion of underrepresented voices, particularly in leadership roles. Adaptation studies have shown that enhancing the agency and the personal and collective empowerment of equity-deserving groups that are managing natural resources is critical to securing ecosystem functioning and ensuring effective adaptation responses, as well as improving participation and decision-making capacity (Woroniecki, 2019). This also requires reducing and eliminating the barriers within socio-ecological systems that prevent equity-deserving groups from being able to participate meaningfully in decision-making structures and processes.

Measures could include setting quotas for the participation of underrepresented groups in natural resource management committees, ensuring that NbS policies and plans at all levels consider GESI, and providing leadership and mentorship opportunities for women and other



equity-deserving groups. In this way, enhanced agency and empowerment can be seen as social benefits of NbS that can help to reduce further marginalization and vulnerability as a consequence of climate change (Woroniecki, 2019). This element is also conducive to a rights-based approach to NbS implementation that emphasizes participation and inclusivity at each stage of the project life cycle.

### **3. Promoting an Equitable Distribution of Benefits From NbS for Adaptation**

NbS policies and projects should be designed and implemented to ensure that the socio-ecological and economic benefits gained from these interventions are distributed equitably across gender and social groups (Dazé & Terton, 2021; GIZ & FEBA, 2022). This requires a mix of targeted interventions to benefit equity-deserving groups and the intentional design of all interventions to ensure that the opportunities and benefits are shared fairly across different gender and social groups and that they do not exacerbate existing inequalities. It also involves systems-oriented actions to lift barriers faced by particular groups—for example, by supporting advocacy for secure land tenure for women or strengthening access to financial services for equity-deserving groups. The design and operationalization of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) systems are essential here to ensure that equity is assessed in the outcomes of NbS for adaptation and that equity-deserving groups are able to provide perspectives on what is working well and where things could be improved for a fairer distribution of benefits.

Measures may include dedicated budgets for actions targeting equity-deserving groups, prioritization of NbS actions through participatory processes using multi-criteria analysis, collecting and analyzing disaggregated data as part of MEL systems, and incorporating participatory MEL methodologies to capture qualitative benefits and identify people who may be excluded.

Across all three elements, traditional and customary laws and gender and socio-cultural norms greatly influence the enabling environment, as well as the systems that determine participation in and access to the benefits of investments in NbS and adaptation programming for different gender and social groups. Consequently, efforts are required to challenge the “tough stuff,” including the gender stereotypes, societal norms, and social inequities that hamper GESI and biodiversity outcomes at multiple levels, from the household to local, national, and international centres of government (CBD, 2022a). This requires working with men and traditional powerholders and authorities at all levels to confront entrenched gender and social norms. Assessing these elements jointly during the design phase of a project and including GESI activities that target issues across all three elements described above will help to ensure that an NbS initiative is both gender responsive and inclusive in its implementation and impact.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These three foundational elements were adapted from Dazé and Terton (2021). For a more in-depth example of an analytical framework that examines the scope of environmental change experienced by Indigenous populations, please see Figure 1 from *The Dynamic Interaction Between Environmental and Human Factors in Shaping the Resilience of Indigenous Peoples to Environmental Change* by Ford et al. (2020).



## 4.0 Key Considerations for Integrating GESI Into NbS Initiatives

This section identifies entry points for integrating a GESI lens into an NbS initiative using an adapted version of the CBD's (2019b) project implementation cycle for ecosystem-based adaptation. A snapshot of key actions that can be considered at each stage and how to apply the three elements of GESI in NbS that are noted above are summarized in Table 1. Each stage will be explored in greater detail and includes links to helpful tools and resources, as well as case studies, to aid in GESI mainstreaming for NbS. All information presented in the report is based on current good practice and aligned with the [Feminist International Assistance Gender Equality Toolkit for Projects](#) (Government of Canada, 2023a), which provides a set of tools and standards for GESI mainstreaming in Global Affairs Canada-funded programming. It is important to note, however, that these steps are not always linear—some activities may occur concurrently while others may be iterative. For example, it is good practice to periodically revisit the project's Theory of Change (ToC) and GESI strategy based on the ongoing collection and analysis of data during the project's lifetime. As such, MEL mechanisms are outlined in the final step (Step E), but MEL components should be considered throughout the steps outlined below.



**Table 1.** Implementation steps and associated actions to enhance GESI in NbS initiatives

Step	Actions to enhance GESI considerations	Cross-cutting considerations
<p><b>A. Understanding the system</b> Identify key features of the target socio-ecological system.</p>	<p>Conduct preliminary intersectional gender analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify systemic social and gender inequalities and their intersections.</li> <li>• Determine target equity-deserving populations</li> <li>• Map actors working on GESI issues (government, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, etc.).</li> <li>• Assess the GESI capacities and priorities of relevant actors, including potential project partners.</li> <li>• Assess country government priorities and requirements for GESI, as well as applicable government and partner safeguarding policies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Three GESI in NbS elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing gender and social differences in needs and capacities to implement NbS for adaptation</li> <li>• Facilitating equitable participation and influence in NbS for adaptation decision-making processes</li> <li>• Promoting an equitable distribution of benefits from NbS for adaptation</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Risk assessment</b> Identify the main climate and non-climate risks and impacts.</p>	<p>Apply a GESI lens to climate risk and vulnerability assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) processes.</li> <li>• Analyze differentiated impacts of climate change on different gender and social groups.</li> <li>• Assess how gender and intersecting identity factors influence climate vulnerability and adaptive capacity.</li> <li>• Engage local GESI expert organizations and women/equity-deserving groups in climate vulnerability and risk-assessment processes.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>C. Identifying and appraising options</b> Identify potential NbS options that fit within an overall adaptation strategy. Develop criteria to prioritize and appraise options.</p>	<p>Identify gender-responsive and socially inclusive NbS options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use participatory approaches to appraise and prioritize NbS options, ensuring equitable participation of equity-deserving groups.</li> <li>• Identify specific NbS options for different gender and social groups.</li> <li>• Assess risks of maladaptation for different gender and social groups. Include contribution to GESI and equity in benefits among criteria used to prioritize options.</li> <li>• Propose targeted GESI interventions to address intersectional gender-based constraints and gaps identified.</li> </ul>	



Step	Actions to enhance GESI considerations	Cross-cutting considerations
<p><b>D. Implementation</b></p> <p>Design and implement the selected options.</p>	<p>Prioritize GESI in NbS design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on intersectional gender analysis, develop a GESI-mainstreamed ToC and strategy for implementation of NbS actions.</li> <li>• Ensure that the performance measurement framework allows for the assessment of equity in benefits from NbS by establishing gender-responsive and intersectional indicators, targets, and methodologies.</li> <li>• Hire GESI specialists and establish a GESI advisory committee</li> <li>• Consider GESI in NbS project operations.</li> <li>• Establish data-driven monitoring and reporting mechanisms for the GESI strategy to inform annual work planning and donor reporting.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>E. MEL</b></p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the project; learn and adapt to inform future policy and practice.</p>	<p>Establish a gender-responsive MEL system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage participatory methods to engage diverse NbS actors in MEL activities on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Develop and implement GESI-focused MEL tools.</li> <li>• Collect and assess intersectional data on an ongoing basis to assess the impact of the NbS initiative against the ToC.</li> </ul>	

Source: Adapted from CBD, 2019b.



## 4.1 Step A: Understanding the system

The first step to NbS implementation involves thinking about the key characteristics of the communities and ecosystems that the project will target, as well as how climate change impacts them. It is important to consider the two as an interconnected, socio-ecological system and examine gender and intersecting identity factors within the system (IISD et al., 2022). This process can include a stakeholder mapping exercise to enable the project team to better understand the roles of diverse actors within the project site(s), including understanding the existing governance mechanisms that are in place, as well as identifying which actors (government, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, etc.) are working on GESI issues in the area.

### Box 1. Safeguarding policies

The development and application of safeguarding policies provide a useful starting point to establish a foundation for compliance with GESI and human rights principles. Examples include

- IUCN's [Global Standard for NbS](#) (2020)
- CBD's [Mo'otz Kuxtal Guidelines](#) (2019a)
- Wildlife Conservation Society's [Safeguarding Policy](#) (2020)

Safeguarding policies only provide a baseline for the advancement of GESI and human rights through NbS programming. For NbS initiatives to be gender responsive and socially inclusive, they must be guided by a multi-scale GESI strategy developed to target GESI and rights-based issues.

As part of this process, the design team should conduct a preliminary GESI assessment to determine which populations the project will target. A gender-responsive and socially inclusive approach to designing and implementing NbS for adaptation is primarily informed by an intersectional gender analysis. Women and Gender Equality Canada's<sup>2</sup> [Gender-Based Analysis Plus](#) (GBA Plus) tool provides an excellent intersectional lens for understanding how the lived realities of people with diverse gender and social identities codify how they experience the impacts of different policies and programs (Government of Canada, 2023b). By utilizing this approach throughout the project life cycle, starting in the design phase and continuing during implementation and MEL, NbS programming can be designed to be more responsive to individual needs and consider how various identity characteristics, such as age, economic status, ability, education, ethnicity, gender, geography, language, racialization, religion, sex, and sexual orientation, among others, inform the experiences, barriers, and inequalities that individuals face (Government of Canada, 2023b).

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<sup>2</sup> The GBA Plus Tool was developed under the Status of Women Canada, now Women and Gender Equality Canada.





Additionally, the three elements of GESI in NbS introduced above can be leveraged as an analytical framework to help conduct this preliminary assessment of intersectional gender-based constraints, needs, and gaps experienced by equity-deserving groups regarding NbS. This intersectional analysis is expanded upon in Step B.

Government priorities for GESI and adaptation should also be assessed as early as possible to ensure that the proposed NbS project design aligns with existing policy commitments. If partners have been engaged at this point, partner strengths and capacities regarding GESI and NbS should be assessed, and shared GESI goals for the project should be discussed. Finally, GESI specialists should be engaged in the ideation stage to ensure that GESI considerations are thoroughly mainstreamed into project design.

### 4.1.1 Helpful Tools and Reference Documents

- [\*Feminist International Assistance Gender Equality Toolkit for Projects\*](#) (Government of Canada, 2023a)
- [\*GBA Plus Framework\*](#) (Women and Gender Equality Canada) (Government of Canada, 2023b)
- [\*Gender-Responsive National Adaptation Plan \(NAP\) Processes: Progress and Promising Examples\*](#) (Dazé & Hunter, 2022, NAP Global Network)

#### Box 2. Step A example: Conceptualizing a GESI-mainstreamed NbS project

A participatory study of climate change vulnerability was conducted in the Sơn Thọ commune within Hà Tĩnh, a mountainous northern coastal province of rural Vietnam, to determine appropriate, gender-responsive NbS interventions. The study determined that good ecosystem management practices played a key role in changing local landscapes and generating ecosystem services and that it is important to account for the different needs and priorities of men and women. For example, it was more common for women to prioritize NbS measures, such as beekeeping and the intercropping of plants, including vegetables and grass for animals. Men, on the other hand, preferred forest protection measures, including soil coverage to prevent erosion, water harvesting, and drip irrigation for fruit trees. These options suggest that, in this community, men are focused more on longer-term and larger-scale solutions due to differences in their gendered roles and responsibilities. Women's preferences tend to favour solutions tied to their domestic tasks and daily roles, such as providing foodstuffs for both families and animals.

Source: Lien & Brown, 2018.



## 4.2 Step B: Risk assessment

At the beginning of project implementation, an FPIC consultation exercise should be undertaken to inform and garner support from community members. The FPIC process seeks collective consent from Indigenous Peoples and identifies all affected communities in the project site(s) to ensure that all perspectives are equally considered and respected through inclusive decision making (Bertalan, 2021). Next, a climate risk assessment of the project's socio-ecological system is undertaken to identify current and future climate change hazards and related vulnerabilities (IISD et al., 2022). Building on the preliminary GESI assessment conducted during Step A, the risk-assessment process includes a more in-depth assessment of GESI and human rights issues using an intersectional tool such as GBA Plus. This can serve to validate data that has been gathered during the design phase and allow for the collection of additional data to examine GESI-related issues in detail.

Moreover, an intersectional analysis allows for an assessment of both inter-categorical impacts of NbS programming (e.g., differences between women and men, girls and boys, and gender-diverse people), as well as intra-categorical impacts (e.g., differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, and younger and elder Indigenous women) (Adaptation Fund, 2022). While gender is not the only focus of an intersectional analysis, it remains a useful entry point to better understand tangential and intersecting identity factors as they relate to climate vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities (Adaptation Fund, 2022). Importantly, an intersectional analysis allows for a more nuanced understanding of complex power structures as they relate to NbS aid in the design of climate change adaptation interventions that can help transform systemic barriers. The identity factors that are prioritized for analysis within a given initiative depend on the specific context, the availability of data and/or groups that can provide the information required, and the capacity and resources to collect and analyze the data. Potential security risks associated with investigating certain identity factors must be kept in mind. The purpose of incorporating a GESI lens into the risk assessment is to identify how the impacts of climate change are experienced by different groups according to their gender and other intersecting identity factors.

Similar to Step A, the themes explored within the three elements of GESI in NbS can be used as analytical criteria to inform the development of the assessment; for example, they might prompt the inclusion of questions to help identify gender or social barriers that prevent certain groups from participating in NbS activities or accessing NbS resources. Further, the assessment can determine, in responding to these impacts, what specialized knowledge or experience these groups have regarding climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation that can help respond to these risks. The risk-assessment methodology should be tailored to the project's target ecosystems and communities, as questions that are customized for urban NbS interventions will differ from those of coastal or forest NbS interventions (Trohanis et al., 2023). The findings will inform the design and selection of gender-responsive and socially inclusive NbS options and activities and the formulation of a strategy to advance GESI, as well as address unanticipated outcomes and risks that may impact NbS effectiveness and adaptive capacity.



All design activities should utilize participatory methodologies to ensure that underrepresented voices, such as those of Indigenous Peoples, women, and girls, are at the centre of every process. During the assessment process, it is important to consult with local women's, human rights, and/or special interest organizations that are representative of equity-deserving populations that the project will be working with to ensure their diverse needs and interests are well represented. The analysis should also focus on soliciting the responses of equity-deserving groups and sub-groups that the project will be engaging with through an intentional data sampling approach to ensure a diversity of responses. This will help the project team to adequately understand the context, specific constraints, and challenges that these groups face.

### 4.2.1 Helpful Tools and Reference Documents

- *Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis Handbook* (CARE International, 2019a)
- *Hariyo Ban Program: Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning: Training of Trainers Manual* (Regami & Rijal, 2014, World Wide Fund for Nature and CARE International)
- *Gender and Inclusion Toolbox: Participatory Research in Climate Change and Agriculture* (Jost et al., 2014, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, World Agroforestry Centre, and CARE International)

#### Box 3. Step B example: GESI, risk, and vulnerability assessment

In Cuba, a gender assessment was performed to inform the design and implementation of an NbS for an adaptation project<sup>3</sup> focused on enhancing the resilience of Cuba's southern coastal ecosystems. The assessment sought to determine how gender and other intersecting identity factors influence the adaptive capacity and climate vulnerability of individuals living in the project's intervention sites through a policy and plan analysis, literature review, interviews, surveys, and field visits performed at the household, community, and local and national government levels. Topics examined included the gendered division of labour, differences in education, access to and control of resources, rights, GBV, participation in decision making, and household dynamics, among others.

During stakeholder consultations, the project implementers (UN Development Programme [UNDP]) discovered that age and ability, rather than gender, were the main factors that determined climate vulnerabilities. Community members identified children, the elderly, and people with disabilities as those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in coastal areas, such as coastal flooding. They did, however, find that women were disproportionately affected by water supply and quality issues caused by saltwater intrusion. During a field visit, it was revealed that several homes in one of the project's intervention sites were filled with black and grey water. As most women residing in the project sites were identified as the primary heads of household and shared that they were

<sup>3</sup> Coastal Resilience to Climate Change in Cuba through Ecosystem-Based Adaptation – “MI COSTA”



responsible for all domestic tasks, it was determined that they used the contaminated water the most.

As a result, UNDP used the knowledge from their intersectional assessment to adjust activities and MEL indicators to be more responsive to social and gender differences. For example, a training package highlighting how people experience different levels of vulnerability due to their intersectional identities, particularly among equity-deserving groups, such as the elderly, children, people with disabilities, woman-headed households, and women, and how to address these differences in NbS for adaptation was developed for local government officials.

*Source: UNDP, 2021a, 2021b.*

### 4.3 Step C: Identifying and appraising options

The third step to NbS implementation involves an evaluation of potential NbS options leveraging the intersectional findings gathered during Steps A and B. In this step, the benefits, costs, and impacts of different NbS according to the needs of diverse gender and social groups are identified and compared with other adaptation options (IISD et al., 2022). This evaluation should leverage participatory approaches with a focus on ensuring equitable participation of equity-deserving groups in the appraisal and prioritization process. Through this process, the project team can assess comparable risks to ensure that interventions do not incur the risk of maladaptation for participants according to their gender and other intersecting identity factors. For example, a multi-criteria analysis can be considered, with specific criteria tailored to the context and drawing on the analysis conducted in the previous steps. Prioritized options should be discussed within the project team, highlighting how they will advance GESI and ensure equity in benefits among diverse project participants, as well as support their longer-term resilience.

In addition to selecting gender-responsive and socially inclusive NbS options, targeted GESI interventions should be incorporated into the project that address the existing intersectional gender-based constraints and gaps identified during Steps A and B. Examples include targeted technical training, inputs, and financial support to engage women and other equity-deserving groups in the design and implementation of NbS; support for equity-deserving groups to formalize or enhance their existing natural resource management structures; and the development of formal agreements with Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and local authorities where resource user rights are unstable or insecure in project areas.

The NbS options and targeted GESI interventions should be outlined in the project's design. The design should align these activities with the identity-based constraints, risks, and vulnerabilities identified during the risk assessment, promoting an integrated approach rather than treating GESI as a separate component of the project.



### 4.3.1 Helpful Tools and Reference Documents

- *Gender Transformative Adaptation: From Good Practice to Better Policy* (Deering, 2019)
- *Toward Gender-Responsive Ecosystem-Based Adaptation* (Dazé & Terton, 2021, GIZ & IISD)
- *Addressing Gender Issues and Actions in Biodiversity Objectives* (CBD, 2020a)

#### **Box 4. Step C example: Prioritizing gender-responsive and inclusive NbS options and GESI activities**

The Increasing Income, Diversifying Diets, and Empowering Women in Bangladesh and Nigeria (IDEA) project, in partnership with WorldFish, selected NbS activities that could deliver both biodiversity and well-being benefits by improving women's control over natural resources. In Bangladesh, 150,000 landless families have access to government-owned seasonal and derelict ponds in Taraganj (Rangpur District). The project provided women with greater control over fishing resources that are typically leased out by the government to men's fishing groups. The project supported women in forming a management group, as well as in collectively restoring and farming native fish species that were previously in decline, which also contributed to household food security. This action helped to reduce pressures on wild fish stocks and on the procurement of other natural resources that would normally be required to meet families' nutritional needs. Additionally, the project worked with men in the community to challenge existing gender norms that inhibited women's access to the pond.

Beyond the pilot project, the expectation is that more women's groups will become formalized and able to access the government ponds to promote sustainable aquaculture, deliver biodiversity co-benefits, and improve household food security at scale. Increasing women's participation in the fishing sector creates a potential risk of increased conflict or pushback from men and powerholders in the community, as power dynamics may shift. As such, engaging with men at the community level on gender norms aids in mitigating these risks, as it presents an opportunity to promote the acceptability of women in fishing alongside enhancing shared decision making at the household level.

*Source: Woodhouse et al., 2022.*

## 4.4 Step D: Implementation

At this point, one or more dedicated GESI specialists should be contracted to support the project on a full-time basis. This is considered good practice and is actively encouraged. In addition, there are other ways the project team can consider how to embed GESI considerations within project operations. Suggestions include

- being aware of cultural diversity in the project region and setting intentional hiring targets to reflect it;



- partnering with local GESI-focused organizations and establishing GESI expectations in partner contracts;
- establishing a project GESI advisory committee, including local community members involved in NbS activities;
- ensuring project sites (offices, training, and workshop facilities) are inclusive spaces and accessible to all participants;
- promoting continuous GESI learning and goal setting; and
- implementing NbS communications activities with gender responsiveness and inclusivity in mind.

During implementation, the project team, with support from the GESI specialist(s), should establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism to track the progress of strategy implementation. Semi-annual or annual donor reporting periods, as well as annual work-planning activities, are excellent opportunities to re-examine and update the project's GESI strategy. Reporting on the progress of the implementation of the GESI strategy should be informed by project data, information, and feedback from project partners and led by the GESI specialist(s) in collaboration with MEL, NbS, and other relevant specialist staff to ensure the updates are representative.

During this step, it is also essential for GESI considerations to be fully integrated into the project's ToC, performance measurement framework, and other key MEL components, such as the development of gender-sensitive indicators and outcomes (more detail is provided in Step E). Incorporating intended project outcomes from all three of the elements of GESI in NbS into the ToC will better ensure the initiative is gender responsive and socially inclusive. In finalizing the GESI strategy and associated activities, the project team should ensure that an adequate amount of the total project budget is allocated to GESI expertise, training, and GESI-specific MEL.

#### 4.4.1 Helpful Tools and Reference Documents

- *[Enabling Rural Women as Key Actors in Nature-Based Solutions](#)* (Salcedo-la Viña et al., 2023, World Resources Institute)
- *[Gender Transformative Approaches for Advancing Gender Equality in Coral Reef Social-Ecological Systems Technical Brief](#)* (Lau et al., 2021, CARE International and World Wide Fund for Nature)
- *[Best Practices in Gender and Biodiversity: Pathways for Multiple Benefits](#)* (CBD, 2022a)



### Box 5. Step D example: Implementation of an NbS project and GESI strategy

The Economic Inclusion Programme for Families and Rural Communities in the Territory of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2013–2019)<sup>4</sup> aimed to support the empowerment of women in natural resources management in Bolivia by bringing together both Traditional and scientific knowledge. The project team first helped to obtain collective land titles and legal recognition for Indigenous communities. Land use arrangements were also employed to ensure land holdings would be managed equitably between men and women. The team conducted participatory assessments to develop three-dimensional “talking maps” (*mapas parlantes*), which depicted the desired status for the community’s future, as well as current and anticipated future climate-related challenges regarding natural resources management. The maps illustrated specific ecological threats to Indigenous women and youth’s natural resources management practices and disaggregated data by gender, age, and ethnicity. The project identified improved agronomic practices, irrigation, and land rehabilitation as key strategies for increasing resilience to climate change impacts, and the project sought to “recover and replicate ... knowledge – especially that of women – and blend it with science and technology” (CBD, 2022a, p. 38) to develop the targeted NbS activities. A dedicated budget line was set aside for women- and youth-specific initiatives.

Project activities built on traditional agroecosystems to establish vertical watersheds for agricultural production, home gardens, and communal seed banks with medicinal plant species that were important to women. They also established *quthañas*, a climate-resilient water harvesting system that aids in sustainable water management given the lack of water availability due to climate change, which is accessible and time efficient for women given their role in water collection. The collection and analysis of gender data enabled a better understanding of gendered roles and responsibilities, such as women’s heavier workloads, to develop gender-responsive actions. As such, the project included the provision of childcare, training on technologies to reduce women’s work burdens, and the inclusion of women in decision making to determine local priorities for financing natural resources management initiatives.

Ecological logbooks (*cadernetas ecológicas*) were also established, which helped make women’s contributions to household labour and natural resources management more visible and promoted joint household decision making. Partnerships were developed with UN Women and local non-governmental organizations to enable ready access to gender and other forms of specialist expertise, as well as promote more sustainable gender and biodiversity gains. Dedicated staff were identified as “gender promoters” and supported by a national gender expert. All capacity-strengthening initiatives involved women trainers to overcome social barriers for women participants.

Source: CBD, 2022a.

<sup>4</sup> The project was co-financed and implemented by the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Spanish Trust Fund, and the International Fund for Agriculture and Development.



## 4.5 Step E: MEL

During this step, the project team, guided by one or more MEL specialists, should develop a MEL plan that describes the MEL tools and activities to be used and undertaken by the project. A MEL plan allows for the project team to assess the effectiveness of the NbS interventions in addressing adaptation in an equitable manner and in promoting GESI. It should be noted that this step overlaps with previous steps, as MEL processes begin with the GESI assessment and become formalized in the implementation phase. The language used in the MEL tools should assess impacts across the three elements of GESI in NbS, as well as demonstrate how the project design or ToC has considered them. Associated indicators should be context specific, and, wherever possible, they should be disaggregated by gender and other pertinent intersecting identity factors as per the GESI assessment, such as sexuality, age, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, nationality, and ability, among others.

All MEL staff or individuals contracted to collect project data should be trained on how to do so in a gender-responsive and self-reflexive manner, including guidance on data privacy and safeguarding. MEL activities should be done using a participatory approach that involves diverse NbS participants, particularly equity-deserving groups whose voices are more likely to go unheard. The establishment of a positive feedback loop, where data can be made accessible to participants for validation and discussion on an ongoing basis, is key to this process. A sufficient budget should be made available to develop and implement GESI-focused MEL tools that gather data on GESI dimensions, such as through surveys or outcome mapping exercises. It is also recommended that GESI and MEL specialists work closely during project data collection and reporting periods to ensure tools are sufficiently mainstreamed and to jointly analyze NbS and GESI data. Finally, the project team should establish a research or learning agenda that includes GESI- and NbS-specific research questions to facilitate learning, adaptive management, and the sharing of successes and failures.

### 4.5.1 Helpful Tools and Reference Documents

- [\*Gender Analysis Guide\*](#) (IUCN, 2021)
- [\*Integrating Gender and Social Inclusion in NbS: Guidance Note\*](#) (Trohanis et al., 2023, World Bank)
- [\*A Study on Intersectional Approaches to Gender Mainstreaming in Adaptation-Relevant Interventions\*](#) (Adaptation Fund, 2022)
- [\*Guidance Note on Feminist MEAL\*](#) (Oxfam Canada, 2020)
- [\*Project-Level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index\*](#) (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2023)
- [\*Gender Progress Markers: Implementation Manual\*](#) (Mennonite Economic Development Associates, 2021)





### **Box 6. Step E example: Evaluating adaptation results for responsiveness to GESI**

In March 2017, the City Council of Barcelona introduced a government bill titled *Urban Planning With a Gender Perspective: The Urban Planning of Everyday Life*, in which planning for public and green spaces using a gender lens was proposed (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2021a, 2021b). This resulted in the *Vacant Lots Plan*, a climate resilience municipal program driven by neighbourhood associations and cooperatives where unused lots are revitalized using urban NbS approaches. The program has transformed several empty lots into community spaces through the creation of urban gardens that incorporate permaculture, organic vegetables, and medicinal herbs and has established green roofs. Evaluating the needs and interests of different groups resulted in the development of NbS interventions that offered therapeutic benefits for more marginalized populations, including people with mental and physical disabilities, the unemployed, youth, and older people, including women within these groups. These interventions also offered opportunities to increase the participation of these groups in NbS planning and implementation, as well as opportunities to increase their agency and autonomy.

*Source: Amorim-Maia et al., 2022.*



## 5.0 Conclusion

The information presented in this report demonstrates the importance of acknowledging and meaningfully integrating GESI considerations within an NbS for adaptation intervention. Failing to do so represents both a risk and a missed opportunity. While mainstreaming GESI in NbS is a relatively new area of focus within adaptation programming, this paper provides a selection of promising practices and relevant case studies that can be applied by NbS practitioners to improve the impact and reach of their work. Ultimately, these measures will improve the quality of NbS for adaptation programming overall and contribute to a world that is more equitable, inclusive, and nature-positive.



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## Appendix A. Key Terminology

### **Agency**

“Agency concerns the ability of people, individually or collectively, to have choice in responding to environmental change and depends on people’s belief that they can manage and control events that affect them as well as socio-economic and political conditions that enable them to take action” (Ford et al., 2020).

Building agency means “building consciousness, confidence, self-esteem and aspirations (non-formal sphere) and knowledge, skills and capabilities (formal sphere)” (CARE International, 2019a).

### **Biodiversity co-benefits**

Net gains to biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and services that can be attained from the implementation of NbS for adaptation (Lo & Rawluk, 2023, p. iv).

### **Climate justice**

“Justice that links development and human rights to achieve a human-centred approach to addressing climate change, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018, p. 552; Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice, 2018) It comprises (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit & Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation, 2022; Schlosberg, 2004):

- recognitional justice, which recognizes and respects the distinct rights, values, experiences, and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and equity-deserving groups;
- procedural justice, which ensures that participation in decision-making, governance and implementation is inclusive, fair, and accessible; and
- distributional justice, which aims to equitably distribute the benefits of an NbS project to stakeholders and rights holders, as well as compensate for any negative impacts resulting from NbS actions.

### **Ecosystem services**

“The benefits people obtain from ecosystems” (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). These benefits include provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural services.



**Ecosystem-based adaptation**

“The use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change” (CBD, 2009).

**Empowerment**

In the context of NbS, empowerment can be defined as (Woroniecki et al., 2019):

- agency and access to tangible and intangible resources, as well as an understanding of changing socio-ecological context for capabilities;
- engagements of knowledge and participation, as well as process ownership and institutional disruption; and
- a recognition of the political nature of rights claims.

**Equity-deserving groups**

Populations that face barriers to participating in society due to systemic or structural discrimination on the basis of gender, age, racialization, disability, Indigeneity, sexual orientation, or other factors (Government of Canada, 2023c; University of New Brunswick, n.d.).

**Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC)**

“A specific right granted to Indigenous Peoples [...] which aligns with their universal right to self-determination. FPIC allows Indigenous Peoples to provide or withhold/withdraw consent, at any point, regarding projects impacting their territories. FPIC allows Indigenous Peoples to engage in negotiations to shape the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects” (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, n.d.).

**GESI mainstreaming**

The integration of gender-responsive and inclusive approaches at all stages of a climate adaptation initiative in order to advance gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) (adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023). This approach recognizes gender and social differences that influence people’s ability to participate in and benefit from sustainable development.



**Gender-responsive NbS**

Gender-responsive approaches are ways of working that examine and actively address gender norms, roles, and inequalities (World Health Organization, 2009) toward gender equality. Gender-responsive NbS for adaptation seeks to improve the ability of equity-deserving groups to manage climate risks while protecting and enhancing biodiversity, with consideration for how gender norms, roles, and behaviours may enable or inhibit their ability to do so. A gender-responsive approach to NbS ensures that differences in needs and access to resources, participation, and opportunities are meaningfully integrated into the planning and implementation of NbS to enable an equitable distribution of benefits (adapted from Dazé & Church, 2019; United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

**Human rights-based approach (HRBA)**

“A conceptual framework ... that is based on international human rights laws and standards, and operationally directed at promoting and protecting human rights. [A] HRBA seeks to analyse inequalities that lie at the heart of development problems, and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress” (UNEP, 2022a).

**Indigenous Peoples**

There is no official definition of Indigenous Peoples; however, within the United Nations (UN) system, they are considered to share the following characteristics, among others: self-identified and accepted by their community; historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; distinct social, economic, or political systems; distinct language, culture, and beliefs; and strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, n.d.).

**Intersectionality**

Initially coined by Crenshaw (1989), this term refers to “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). The term “intersecting identity factors” is used in this report to describe the multiple social categorizations that comprise an individual’s identity and how they interact to form unique experiences of advantage and disadvantage.



<b>Local communities</b>	Those who self-identify and have “lifestyles linked to traditions associated with natural cycles (symbiotic relationships or dependence), the use of and dependence on biological resources and linked to the sustainable use of nature and biodiversity” (CBD, 2013).
<b>Maladaptation</b>	“Actions that may lead to increased risk of adverse climate-related outcomes, including via increased greenhouse gas emissions, increased or shifted vulnerability to climate change, more inequitable outcomes, or diminished welfare, now or in the future” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022a).
<b>Nature-based solutions (NbS)</b>	“Actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services and resilience and biodiversity benefits” (UN Environment Programme, 2022c).
<b>Time poverty</b>	Time poverty is the result of an “inequitable gender-based allocation of unpaid domestic work, [which] often leaves women with little or no discretionary time” (Hyde et al., 2020).

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