

Gender-Responsive Green Growth: Macro-Economic Policies and National Green Growth Strategies

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INTRODUCTION	1
WHY IS GENDER RELEVANT TO MACRO-ECONOMIC POLICIES AND NATIONAL GREEN GROWTH STRATEGIES?	1
HOW HAS GENDER BEEN INTEGRATED INTO EXISTING DONOR PROGRAMMES FOCUSED ON MACRO-ECONOMIC POLICIES AND NATIONAL GREEN GROWTH STRATEGIES?	2
LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMES.....	3

Introduction

Existing macro-economic policies insufficiently account for and value women's economic contributions. Historically, macro-economic policies have been assumed to be gender neutral and hence gender was ignored in their development. This is changing. There is an increasing recognition that macro-economic policies can contribute to gendered patterns of labour market outcomes. Moreover, it is acknowledged that to achieve bold climate action economic policymakers must take a people-centred approach. Unlocking inclusive green growth requires the recognition that macro-economic policies and national green growth strategies affect women and men differently. To achieve this, development agencies can assist policymakers in incorporating gender-responsive approaches in the development and implementation of their policies.



Gender-responsive green macro-economic policies influence the performance and behaviour of an economy in a way that accounts for the structural barriers driving gender inequality, and promotes the conservation of natural capital and efficient use of natural resources. Policy areas include those related to the labour market, tax, government spending and borrowing, trade, and monetary and credit rules. Within any given macro-economic environment, **gender-responsive national green growth strategies** account for the socially constructed behaviours, norms, and relationships between men and women in a way that incentivises behavioural change by firms and consumers, and facilitates the reallocation of jobs, capital, and technology towards economic activities that promote inclusive green growth.¹

This Guidance Sheet sets out: arguments for considering gender-responsive approaches in donor programmes focused on macro-economic policies and national green growth strategies; examples of how diverse approaches have been integrated into existing programmes; and recommendations for future programmes.



Image from GREEN ink.

Why is gender relevant to macro-economic policies and national green growth strategies?

- **Gender equality can promote economic stability and growth.**² It can be argued that existing levels of gender inequality threaten stability and growth, undermining the transition to an inclusive green economy and sustainable development.
- **Narrowing participation gaps between women and men is likely to bring large economic gains.** This is in terms of economic benefit from bringing women into the labor force over and above the benefit from simply having more workers, and from reallocation to the services sector. McKinsey & Company estimate that if all countries matched their 'best-in-region country' in progress toward gender parity, US\$12 trillion could be added to global GDP by 2025.³

¹ OECD, 2011

² Note that recent research by Kan and Klasen (2019) indicates the assumption that gender equality promotes economic stability is based on limited research.

³ McKinsey & Company, 2015.

- **Macro-economic policies and green growth strategies can respond to women's unpaid care burden and informal working, and address other barriers to labour force participation.** Most cultures ascribe primary responsibility for unpaid work within the domestic domain to women, restricting the time available for paid labour force participation. Gender biases in tax policies can influence women's decisions to engage in paid work and reinforce these norms. Macro-economic reforms can address gender discriminatory laws preventing women from working in specific industries or times of day, and can encourage the formalisation of employment and entrepreneurship.
- **Women's participation in public-private dialogue in the development of policy is restricted.** Unpaid care work can restrict the time available for women in all stakeholder groups to participate. Given women's significant representation in the informal sector, and the fact that workers in this sector may have restricted access to policy consultations, they can be excluded from providing inputs. Moreover, the low level of women's unionization compared to men can further result in a lack of women's views and interests being represented by trade unions.
- **Macro-economic policies and strategies are impacted by the power dynamics between women and men in society throughout the policymaking cycle.** There are low levels of participation of women policymakers in the development of green growth policies and strategies. For example, a study analysing 72 countries found that women represent only 6% of ministerial positions responsible for national energy policies and programmes.⁴ Moreover, there are relatively few women policymakers in central banks and ministries of finance despite evidence indicating that gender diverse monetary policy committees make more efficient monetary policy decisions.⁵
- **There is a lack of sex-disaggregated data to inform policymaking and regulation among central banks and ministries of finance.** The result is a lack of evidence to identify gender differences in the impact of their macro-economic policies.

- **Gender is integrated into international commitments under the UNFCCC and in the SDGs.** As such there is a need and opportunity to translate these commitments into national-level implementation in National Green Growth Strategies, relevant sector policies, and data collection tracking systems.



How has gender been integrated into existing donor programmes focused on macro-economic policies and national green growth strategies?

A number of gender approaches have been adopted by donor programmes that support the development and implementation of macro-economic policies and national green growth strategies. Examples of such programmes are provided in Box 1. Common approaches across programmes are:

- Technical support to incorporate a focus on women and gender considerations within green growth policies;
- Consultation of women, gender experts, and ministries in the development of green growth policies;
- Capacity building of policymakers; and,
- Gender impact assessments of laws and policies related to green growth.

These gender and green growth approaches tend to mainstream gender in the overall programme, and any targeted focus on women as the primary beneficiaries is generally at the activity level. The approaches are generally **gender-responsive** in that they analyse and address the heterogeneous needs of, and impacts on, different population groups, but do not explicitly challenge existing gender roles and norms. There are opportunities for donor programmes to explore gender differential impacts of green taxes, inflation, and credit arising from the transition to a green economy. Moreover, there is scope to support the identification of macro-indicators that are sex-disaggregated.

⁴ [USAID & IUCN, 2014.](#)

⁵ [Romelli, Charlety, & Santacreu-Vasut, 2017](#); [AFI, 2018](#) ; [Masciandaro, Profeta and Romelli, 2016](#); [Diouf and Pepin, 2016.](#)



Lessons learned and recommendations for future programmes

Below are some recommendations to consider when supporting the development and implementation of gender-responsive macro-economic policies and national green growth strategies, inspired by lessons learned from existing programmes. See Box 2 for resources to assist with adopting these recommendations.

Diagnosis and Design

- ✓ Identify whether any macro-economic policies are currently gender-responsive and search for evidence of integrating gender considerations or promoting women's participation into any existing national green growth policies. Selling the government its own strategy can be more effective than selling your own strategy.
- ✓ Compile national-level data on the amount of unpaid care work women and men are engaged in, and the proportion of women and men working in the informal economy, to form arguments on the need to account for this in macro-economic policies.
- ✓ Identify existing data on participation of women as policymakers in the ministries responsible for green growth-related policy areas, as well as within the ministry of finance and central bank.
- ✓ Promote institutional coordination through involving the lead ministry on gender, as well as ministries responsible for key sectors within the green economy in the project design and in any steering committees for its implementation. The level of ministerial buy-in influences the effectiveness of integrating gender into green growth policies at a strategic level. In doing so, request gender-balanced representation from participants from each ministry.
- ✓ Tailor your message to the target policymaker audience to give it the most traction. For instance, use economic arguments for the ministry of finance, and human development arguments for ministries with a social or women's affairs remit.
- ✓ Consider collaborating with entities involved in supporting national governments on macro-economic and green growth policy development including PAGE, IUCN, GGGI and the New Climate Economy, as well as the World Bank's ESMAP.

Implementation

- ✓ Design a capacity building programme for policymakers on gender and macro-economic policies or gender and green growth. Also consider including a focus on these topics in other policymaker training content.
- ✓ Encourage and up-skill women as green macro-economic policymakers.
- ✓ Provide technical support to partners on the gender dimensions of macro-economic policy related to informal worker and unpaid care work.
- ✓ Advise partners to gender sensitize existing or new national green growth policy content by:
 - ↳ **Linking gender equality to the transition to a green economy** in the context setting for their green growth policies and providing examples of any differential or greater vulnerability of women or men to barriers, including social norms constraints, to participating in the economy that may need to be addressed through the policy.
 - ↳ **Formulating gender-sensitive wording of the national green growth policy strategic objectives, outputs and outcomes.**
 - ↳ **Including specific women-targeted policy measures** and accompanying indicators in green growth plans at a national, subnational, and sector level within the business environment, including policy actions that challenge and transform social norms. Use this as an opportunity to replicate successful initiatives elsewhere and ensure policy coherence with gender dimensions of sector policies and overarching national gender policies in the formulation of the new green industrial policy.
- ✓ Provide technical advice on gender mainstreaming in climate-related policies as subcomponents to the national green growth plan.
- ✓ Engage with women's associations as part of a participatory policy development process, and also ensure women's participation from other stakeholder groups to provide perspectives throughout public-private dialogue in policy consultations. In doing so, engage with representatives of the informal and formal sectors within the green economy.

- ✓ Support the central bank, ministry of finance, and national statistical office to develop and collect sex-disaggregated data and indicators. This may include supporting efforts to provide sex-disaggregated supply-side data to the [IMF Financial Access Survey](#).
- ✓ Conduct gender policy impact assessments in the development of new green growth policies and laws.
- ✓ Devise policy incentives to encourage companies in green economy sectors to disclose, for example, levels of women's workforce participation and leadership, actions taken to promote a gender-balanced workforce, or supplier diversity.
- ✓ Explore approaches to account for unpaid care contributions within green macro-economic indicators.
- ✓ Reference the SDGs and binding international policy documents that refer to gender and green growth to accelerate conversations with policymakers in meetings and awareness-raising workshops.

Evaluation and Sustainability

- ✓ Include indicators focused on the intersection of gender and green growth policies in different components of the business environment in terms of their existence and implementation, as well as women's participation in developing the policies. For example:
 - ↳ Number of countries adopting a gender-responsive green industry work plan
 - ↳ Number of gender-references included in national green industry policy implementation plans
 - ↳ Percentage of women represented in green industry decision policymaking and policy implementation structures.

This material has been prepared for discussion purposes only. As such, the material should not be regarded as incorporating legal or investment advice, or providing any recommendation regarding its suitability for your purposes. Conclusions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the DCED or its members.

Box 1: Case studies

- [The Global Green Growth Institute \(GGGI\)](#) was established in 2012. Its gender and green growth activities include:
 - supporting the Government of Rwanda with the application of gender and social inclusion principles to its National Roadmap for Secondary Green City Development;
 - mainstreaming gender-responsive policies into work in Indonesia that mobilises carbon finance to address deforestation in Kalimantan;
 - supporting the Jordanian government to develop its forthcoming National Action Plan for Green Growth, including through engagement with ministries to ensure policy coherence with gender targets articulated in other strategies;
 - providing training to policymakers in Jordan responsible for the green growth strategy development on social inclusion and women's empowerment; and,
 - producing a report on [Gender Inclusive Green Growth in Lao PDR: Recommendations to maximize economic growth through gender equality](#).
- Through the [Partnership for Action on Green Economy](#), UNDP has provided policy support to the Mongolian government on gender mainstreaming in the country's existing green development policy. This involved UNDP undertaking:
 - a gender analysis on national gender equality norms, including laws and policies;
 - a rapid assessment of sectors to identify key gender inequalities; and,
 - an assessment of the gender information required for policy planning.
- The gender mainstreaming strategy linked gender equality to green development at the overall objective level, and in each of the outcomes and outputs, with each of these accompanied by a proposed action plan with key actions and targets.
- The GIZ's [Social Dimension of Sustainable Green Growth](#) programme in Vietnam is running from 2016-2022. To date, the programme has worked with the relevant ministries to:
 - provide capacity building support to implement a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and assess gender impacts within the SIA;
 - analyse the implementation of the Vietnam Green Growth Strategy from a gender perspective;
 - recommend concrete measures for better integrating social and gender issues into future green growth policies;
 - analyse how green economy approaches can transform persistent structural (including gender) inequalities that underpin poverty and vulnerability; and,
 - consult with the Vietnam Women's Union to inform programme activities.



Box 1: Case studies continued

- The Secretary General of the United Nations launched [Sustainable Energy for All \(SEforALL\)](#) in 2012. This global initiative was designed with the objectives of: ensuring universal access to modern energy sources; doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. To understand the extent to which gender is being mainstreamed in SEforALL-related activities and to highlight cross-cutting gender issues and regional trends, IUCN's Global Gender Office assessed SEforALL country action plan documents from 56 countries. The results were published in a [report](#). Gender considerations were included in 84% of documents and in these documents women were generally characterized as beneficiaries and seldom as agents of change. The most prominent cross-cutting gender issues related to time poverty, lack of electrification in rural areas, and women's health, safety, and well-being.
- The UNDP's [Governance of Climate Change Finance to Enhance Gender Equality](#) programme focuses on climate change mainstreaming as the entry point into sustainable planning and budget reform in Asia Pacific, and also considers the effectiveness of climate change interventions in terms of gender equality, poverty reduction, and respect for human rights. Programme activities include:
 - using the Climate Change Budget Integration Index to measure the extent to which climate change, gender equality, and human rights are integrated in budget processes;
 - assisting governments to adopt investment appraisal guidelines and budget circulars; and,
 - providing south-south exchanges and peer-learning events on climate change finance that has an impact on gender and poverty.

Box 2: Resources

- **Background**
 - [Macroeconomics and Gender Recent research on economic growth and women's economic empowerment](#), IDRC
 - [Gender and Its Relevance to Macro-Economic Policy: A Survey](#), IMF
 - [Women, Work, and the Economy: Macroeconomic Gains from Gender Equity](#), IMF
 - [Economic Gains from Gender Inclusion: New Mechanisms, New Evidence](#), IMF
 - [Economic Gains from Gender Inclusion: Even Greater than You Thought](#), IMF
 - [Gender-Just Macroeconomics Engaging the IMF and World Bank](#), Bretton Woods Project
 - [Why Macroeconomic Policy Matters For Gender Equality](#), UN Women
 - [Practitioner's Guide to Strategic Green Industrial Policy](#), PAGE
- **Unpaid care work**
 - [Care Work and Care Jobs – The Future of Decent Work](#), ILO
 - [Women's Work – Mothers, children and the global childcare crisis](#), ODI
 - [Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020 -Families in a Changing World](#), UN Women
- **Informal economy**
 - [Women and Men in the Informal Economy – A Statistical Brief](#), WIEGO
 - [Measuring Informality: A Statistical Manual on the informal sector and informal employment](#), ILO
 - [Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation 2015](#), ILO

Box 2: Resources continued

- **Gender diversity in policymaking**
 - [Women's Participation in Global Environmental Decision Making - New Research from the Environment and Gender Index](#), IUCN
 - [Gender Diversity with AFI Member Institutions](#), AFI
 - [Women in Environmental Decision making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines](#), IUCN
 - [Gender and Climate Finance: New Data on Women in Decision-Making Positions](#), IUCN
- **Training for policymakers**
 - [Gender and Macroeconomics – an Introduction](#), Heinrich Böll Stiftung
 - [Mainstreaming Gender in the Energy Sector Training Manual](#), Energia
 - [Leadership and Diversity Program for Regulators](#), AFI and Women's World Banking
- **Incorporating gender into green growth action plans**
 - [Mainstreaming Gender into National Mitigation Activities – Guidelines for Policy Makers and Proposal Developers](#), ADB
 - [The Art of Implementation Gender Strategies Transforming National and Regional Climate Change Decision Making](#), IUCN
 - [Climate Change Gender Action Plan \(ccGAP\) examples](#), IUCN
 - [Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Policy and Action](#), GRF
 - [Gender Mainstreaming in Water Policies and Actions](#), GRF
 - [Gender and energy online toolkit for practitioners](#), World Bank
 - [Integrating Gender Considerations into Energy Operations](#), World Bank
- **Collecting data**
 - [Toolkit on sex-disaggregated data collection](#), AFI
- **Gender policy impact assessment**
 - [Gender-Based Analysis Plus \(GBA+\)](#), Government of Canada
- **Gender and tax**
 - [Taxation and Gender Equity. An eight-country study of the gendered impact of direct and indirect taxes](#)
 - [Issues Brief: Gender Equality and Poverty Reduction: Issue 01 Taxation](#), UNDP
- **Gender and fossil fuel subsidy reform**
 - [Gender and Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform An audit of data on energy subsidies, energy use and gender in Indonesia](#), IISD
- **Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review**
 - [A Framework for Enhancing Gender and Poverty integration in Climate Finance](#), UNDP