



中国环境与发展国际合作委员会  
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on Environment and Development

# Report on Gender Mainstreaming in SPS for the Period 2021-2022





## Report on Gender Mainstreaming in SPS Research for the period 2021–2022

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CCICED Secretariat International Support Office<sup>1</sup>

In 2018, the CCICED Executive Committee identified gender equality as a cross-cutting theme and research priority. To support the integration of gender considerations as part of the Special Policy Studies for the period 2020–2021, the CCICED Secretariat International Support Office prepared this report.

The purpose of this report is two-fold: first, to highlight some of the research findings and recommendations of CCICED's 2020–2021 research work specific to gender, drawing on the final research papers from the Special Policy Studies; second, to provide recommendations for mainstreaming gender perspectives in the forthcoming phase of the research.

As exemplified in CCICED's recent work, gender equality is increasingly recognized as imperative to expediting progress on environmental sustainability and climate change. Not only is ensuring women have access to their rights an objective in itself, but enabling women's equitable access to and control of environmental resources and their participation and leadership in environmental decision making expedites progress toward sustainable environmental outcomes. The importance of implementing gender-responsive and inclusive approaches and practices that engage women as well as diverse groups in environmental and climate change initiatives, by hearing their perspectives, understanding their unique needs, and drawing on their capacities, is clear. Many of this year's CCICED Special Policy studies introduce gender concepts and demonstrate their practical application in progressing gender equality and women's rights in tandem with progressing sustainable development outcomes throughout the diverse range of environmental topics they address. The 2022 scoping studies<sup>2</sup> on innovative green finance and sustainable trade provided additional examples of gender initiatives.

### Gender Equality and the International Framework

China and most countries have signed on to international commitments that obligate them to promote gender equality, eliminate discrimination, and mainstream gender throughout legislation, policies, and programs, including within environment and climate change programs. China's domestic and international commitments to gender equality and sustainable development include

- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979)
- United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development and Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992)
- United Nations Conference on Women and Platform for Action (Beijing 1995)
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs)
- China National Program for Women's Development (2021–2030)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)

The UNFCCC's *Gender Plan of Action* has identified the following gender-based priority areas, which member states are encouraged to advance: capacity building, knowledge management, and communication; gender balance, participation, and women's leadership; coherence; gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation; and monitoring and reporting. These

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<sup>1</sup> Drafted by the WPS Group, Kristine St-Pierre and Jennifer Savidge.

<sup>2</sup> The scoping studies were not reviewed as part of this report.



priorities are reinforced in the *Climate Change and Gender Outcomes resulting from COP 26*, and they represent areas with which research objectives and approaches can be aligned to help further a gender-responsive sustainable development agenda. Similarly, the CBD also has a gender action plan with which research can be aligned.

Gender equality is recognized as integral in making progress toward the SDGs. It is not only a stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls but is recognized as cross-cutting across all SDGs, including those related to the environment and climate change. As a stand-alone goal, it promotes women's access to natural resources and enabling technologies and their increased participation and leadership in environmental decision-making processes. Importantly, it also calls on reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, including ownership of and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources. As a cross-cutting priority, gender equality can accelerate progress toward the other goals, including those associated with energy, ecosystem management, environment, climate change, disaster risk reduction, oceans, and forests.

The increasingly recognized intersections between gender, the environment, and climate change and emerging good practices and case studies in these areas create opportunities for China to leverage this learning for integration into its own approaches and policies. Opportunities are also enabled for China to contribute to these growing fields by offering innovative approaches that, enable women's participation and leadership in the design and implementation of approaches that are responsive to their needs and those of other marginalized groups, including for example, supporting women entrepreneurs and business ownership, which can have a multiplier effect on sustainable development.

### **CCICED's 2021 Gender-Related Work Through Special Policy Studies: Key observations**

This section presents key observations on the importance of gender equality within each SPS research area and identifies opportunities to further advance gender equality within environmental and climate change policy development and governance.

#### **1. Climate Change**

The intersections of climate change and gender equality are well-recognized within the international community. China's international commitments include the UNFCCC and its Gender Action Plan, as well as the SDGs, in which the issues of gender equality are a stand-alone goal and crosscut environmental and climate change goals. Gender equality considerations within climate change frameworks and approaches relate to women's and men's traditional roles within society and the economy and how these impact their access to and control of resources, such as land, climate change solutions, and clean energy investments; their participation and leadership in decision making, including as it relates to the transition to a green economy and climate financing; and their access to their rights, including access to land rights. Such commitments encourage the identification of gender-based barriers and gender-responsive measures to address them in order to leverage women's capacity to contribute to climate change initiatives, promoting both gender equality and sustainable development.

Reflecting the important intersections between gender equality and climate change, the *Carbon Emissions Peaking and Carbon Neutrality Policy Measures and Implementation Pathways* SPS



effectively integrates gender considerations. References to gender are included in the paper's introduction and executive summary, and a section of the SPS is dedicated to gender mainstreaming within climate and energy transition-related work, complete with recommendations. The paper recognizes that strengthening the integration of gender considerations in climate change will promote China's progress toward gender equality and sustainable development, while also improving China's international image, given the global community's recognition of the imperative of addressing gender equality within climate change and environmental approaches. It also recognizes the importance of enabling women's participation as facilitators and leaders in climate work, acknowledging climate change's disproportionate impact on them and the importance of considering their perspectives and leveraging their capacities to address it. It also advocates for a just, low-carbon energy transition, in which women are enabled to participate equally and access opportunities in an evolving job market. Finally, the paper encourages greater consideration of social impacts, particularly related to gender equality, within overseas green investments and aids, and promotes greater engagement in international cooperation on gender equality, including leveraging China's leading role in global climate governance to promote the integration of gender equality.

Future research could focus on providing analysis of specific initiatives that demonstrate the importance of women's engagement as participants and leaders within the design and implementation of climate change initiatives, showcasing and potentially comparing the results against gender-neutral initiatives. Future research could also provide explicit details on how existing green investment initiatives have integrated gender equality and climate change objectives, and could make recommendations for the development of such initiatives in the future.

## 2. Value Assessment of Nature-Based Solutions

Though international best practices specific to gender equality and nature-based solutions (NbS) are not yet well documented, there are many gender dimensions of NbS and wider environmental initiatives. Gender considerations within NbS approaches relate to the ways in which women's and men's different traditional roles and positions in society impact their access to and control of resources related to NbS, their participation and leadership in NbS decision making, and their access to their rights, including to the benefits of NbS. Unless gender-based barriers related to NbS are identified and gender-responsive measures are incorporated in NbS design and implementation, women are often excluded from contributing their unique perspectives and insights to the development of solutions due to gender-discriminatory norms that inhibit their participation and leadership. Design and implementation processes that expressly integrate gender considerations enable women as well as men to contribute to and benefit from NbS, ensuring these solutions are representative of the societies they are intended to serve.

The *Value Assessment of Nature-Based Solutions* SPS effectively integrates gender considerations at key points in the paper. It emphasizes the importance of gender and inclusion in the prototype database for NbS, by suggesting that gender-responsive and inclusive approaches be highlighted in categorized case studies, particularly within criteria five, six, and seven, which are closely aligned with inclusive approaches. The sub-paper *Prototype Database of Nature-based Solutions Cases* provides an excellent introduction to how gender and inclusion considerations are incorporated into and relevant to the prototype framework. The main paper also encourages the collection and analysis of relevant data in the SEEA EA, which enables measuring and tracking of benefits from NbS in a comprehensive manner, by encouraging ecosystem accounts to include data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity to better understand the distribution of NbS outcomes across demographic



groups. Notably, the SPS dedicates a section to *gender dimensions of NbS in China*, providing short case studies illustrating gender dimensions of ecosystem provisioning services, ecosystem cultural services, and ecosystem regulating services. Importantly, at its conclusion, the report includes a discrete recommendation emphasizing the role of women in NbS development and implementation, ensuring that their needs and perspectives are considered in NbS design, implementation, and monitoring; that they are enabled to participate and share in NbS benefits; and that governance processes are inclusive. In the appendix, the relevance of gender considerations to the IUCN global standard is illustrated in the categorization of a case study on sustainable aquaculture and innovative seaweed farming in Zanzibar, providing an effective model to replicate in integrating gender.

The integration of gender and inclusion considerations into the case studies appears to have been limited by an absence of existing data disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, and other factors. Future research efforts, then, could showcase additional case studies that feature and analyze such data, thus demonstrating the utility of its collection and analysis to measuring equitable outcomes (i.e., for women and Indigenous Peoples) for the wider NbS community. Research to improve global standards for NbS could also consider a more explicit focus on gender and inclusion considerations within the various criteria, to increase understanding and uptake of the systematic integration of gender considerations.

### 3. Global Ocean Governance

Gender equality is recognized as essential for the effective protection of oceans, the sustainable management of ocean and marine resources, and the accomplishment of the SDGs. The different roles of women and men in using and managing marine ecosystems and women's lesser access to their rights, decision making, and resources—reinforced by gender-discriminatory norms—mean that women and men are impacted differently by climate change, environmental issues such as pollution, and the drive toward globalization, and thus have different needs and capacities. Women are present in large numbers in onshore fisheries, processing of marine products, aquaculture, and managing plastic and other waste, and make important contributions to disaster risk reduction initiatives and conservation efforts. Despite their importance in marine ecosystems, their perspectives are not adequately represented in the formulation and implementation of marine ecosystem policy or within research initiatives, and women continue to be underrepresented within marine systems governance. To enable women to equitably contribute to, benefit from, and participate and lead in the development of sustainable marine ecosystem management and governance, the planning, implementation, and monitoring of such initiatives must be made gender responsive, considering both women's and men's perspectives and capacities.

The *Ecosystem Based Integrated Oceans Management Under the Vision of Carbon Neutrality* SPS effectively integrates gender considerations at various points within the text. This begins in the introduction, where the importance of gender equality to “the effective protection of oceans, the sustainable management of ocean and marine resources, and the accomplishment of the SDGs” is recognized, as is the need to improve understanding of a gender-responsive and inclusive approach to ocean management. Gender equality is specifically acknowledged as important to consider in the exploration and implementation of the four ocean-based approaches to carbon neutrality, including the question of how women should be engaged. Gender considerations are then integrated into the priority actions for two of these approaches: Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal and Nature-based Solutions, and Offshore Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage; considerations include the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data to better understand gender relations in fisheries



and aquaculture and women's contributions in low-carbon, sustainable seafood production. Importantly, the SPS recognizes that for ecosystem-based ocean management and governance to be successful, gender-responsive planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation are required at all levels, which includes engaging women across activities.

Limited data and research have been carried out to date on gender dimensions of ecosystem-based integrated ocean management. This represents an opportunity for future research, which could aim to build understanding of the different facets needed to create gender-responsive and inclusive ocean management to promote greater sustainability. Such research could provide a gender analysis detailing women's and men's respective roles and gender dynamics relevant to ocean management in a specific region or value chain, where gender differences could best be illustrated. It could propose specific gender-responsive measures to ensure women's and men's different perspectives on sustainable ocean management are represented and incorporated; address any barriers identified to women's participation and leadership; and progress initiatives in sustainable ocean management toward equitable and gender-responsive outcomes.

#### 4. River Basins

Climate change impacts women and men differently, because of traditional gender roles of women and men within the household and labour force, which tend to limit women's access to their rights, input into decision making, and access to and control of resources. Women tend to have a greater reliance on natural resources and bear responsibility for their use and management, including water. However, due to discriminatory gender norms, they also have more constraints, such as limited mobility, and less adaptive capacities and access to resources than men for responding to climate change. Despite their distinctive roles and their increased vulnerability to climate-induced shocks, women are often underrepresented within public and decision-making forums and governance structures. As such, it is important to ensure that a diverse group of women as well as men are included in stakeholder consultation processes and represented within decision making related to the design and implementation of comprehensive river basin management, to ensure an equitable and sustainable system.

The *Integrated River Basin Management Under Climate Change* SPS very effectively integrated gender through the inclusion of the stand-alone section *Social Equity and Gender Issues in the Yangtze River Basin*. This section included a situational analysis and problem identification; outlined the benefits of empowering women and vulnerable groups; and proposed strategies on social equity and gender in river basin management. The section also included two short case studies on how river basin initiatives had integrated gender considerations. The paper's final policy recommendations incorporated a focused gender equality recommendation: *Social equality and gender equality should be emphasized in enhancing sustainable response to climate change in the Yangtze Basin, so as to draw more attention to the agenda of social inclusiveness and gender equality*. The sub-sections of this recommendation encompassed many good practices relevant to the integration of gender considerations in integrated river basin management, which were also reflected in the paper. These included the importance of fully understanding the social cost of river basin management, including on women and groups particularly vulnerable to climate change-induced disasters, and promoting gender equality and social equality in any solutions identified. The recommendation also asserted that measures should be in place to ensure security and social equality within river basin management, especially for population groups particularly vulnerable to disasters, such as women, the elderly, and children, as well as those living in rural areas, small towns,



flood retention zones, and ecological reserves in the Yangtze Basin. Finally, the paper recommends that gender equality and social inclusion should inform the entire policy-making process for responses to climate change in the Yangtze River Basin, from analysis to planning to implementation. Policy-making should be based on gender and social equality analysis, drawing on consultations with women and other demographic groups, and include gender-sensitive targets and quantitative and qualitative indicators. The recommendation also asserted that women should be represented in river management decision-making bodies, which would ensure their perspectives are included in decision making.

Future research might focus on developing case studies of comprehensive river basin management carried out in the Yangtze River Basin or other river basins, to showcase the results of a gender analysis, the use of gender-responsive measures to understand the needs and perspectives of women and men and the outcomes achieved by considering gender. Other good gender practices that might be showcased to serve as a model for other river basin management initiatives include disaggregating all relevant data by sex; making deliberate efforts to include women in stakeholder consultations; conducting gender impact assessments to understand and address the differential impacts of climate change on women and men in such areas as land use, planting mode, water resource utilization, river transportation, ecosystem services, and any other relevant areas; and enabling the participation and leadership of women in governance and decision-making bodies.

#### 5. Sustainable Food Supply Chain

Women are central to sustainable food supply chains, as consumers, producers, and household food managers. Despite this, due to gender-discriminatory social norms and rigid gender roles that deprive women of their rights, limit their participation in and input into decision making, and restrict their access to and control of resources, including land, women in many parts of the world are discriminated against economically and socially. This discrimination limits their ability to contribute to and benefit from sustainable food security in their various roles. For example, women make up nearly half of agricultural workers in low-income countries but represent less than 15% of landowners. Women farmers manage smaller plots of land and have less access to agricultural inputs, technical training and assistance, market information, and financial and other services than male farmers, while women living in rural communities suffer greater risk and impacts from climate change. Research demonstrates that rural communities have access to more food, improved nutrition status, higher incomes, and more efficient and sustainable food systems when women have better access to decision making, resources, economic opportunities, and services. To promote sustainability within food supply chains, gender-based barriers facing women in accessing resources and opportunities to participate and lead in programs and initiatives developed to promote food sustainability must be identified. Measures can then be designed and implemented to address these barriers and promote the participation of women as consumers, household food managers, producers, and leaders within sustainable food initiatives.

Gender considerations have been integrated within the *Sustainable Food Supply Chain* SPS, including within recommendations. Drawing on the strong intersection between gender equality and food, the paper has integrated gender perspectives in the following areas of sustainable food supply chain approaches relevant to the Chinese context:

- In a reflection of good global practice, the integral nature of gender to agricultural sustainability, an intersection which is particularly important given the prominence of



- women within agriculture yet their limited access to land, agricultural inputs, innovation, information, and training.
- Related to the topic of food consumption, the importance of using and analyzing sex-disaggregated data to make visible any gender differences and impacts that might need to be addressed, such as differences in nutrition status between women and men and between girls and boys.
- In improving productivity, the importance of designing and implementing gender-responsive measures to ensure that innovations and agricultural technologies reach women farmers, who are often excluded from access to technical training and innovation-related information.
- To ensure women's perspectives are represented in approaches and strategies to promote sustainable agriculture, institutionalizing the participation and leadership of ministries and other organizations representing women's agricultural and related interests within committees.

Future research could include developing case studies of gender-responsive food sustainability initiatives that have been carried out, applicable to the Chinese context. Such case studies could include a gender analysis summarizing the socio-economic and gender context and the different considerations for women and men producers and consumers, as well as for institutions, to enable them to contribute to and benefit from the initiative; institutional, policy, and practical measures that were put in place to promote equitable outcomes; and results achieved. Good practices identified could then be incorporated into recommendations at the institutional, policy, and programmatic levels to promote equitable and sustainable food systems.

#### 6. Green and Low-Carbon BRI

As reflected in the SDGs, there are many linkages between renewable energy, gender equality, and sustainable development. Women's and men's roles and positions in society, the economic impact of their differential energy use, their participation within the energy sector, and the gendered impacts of energy-related environmental and climate change issues are equally relevant in the transition to a green and low-carbon BRI. Women are often excluded from participation and leadership within the energy sector—including in renewable energy—and their unique needs and perspectives are often not considered within energy policy and in transitions to green energy. This is despite studies demonstrating women's greater willingness to change environmental behaviours compared with men's. By incorporating measures to address identified gender-based barriers, promote women's participation and leadership within green energy initiatives at all levels, and draw on the perspectives, knowledge, and capacities of women as well as men, policies and approaches in supporting a transition to a green and low-carbon BRI can more effectively contribute to sustainable, inclusive, and equitable development.

The final draft of the *Key Pathways on a Green and Low-Carbon BRI* SPS was not available at the time of writing. However, the draft paper included the text box titled "*The "Whole Lifecycle Approach to Best Practices in Renewable Energy Development,"*" which provided examples of important gender considerations that contribute to the identification of government priorities within renewable energy initiatives, as well as project measures that may be required by governments to identify and address gender-based priorities. Additional identified entry points for integrating gender into research on a green and low-carbon BRI include the following:



- The SDGs acknowledge the importance of gender both as a stand-alone goal and as a cross-cutting theme, acknowledging its intersection with renewable energy and climate change, as does the UNFCCC. This provides an opportunity for a green and low-carbon BRI to align with international commitments by integrating gender considerations into green energy policy and transitions.
- Labour-market assessments relevant to the transition to a green and low-carbon BRI can be made gender-sensitive by providing sex-disaggregated data where possible and highlighting women's and men's concentrations in low- versus high-productivity sectors, enabling the development of gender-responsive measures as needed.
- The intersections between gender equality and clean energy, such as women's and men's differential use of energy, their unequal access to clean energy, and the differential impacts of climate change on them, can be unpacked to demonstrate the importance of gender-responsive measures to achieve equitable and sustainable outcomes.

Gender considerations are increasingly considered within environment and social impact assessments for infrastructure projects supported by development financial institutions (DFIs). Future research could look more specifically at how DFIs are integrating gender considerations within environment and social impact assessments for clean energy and other infrastructure projects, to maximize the sustainability of initiatives, and provide case studies demonstrating improved and equitable outcomes resulting from such approaches and recommendations to policy-makers.

### Recommendations to CCICED for the Forthcoming Research Phase

In addition to the current approach, the following recommendations are made to strengthen the integration of gender within the SPS:

- **Consideration should be given to mandating the inclusion of gender from the beginning of the research cycle.** Gender could be required to be integrated beginning at the SPS proposal stage, and its inclusion validated by CCICED staff.
- **Any templates provided within the CCICED Guidance documents should outline to the SPS teams clear steps to further highlight gender issues and considerations.** Requirements for the inclusion of gender could be clearly stipulated within relevant areas of all templates provided by CCICED for use by the SPS teams, such as for proposals or inception plans, in keeping with the approach adopted by other donors and organizations requiring the integration of gender perspectives.
- **Consideration should be given to providing budgetary allocations specifically for gender research within each SPS.** Allocating a specific budget will encourage the integration of gender and allow for appropriate resourcing of time or expertise required for gender research. Gender research might be carried out by SPS team members or by a gender specialist.
- **Commissioning a dedicated gender analysis for each SPS topic should be considered.** A gender analysis could be carried out prior to the development of a detailed research outline, to inform how gender could be approached within the SPS. Introducing a gender analysis at the planning stage would allow it to be integrated into the research plan.



- **Consideration should be given to mandating the inclusion of gender in three areas of the SPS:** as a stand-alone text box or dedicated section near the beginning of the paper to showcase the nexus between gender equality and the specific SPS topic; integrated at relevant points throughout the paper, drawing on the gender intersections acknowledged in the focused section; and within recommendations, with a minimum of one gender-focused recommendation, given that this is the section most likely to be transmitted to the highest levels to influence policy. This approach was highly effective in the few cases where it was carried out.
- **The inclusion of case studies integrating gender considerations should be highly encouraged.** Gender-focused or gender-integrated case studies are remarkably effective in displaying the importance of identifying and integrating gender perspectives in the SPS area, particularly for initiatives that can identify equitable outcomes. Given that gender is an emerging area in some of the SPS research areas, and in keeping with requests for case studies within gender action plans for international environment and climate change conventions, these are particularly helpful in demonstrating the importance of gender equality to sustainable development.