

## Integrating gender and social inclusion into Long-Term Low Emissions Strategies

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### Executive summary

Under the Paris Agreement (Article 4.19), Parties are invited to voluntarily formulate and communicate Long-Term, Low-Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS). These strategies provide roadmaps for economic transformation towards net-zero and climate-resilient futures by mid-century. Globally, 80 countries have submitted their LT-LEDS to the UNFCCC [Long Term Strategies portal](#), signalling their vision for low-carbon growth and resilience.

In Africa, only eleven countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia and Zimbabwe) have formally submitted their LT-LEDS, while many others are still in the process of designing and refining theirs. This presents a critical opportunity. With many strategies still under development, there is space to deliberately and centrally integrate gender equality and social inclusion. Doing so will ensure that long-term climate planning not only reduces emissions and builds resilience but also advances equity, decent work and inclusive growth.

### Introduction

The relatively low rate of LT-LEDS submissions reflects the complexity of developing comprehensive, whole-of-society strategies, particularly in contexts where development needs are pressing and national debates continue around the role of high-emissions sectors and technologies in traditional growth models. LT-LEDS are designed to set out long-term visions and provide a framework for aligning short- and medium-term actions (defined in policy frameworks such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)), with national sustainable development goals and the Paris Agreement's temperature targets. These frameworks also ensure that climate considerations are mainstreamed into all government decision making from the national to local levels. They serve as holistic roadmaps for guiding transformation, while simultaneously safeguarding poverty reduction, sustainable growth and equity. These strategies must go beyond technical climate planning to address structural inequalities and ensure that resilience pathways respond to the realities of vulnerable populations.



## Why does gender equality and inclusion matter?

Climate-resilient development cannot be achieved without equity and justice at its core. Gender inequalities, combined with socioeconomic vulnerabilities, leave women, girls, youth, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups disproportionately exposed to climate impacts. Exclusion from decision-making further limits their ability to shape and influence adaptation and mitigation responses that directly affect their lives.

Both the Climate-Resilient Development framing and LT-LEDS technical guidance stress that inclusive, participatory approaches are essential for effective and durable transformation. For example, the [AGNES LT-LEDS Technical Guide](#) (2024) explicitly notes that LT-LEDS development must engage diverse groups, including women, youth, Indigenous peoples, farmers, and local communities, at every stage of the process, from visioning and scenario modelling to implementation and monitoring.

### Typologies of gender integration

Climate policies and LT-LEDS vary widely in how they integrate gender.

- **Gender-sensitive** strategies acknowledge the differentiated vulnerabilities faced by women and men but often stop short of outlining concrete measures. For example, [Mexico's LT-LEDS](#) and Peru's earlier drafts primarily recognise women's disproportionate exposure to climate risks.
- **Gender-responsive** strategies go further by deliberately designing actions that respond to these differences and promote women's participation, as seen in [Chile's LT-LEDS](#) and [Costa Rica's National Decarbonisation Plan](#), which include gender-sensitive indicators and participatory foresight exercises.
- At the most advanced level, **gender-transformative approaches** aim to address structural inequalities and shift power relations, embedding equity into institutional frameworks. [Peru's Climate Change Framework Law \(2018\)](#), which makes gender equality and interculturality legally binding principles, represents one of the clearest examples of this ambition.

Together, these experiences illustrate the diversity of approaches and offer important lessons for African countries still shaping their LT-LEDS.

### Integrating gender across the policy cycle

It must be noted that there must be a deliberate intention on placing gender at the centre of LT-LEDS and their development. Gender and social inclusion should not be treated as “add-ons” but must be intentionally woven through all stages of LT-LEDS design, planning, implementation, evidence generation and monitoring. This includes:



#### Vision-setting:

- Frame low-carbon, climate-resilient futures around equity, decent jobs and inclusive economic transformation.
- Explicitly link the long-term vision to SDG 5 on gender equality and national gender policies.
- Use foresight and scenario planning that accounts for women's roles in agriculture, care, and informal economies.



#### Stakeholder engagement and consultation:

- Ensure women's groups, youth movements, labour unions, indigenous organisations, and local communities meaningfully shape strategies. For example, in Ethiopia a series of workshops were organized to solicit feedback to incorporate into its [Long-term Low emission and Climate Resilient Development Strategy \(2020-2050\)](#) - including regional bureaus, academia, women, youth, and civil society organisations - through six national stakeholder consultations and validation workshops and five training and capacity-building events. It is important to apply participation quotas or targets in these meetings and to strive for 50% women's representation.
- Provide resources (travel, childcare, translation) so women and marginalised groups can participate effectively.

- Institutionalise gender focal points in stakeholder platforms. Guinea has established a gender and climate change platform to coordinate different stakeholders – ministry departments, government institutions, and civil society. Nigeria is targeting inclusive, participatory decision-making processes to reflect the voices of women, girls, and youth as ecosystem managers under increasing insecurity in its [Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy \(2060\)](#).



### Strategy design and policy formulation:

- Conduct gender-responsive vulnerability and needs assessments to inform priorities, such as the analysis on gender and climate change in the Benin [Plan of Action on Gender and Climate Change](#).
- Integrate gender and social inclusion analyses into sectoral pathways. For example, the [Ghana Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender in Priority Sectors of Ghana's NDC](#) was developed with government and civil society stakeholders to ensure that NDC actions are implemented with gender in mind within its seven economic sectors: energy and industry, health, transport, agriculture and forestry, waste, and water.



The toolkit was developed through broad stakeholder consultations and inputs to ensure an inclusive process and generate stakeholder ownership and buy-in.

- Align LT-LEDS with national gender equality legislation and international commitments (including the [UNFCCC Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and Gender Action Plan](#)).
- Explicitly identify co-benefits for women and youth, such as time savings from clean energy or resilience of women-headed households.



### Indicators and reporting systems

- Include gender-disaggregated indicators in LT-LEDS tracking systems (e.g. percentage of women with access to finance/ renewable energy, or role in climate decision making). [Nigeria's Green Jobs Assessment Model \(2020\)](#) summarizes climate effects on employment by gender for industry, reforestation, clean cooking strategies, climate smart agriculture, energy, and water.
- Develop outcome-level and output-level indicators to bridge the gap between high-level goals and activities.
- Embed gender-sensitive metrics in MRV and M&E systems. For example, the [Ethiopia LT-LEDS](#), in alignment with national NDC and NAP MRV and M&E frameworks, commits to incorporating sex-disaggregated targets and indicators to increase inclusive outcomes by identifying trends.
- Involve women's organisations in evaluation and learning processes.



### Institutional arrangements and governance

- Create formal collaboration mechanisms between environment, finance, planning and gender ministries.
- Establish gender focal points in climate units of ministries and agencies. For example, [Kenya's Climate Act of 2016](#), calls for the creation of a climate change unit in each ministry, with climate change and gender focal points seconded from the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender<sup>2</sup>.
- Guarantee women's representation in national climate councils, steering committees, and technical working groups.
- Embed accountability mechanisms through parliamentary women's caucuses, gender commissions or independent oversight bodies.

2 UNDP Kenya. [Kenya Gender Analysis. 2020](#).



## Budgeting and financing

- Apply gender-responsive budgeting to tag and track climate expenditures benefiting women and vulnerable groups, as done in Ethiopia and Ghana.
- Allocate dedicated funds to women-led climate initiatives or small and medium enterprises.
- Include gender-responsive criteria in climate finance proposals/ align with multilateral finance standards such as the GCF gender policy. For example, **Rwanda's Green Fund** was established to mobilise climate finance in collaboration with the Development Bank of Rwanda. A blended finance private sector incubator and accelerator facility offers grants, repayable grants, and equity. To date USD 250 million has been invested over 10 years in approximately 50 projects. The design stage uses targets (e.g., number of beneficiaries, jobs created, community mobilisation, and gender targeted criteria) to ensure 60% of beneficiaries are female. In addition, it uses performance-based budgeting linked to gender indicators (e.g. percentage of adaptation funds reaching women farmers).



## Implementation

- Support women's cooperatives, farmer associations and small female-led businesses as direct implementers of adaptation and mitigation projects.
- Include targets for training women extension officers, engineers and negotiators.

- Mainstream gender into public procurement policies for climate technologies and services.
- Invest in capacity building for women leaders, negotiators, and entrepreneurs.



## Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

- Collect and report sex-disaggregated data at all stages.
- Use participatory monitoring approaches that include women's organisations.
- Document and share lessons learned through women-focused knowledge platforms and peer exchanges.
- Incorporate gender-sensitive evaluation questions (e.g. "How have women benefited differently from this measure?").



## Accountability and transparency

- Publish climate finance flows and programme outcomes with gender-disaggregated data.
- Use transparency portals accessible to civil society, with simplified reporting.
- Strengthen grievance and redress mechanisms for women and vulnerable groups.

## Africa's LT-LEDS journey and peer learning

African countries have begun to experiment with diverse approaches to integrating gender into their LT-LEDS.

- **Ethiopia** has embedded gender-responsive budgeting and indicators and has given the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs a formal seat on its inter-ministerial steering committee.
- **Nigeria** and **Burkina Faso** explicitly reference gender equity and women's empowerment in their LT-LEDS.
- The **Gambia** emphasises equitable governance and participation, while **South Africa** situates gender within its "just transition" framing, embedding social justice principles even where gender-specific measures are not detailed.

Collectively, these experiences show that gender can be integrated in multiple ways through the policy cycle as mentioned above, offering valuable lessons for countries still developing their strategies.

Internationally, there are benchmark examples that African countries can draw on. **Costa Rica's National Decarbonisation Plan** (2019) is widely recognised for its participatory foresight process. It engaged more than 350 stakeholders, including women's groups, Indigenous peoples and youth, and embedded gender equality and social justice at the core of its long-term vision. **Chile's LT-LEDS** explicitly integrates gender and intergenerational equity as cross-cutting principles, establishes gender-sensitive indicators for the energy transition, and commits to promoting women's leadership in green jobs and decision-making. These illustrate how legal

mandates, inclusive participatory processes, and targeted indicators can elevate gender considerations from recognition to transformation.

Together, African and international experiences highlight that gender integration in LT-LEDS is not a one-off achievement but a continuous cycle of peer learning and refinement. Countries can benefit by building on each other's innovations and experiences to ensure that long-term strategies are both climate-ambitious and socially just.



## Global and African examples of gender integration in LT-LEDS:

- **Nigeria's LT-LEDS** (2024) outlines a net-zero, climate-resilient, high-growth circular economy by 2060, pursued in a gender-responsive manner. Gender is a guiding principle, anchored in the Climate Change Act (2021), which requires gender considerations in all climate policies.
- **Ethiopia's LT-LEDS**, to 2050, mandates the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs as part of its Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee, ensuring gender expertise in decision-making, monitoring and accountability. It also includes gender-disaggregated indicators and gender-responsive budgeting. In addition, Ethiopia has established a Women and Youth in Green Jobs Programme aiming to create economic opportunities through paid employment and entrepreneurship.
- **Zimbabwe's LT-LEDS** (2020-2050) has used socio-economic impact assessments to evaluate differentiated impacts of long-term measures on job creation, skills, gender equality and income distribution, supporting women's economic participation while addressing inequalities.
- **Morocco's Stratégie Bas Carbone a Long Terme** (to 2050) includes a vocational training and school curricula as important cross-functional issues to promote long-term low-carbon development in Morocco.
- **Tonga's LT-LEDS** includes capacity building of women and youth in sectors such as forestry and agriculture and gender and youth considerations play an important role within its LT-LEDS.
- Costa Rica is a benchmark example of participatory foresight. Its **National Decarbonisation Plan** (2018-2050) engaged over 350 stakeholders, including women's groups, Indigenous peoples and youth, through participatory foresight methods. Combining quantitative models with qualitative inputs, it embedded gender equality and social justice as central pillars of its long-term vision.
- **Chile's LT-LEDS** explicitly integrates gender and intergenerational equity as cross-cutting principles. The strategy establishes gender-sensitive indicators for energy transition and commits to promoting women's leadership in green jobs and decision-making spaces. In addition, sectoral authorities (e.g., Ministry of Energy) are given outlines to generate gender analyses in close collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity, to identify concrete actions for the advancement of gender equality.

## Progress and gaps

Several assessments highlight progress, yet uneven integration of gender into LT-LEDS.

- The **UNFCCC LT-LEDS Synthesis Report** (2023) found that around half of global submissions reference gender, but only a quarter do so substantively—through cross-sectoral approaches or gender analysis tools. Engagement of women and vulnerable groups often occurs during drafting but rarely results in measurable indicators, budgets or institutional mechanisms. Compared with NDCs, LT-LEDS lag in operationalising gender commitments.
- The NDC Partnership **Insight Brief** on Gender and Youth in LT-LEDS (2024) stresses the importance of gender-transformative approaches that go beyond acknowledging vulnerability to actively embed women's agency, access to finance, and decision-making power.
- The **UNFCCC assessment of gender-responsive climate policies** (2024) reviewed 166 documents submitted between July 2022 and July 2024. It found that 85% of Parties referenced gender, with stronger integration into sectoral approaches and means of implementation. Developing countries, including many in Africa, more systematically integrated gender into reporting compared with developed countries, which often made limited or no mention of gender.

Encouragingly, recent reporting indicates clear positive trends. Countries are increasingly integrating gender considerations into sectoral plans, particularly in health, energy and employment, recognising the differentiated impacts of climate action across these areas. There has also been wider uptake of gender-responsive budgeting and project-level gender assessments, creating more practical pathways for ensuring that women and vulnerable groups benefit from climate finance. In addition, there is growing recognition across Parties that inclusive and participatory approaches are not only fair but also improve the ambition, effectiveness and legitimacy of climate strategies.



Despite these advances, important gaps remain. Stakeholder engagement of women, youth and marginalised groups is often shallow and does not consistently translate into formal decision-making power within LT-LEDS governance arrangements. Monitoring systems rarely include robust gender-disaggregated data, clear accountability mechanisms or measurable outcomes linked to gender equality. Finally, few strategies adopt intersectional approaches that recognise overlapping vulnerabilities or address men's roles alongside women's in climate-resilient development. These gaps highlight the risk that LT-LEDS, if not deliberately designed, will remain aspirational rather than actionable in advancing gender equality.



## Conclusion

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LT-LEDS offer African countries a unique opportunity to chart low-carbon, climate-resilient futures. With many strategies still in development, there is a critical window to integrate gender equality and social inclusion. Doing so will not only strengthen the effectiveness of climate action but also advance livelihoods, equity, and sustainable development goals. Without deliberate gender integration, LT-LEDS risk reinforcing inequalities and undermining resilience. With it, they can become transformative instruments that deliver both climate ambition and social justice.

## Recommendations

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To ensure LT-LEDS deliver equitable and resilient futures, African governments and partners should:

- Embed equity in long term vision-setting.
- Institutionalise gender in LT-LEDS governance structures.
- Develop measurable, gender-disaggregated indicators.
- Adopt gender-responsive climate finance.
- Strengthen participation and co-creation.
- Invest in gender-disaggregated data, evidence and capacity.
- Develop gender-specific supplements to LT-LEDS technical guidance/ step-by-step tools for policy makers on building gender-transformative policies.



## About this AICCRA INFO NOTE

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