

## GAC climate finance consultation

This submission was prepared by the [Food Security Policy Group](#), a network of Canadian development and humanitarian organizations with expertise in global food systems. Drawing on the field expertise of members, FSPG has over 20 years experience in research and policy dialogue with the Canadian government on global food security issues.

**For our submission, we are proposing one mechanism that Canada should include in its climate finance package: a call for proposals for Canadian civil society organizations to implement climate adaptation projects with small-scale farmers, especially women small-scale farmers and their organizations.**

This mechanism is relevant to several of the consultation questions. We outline how this call for proposals could work under **question #2** (how can Canada make the biggest difference?); why this should be a focus for Canada under **question #1** (important areas for Canada to focus on); how this will promote gender equality under **question #6**; how it will integrate climate adaptation, women's rights and sustainable agriculture under **question #7**, and how it will respond to COVID-19 impacts under **question #8**.

### **1. What are some of the most important issues or areas where Canada could focus when it comes to financing climate change adaptation and mitigation in developing countries?**

Canada should focus on enabling small-scale farmers, especially women, to adapt to climate change.

Climate change is hitting food producers in developing countries first and hardest. Changes in rainfall patterns, new pests, and more intense storms are threatening farmers' livelihoods. Climate change is a significant driver of food insecurity.

The links between climate change and gender are well-established. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to climate change due to pre-existing gender inequalities and socially-defined roles. Climate-related events will have the greatest impact on those who are already vulnerable and exacerbate existing inequalities between men and women.

Supporting resilient and inclusive agricultural systems will not only help Canada meet adaptation goals but will also result in mitigation co-benefits.

### **2. For each issue or area that you identified, how can Canadian support make the biggest difference?**

Canada should establish and fund a call for proposals for Canadian CSOs to implement climate adaptation projects with small-scale farmers, especially targeting women and their organizations.

This call for proposals should be part of Canada contributing its fair share to international climate finance, to spending at least 50% of its international climate finance on adaptation initiatives, and to ensuring that at least 15% of these projects have gender equality as a principal purpose.

The call for proposals should cover projects of at least 5 years duration, knowing that the desired goals take time to achieve.

Canadian CSOs are well-placed to design and implement such programming, with decades of experience in humanitarian and development-focused gender-sensitive food security and climate change programming, and partnerships with CSOs in developing countries that understand local contexts and are ready to respond quickly.

Canadian CSOs are also uniquely placed to engage with the Canadian public, and to build understanding and support for Canada's global development work. Compared to multilateral channels for Canada's 2015-2020 climate finance, CSOs have a better track record of reaching the poorest, prioritizing gender goals, and working on adaptation. Yet 60% of Canada's climate finance is currently allocated through multilateral development banks.

Careful investment in resilient and inclusive agriculture and food systems is a key to improving rural livelihoods, transforming rural economies, increasing women's agency and collective action, and tackling climate change. A focus on agriculture and food systems brings the strong potential of enabling climate change adaptation and mitigation co-benefits.

This call for proposals should promote sustainable agricultural development that explicitly aims to improve the lives and raise the incomes of the poorest rural people, especially women, and to enable the poorest and most vulnerable to adapt to the climate impacts already happening, and expected in the future. Projects should be intentionally designed with the lens of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) to strengthen local food systems, build food security and climate resilience and transform gender relations.

The proposed goals for this mechanism include:

- Ensure climate risk and vulnerability are assessed at community/project level.
- Support small-scale farmers (including pastoralists, fishers, etc.) to adapt to climate change and build resilient sustainable livelihoods while promoting gender equality
- Develop new income sources for farm families, diversify crop and livestock production
- Support farmers' organizations, cooperatives and women's rights organizations as they identify and meet needs related to climate resilience, gender equality and food systems.
- Enable women's voices, participation and leadership at all levels of planning and implementation.
- Improve food and nutritional security through efficient, safe and sustainable use of livestock.
- Improve nutrition
- Increase equitable access to information and control over productive assets (including land, technology, and inputs)
- Increase the equitable distribution of reproductive and productive tasks between men and women
- Enable vulnerable families to cope with existing shocks (climate, COVID-19) while building resilience to future shocks
- Mobilize additional resources from innovative sources, including private sector, foundations and the public
- Move to scale by seeking policy improvements in governments
- Engage the Canadian public to improve understanding of gender, climate and food issues, in the context of international cooperation

- Promote sustainable use of natural productive resources (water, soil, biodiversity) through community management and nature-based solutions

## **6. How can Canada continue to promote gender equality through its international climate finance? What does a feminist approach to climate finance entail?**

Canada should give priority to gender equality, aligned with the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP). As proposed, the dedicated mechanism for resilient and inclusive agriculture and food systems should promote women's leadership in climate adaptation and support women-led environmental organizations and movements, and women small-scale farmers and their organizations.

For this work to be effective, we must not see women as beneficiaries only: they must be part of the solution and be key agents of change to address climate change at the local and community levels. First, women play an important role in driving investment that leads to inclusive and sustainable economic growth when they are included in decision-making and empowered to realize their rights. Second, many women, particularly indigenous women, live in close connection with their environment, have a deep knowledge of it and play a leading role with their experiences and skills in defending, preserving and protecting it. Many innovative approaches which are "climate-smart", such as agroecology, agroforestry and agrobiodiversity, draw on these experiences.

A feminist approach to climate finance includes listening to what women's voices can offer as solutions and taking into account knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions from the field and from Canadian women's organisations, climate organizations, and Canadian CSOs.

## **7. Considering the intersection between women's rights and climate adaptation, how can Canada be more effective in supporting sustainable and equitable resource management, agricultural production and access to markets?**

For tens of millions of the world's most vulnerable people, and especially for rural women, gender-transforming investments in local food systems, climate-resilient agriculture, and rural development offer their surest route out of poverty. In the 47 least developed countries, two-thirds of all people live in rural areas; 79% of women depend on farming for their livelihoods. Agriculture accounts for half of all employment in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and often much more. Two-thirds of rural youth live in areas with high agricultural potential.

Careful investment in resilient and inclusive agriculture and food systems is key to improving rural livelihoods, transforming rural economies, changing women's roles, and tackling climate change. Recent [research work](#) by the Food Security Policy Group demonstrates that Canadian CSOs already know how to work in food systems in ways that simultaneously meet climate, gender and economic goals.

An effective approach at the intersection of women's rights, climate adaptation and agricultural production must include work to dismantle unequal power structures, a commitment to enabling women's full agency, and women's full participation and leadership in climate finance processes.

Additional resources from many actors (private sector, public investment, philanthropists, research institutions, and civil society) are needed to fight effectively against climate change. Engaging the private sector is crucial to achieving Canada's commitments and meeting the needs of women.

Institutional investors and others interested in responsible investment are increasingly internalizing the benefits of sustainable investment, including by paying a premium for suitable risk-adjusted returns.

Canada is already committed to implementing innovative financial mechanisms to help achieve the objectives of FIAP. In this context, blended finance is a strong lever to use catalytic capital from public or philanthropic sources to increase private sector investment in sustainable development. It will increase Canada's ability to meet the 2030 SDGs, directly contributing to SDGs 5 and 13, with indirect impacts on the achievement of other goals such as SDG 2 “Zero Hunger”.

## **8. How should Canada align international climate finance to respond to the impacts and priorities emerging from the COVID-19 global pandemic?**

The COVID-19 pandemic is already impacting and will continue to impact food insecurity in the Global South for some time to come. As such, it is incumbent on Canada to align its international climate finance funds with strategies that address not only climate adaptation and mitigation, but the intersectionality of climate and food insecurity. Here are some strategies which hold promise for shaping international climate finance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Funnel a higher percentage of climate funds through Canadian CSOs, which have decades of experience in humanitarian and development-focused gender-sensitive food security programming and partnerships with CSOs in developing countries. As such, they are uniquely placed to respond quickly to fast-changing situations, and on an ongoing basis.
- Operate with an appreciation of the nexus of climate resilience, food security, gender equality, health, and economic empowerment. Tailor investments to simultaneously strengthen healthcare infrastructure, information technology, and surge capacity during COVID-19 and increase community resilience to both pandemics and climate change, including investing in disease surveillance that helps detect not only viral outbreaks but also shifts in vector-borne diseases driven by climate change.
- Work locally, nationally and globally to attain optimal health of people, animals, and our environment through a One Health approach that encourages interdisciplinary collaboration and communication on health at the human-animal-environmental interface.
- Build linkages and dialogue between food systems actors and stakeholders involved in immediate and long-term development responses to both COVID-19 and climate change.
- Develop communication systems that drive change “from a distance” without the need for travel or high levels of face-to-face interaction in order to cope with movement restrictions in place to protect populations from the spread of COVID-19. This also requires seeking out ways to ensure inclusive participation of those without internet access.
- Support community-owned or -managed or -oriented media that provide tailored, local recommendations and response strategies, especially for the most at-risk communities.
- Enable the architecture of disaster risk finance that focuses on climate-related disasters to also manage pandemic risks.

