



This document provides an overview of the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion ambition for UK PACT

UK PACT Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Ambition

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1. Introduction

UK PACT (Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions) is a flagship programme under the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) portfolio. The programme is jointly governed and funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). UK PACT funds projects which support partner countries eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA) to implement and increase their ambitions for carbon emissions reductions in line with their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). All UK PACT projects work to accelerate partner countries' transition to low carbon development.

Overview of key GEDSI concepts

The UK PACT programme understands gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and safeguarding as distinct but overlapping concepts.

Gender equality: The absence of discrimination based on gender in opportunities, the allocation of resources or benefits, and access to services. It is the full and equal exercise by people of all gender identities of their human rights.

Disability: The interaction between persons with impairments and various barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Disability inclusion seeks to tackle the systemic discrimination, stigma, and exclusion that people with disabilities face in many aspects of their lives, including in access to the information and resources needed to adapt to climate change.

Social inclusion: The removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase access for diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities. These barriers may be formal (i.e., policies and legislation) or informal (i.e., customs and behaviours).

Do No Harm: Understanding and addressing the possible negative impacts of interventions on the lives of all persons and aiming at minimum, and at all times, to cause no harm to anyone through our actions.

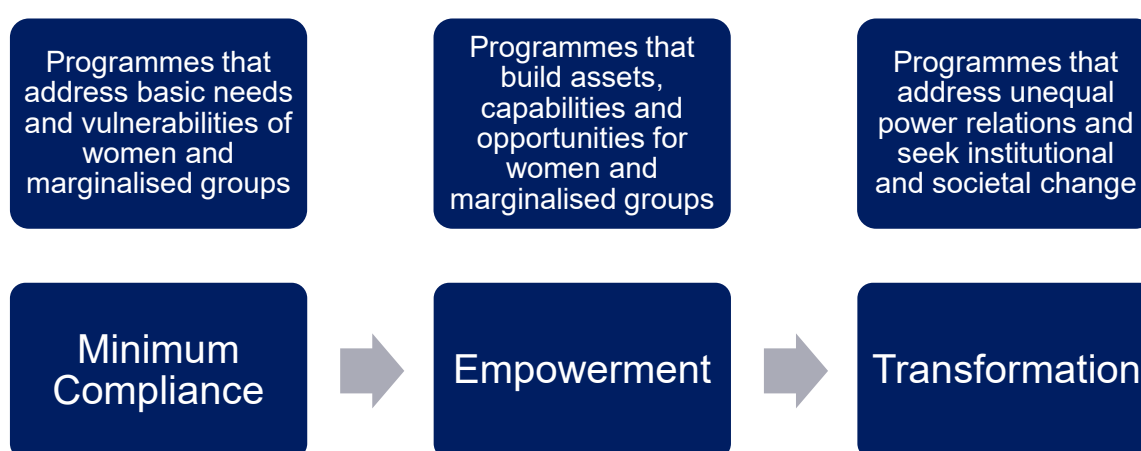
Safeguarding: Taking all reasonable steps to prevent Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.¹

¹ The working definition of safeguarding from the [Resource and Support Hub](#).

Whilst these definitions provide a starting point, we recognise that GEDSI considerations will vary greatly depending on a number of factors, including the nature of a given project and the location in which a project takes place.

The programme conceptualises GEDSI ambition on a continuum from minimum compliance to GEDSI-transformative. This model, represented in Figure 1, is used to set the ambition of the programme across its different strategic objectives and to measure progress on strategic objectives throughout implementation.

Figure 1 The GEDSI continuum



Why it's important for the UK PACT programme

It is widely accepted that the effects of climate change and high emissions are not felt equally.

Due to existing inequalities, power imbalances and unequal distribution of resources, women and other groups affected by marginalisation face disproportionate impacts with negative effects on health, education, livelihoods, security, and other areas. For example, women and children often experience the greatest health burden from use of polluting fuels and technology in the home as they are often socially assigned responsibility for household chores². People with disabilities are also more likely to be disproportionately impacted by climate change, frequently exacerbating the barriers they face in society to their equal participation.

Embedding GEDSI throughout UK PACT is vital for the programme to achieve equitable outcomes and leverage GEDSI co-benefits. There is growing evidence that inclusive action on

² World Health Organisation (WHO) (2023) [Household Air Pollution](#), WHO.

climate change and reducing emissions can lead to GEDSI co-benefits, including in the thematic sectors that UK PACT works in, such as clean energy, climate finance, and sustainable transport. Climate action that takes a gender lens can create rapid improvements in women's economic empowerment.³ In Brazil, girls in rural areas with access to energy are 59% more likely to complete primary education by the time they are 18.⁴ Climate change programmes that integrate gender based violence (GBV) prevention and response can mitigate some of the GBV risks and provide support to survivors.^{5 6} Sustainable transport systems can also be designed to be accessible for people with disabilities at the same time.⁷

Incorporating GEDSI analysis and action increases the likelihood that climate change interventions will achieve the maximum potential of their intended impact and avoid causing harm. For example, addressing gender-specific barriers and enablers to women's economic empowerment, and ensuring women have access to and control over decent work and economic assets can lead to better climate and environmental outcomes.⁸ Indigenous peoples are 5% of the world's population yet protect 80% of the planet's remaining biodiversity, emphasising the importance of engaging with them.⁹ For the programme to enable sustainable and inclusive climate change mitigation and response, it needs to understand who is excluded, what from, where, how and why, in order to avoid exacerbating existing inequalities, break down barriers, facilitate opportunities and promote meaningful outcomes. If the programme is not grounded in this understanding, it risks ignoring the most excluded, reinforcing patterns of exclusion and discrimination, and causing harm. There is evidence of climate change programming causing harm, for example, by introducing flood control measures that eliminated flood plains that were an important food and income source for women, and a programme that provided access to microcredit for women where incidents of domestic violence increased dramatically.¹⁰

This GEDSI strategy is also a response to higher-level global policy frameworks and commitments that are supported by FCDO, DESNZ, and Consortium Members, including the Paris

³ Livingstone, D. and Jenkins, O. (2023) [Women's Economic Empowerment and Climate Change: An Update to the WOW Targeted Guidance 3 Primer](#), WOW Helpdesk.

⁴ Deloitte (2014) [Women, energy, and economic empowerment](#), Deloitte.

⁵ GBV AoR Helpdesk (2020) [Climate change and gender-based violence: What are the links?](#) GBV AoR Helpdesk.

⁶ Clugston, N. (2024) [GBV against climate change activists](#), VAWC Helpdesk.

⁷ For example, see UK PACT's work on [transport in Indonesia](#)

⁸ Livingstone, D. and Jenkins, O. (2021) [Women's Economic Empowerment and Climate Change: A Primer](#), WOW Helpdesk.

⁹ World Bank 2003 and World Bank 2008 in Australian Government (2021) [State of the Environment](#), Australian Government.

¹⁰ Schipper, E. (2020) Maladaptation: When Adaptation to Climate Change Goes Very Wrong, *One Earth* 3(4):409-414.

Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals. The Paris Agreement notes that “Parties should when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.” The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly endorse gender equality and social inclusion, with a key goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030. Goal 5 aims to bring about transformative change to end gender inequality and all other forms of discrimination impacting on participation in social, cultural, political and economic life. The SDGs set out to leave no one behind (LNOB), without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, language, religion, caste, class, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status. International conventions (such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and standards (such as the OECD DAC markers on gender and disability) are also relevant reference points in this regard.

The legislative underpinning for GEDSI in the domestic arena arises principally from the International Development (Gender Equality) Act of 2014 (ID(GE)A), which mandates that all UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes must have regard to reducing gender inequality before providing development assistance. This means that all ODA programmes must actively consider the likely effect of their intervention in reducing gender inequality at all stages of the programme cycle. The Public Sector Equality Duty, created under the Equality Act 2010, requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups with protected characteristics and others in society before a policy is implemented. A 2024 International Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) review of UK International Climate Finance found that, to address backsliding on progress focusing on women and girls, “All ICF-spending departments should integrate consideration of gender in their programmes, including by identifying gender-specific programming, using the gender marker where it is relevant, and providing disaggregated reporting.” Forthcoming cross-HMG ICF GEDSI guidance will also support this ambition on GEDSI (and meet the OECD DAC standards on gender and disability).

2. Our GEDSI ambition

UK PACT agreed a GEDSI ambition statement in 2021, under the previous iteration of the programme. The following text is adapted from that statement, with some adjustments reflecting greater emphasis on disability inclusion and taking an intersectional approach. Learnings and recommendations were also taken from previous UK PACT programming on GEDSI and the Embedding Diversity Inclusion and Racial Equality (EDIRE) in UK PACT workstream.

Our ambition is for UK PACT to go beyond minimum compliance, aiming to be empowering when it comes to gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and where possible supporting transformational change.

UK PACT interventions:

- 1) must do no harm, compliant with the ID(GE)A 2014,
- 2) should strive to achieve GEDSI Empowerment as a minimum, and,
- 3) are strongly encouraged to be GEDSI-transformative wherever possible.

UK PACT commits to opposing all forms of discrimination, and as part of this, it is important to state that UK PACT strives to be an anti-discriminatory programme, with a focus on anti-racism, anti-ableism and anti-sexism. This means we will work to increase equality of opportunity for marginalised groups through our programming and aim to reduce racial and other inequalities, taking an intersectional approach and ensuring our GEDSI approaches are contextualised for the countries we operate in. We commit to addressing diversity and inclusion within our own teams, including committing to be anti-racist and anti-discriminatory in our day-to-day activities, and requiring individual GEDSI objectives for each team member.

To achieve this ambition, the GEDSI strategy for the programme is intended to:

- Ensure that people of all genders and excluded groups can access, meaningfully engage with, and experience equal opportunities under UK PACT without fear of discrimination;
- Support and develop governments' and implementing partners' efforts to achieve GEDSI responsive reforms and initiatives that improve participation and quality outcomes for all.

Annex: Glossary

An overarching glossary of terms is provided in the table below to support a common understanding of key terms across the programme. These terms should be contextualised in each country, with women's rights organisations and representative organisations, as their usage will depend on local dynamics and history.

Accessibility	Removing the barriers faced by individuals with a variety of disabilities (including, but not limited to physical, sensory, cognitive, learning, mental health) and the various barriers (including attitudinal, systemic, location-driven, social status) that impede an individual's ability to participate in social, cultural, political, and economic life. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent, visible or hidden. As we age our abilities change and therefore an accessible society is one designed to include everybody – people with disabilities and people without disabilities.
Climate justice	Recognises that the countries, and people, that have contributed the least to global warming are experiencing the worst impacts of climate change. Unequal distributions of power and resources increases the risks that people face from the climate crisis.
Disability	The interaction between persons with impairments and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Disability inclusion	Disability inclusion seeks to tackle the systemic discrimination, stigma, and exclusion that people with disabilities face in many aspects of their lives.
Do No Harm	Understanding the possible direct and unintentional impacts of interventions on the lives of men and women, girls and boys, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups and all persons – and aiming at minimum, and at all times, to cause no harm to anyone affected by our actions. The Do No Harm Principle is central to safeguarding efforts.
Ethnicity	Ethnicity, as broadly defined, is based on a shared understanding of the history and territorial origins (regional, national) of an ethnic group or community as well as on particular cultural characteristics, such as language and/or religion and/or specific customs and ways of life. (UNECE, 2014)
Gender equality	The absence of discrimination based on gender in opportunities, the allocation of resources or benefits, and access to services. It is the full and equal exercise by men, women, girls, boys and people of marginalised genders of their human rights. In a gender equal situation, people of all genders have equal rights and access to socially and economically valued goods, resources, opportunities, benefits, decision making and positions of leadership; the different gender roles are valued equally and do not constitute an obstacle to wellbeing; and the fulfilment of their potential as responsible members of society is possible. Gender equality is not only a women's issue but

	should concern and fully engage men, women and people of minority genders.
Gender equity	Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. (UNFPA, 2005)
Intersectionality	The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and social class, which overlap to create interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
Just transition	A just transition seeks to ensure that the substantial benefits of a green economy transition are shared widely, while also supporting those who stand to lose economically.
Racism	Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour, structural arrangements and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable; it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as in anti-social beliefs and acts; it hinders the development of its victims, perverts those who practise it, divides nations internally, impedes international co-operation and gives rise to political tensions between peoples; it is contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and, consequently, seriously disturbs international peace and security. (UN, 1978)
Social exclusion	Social exclusion is the process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of social characteristics such as ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, and HIV status.
Socially excluded individuals and groups	Individuals and groups who face barriers preventing them from participating in social, economic and/or political life, resulting in them being underrepresented, stigmatised, or otherwise undervalued. Marginalisation can be due to factors such as gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, education, caste, age, disability, poverty and migration.
Social inclusion	The removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase access for diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities. These barriers may be formal (i.e., policies and legislation) or informal (i.e., customs and behaviours).