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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

GENDERED CLIMATE VULNERABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT OF PRIORITY SEASCAPES IN FISHERIES ACROSS THE CORAL TRIANGLE REGION

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BSS	Bismarck Solomon Sea Seascape
CbA	Community-based Adaptation
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CTI-CFF	Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security
CT6	Six Coral Triangle Countries
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
ICM	Integrated Coastal Management
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
LEAP	Local Early Action Planning
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NPOA	National Plan of Action
REAP CCA	Region-wide Early Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation for the Nearshore Marine and Coastal Environment
RPOA	Regional Plan of Action
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SSF	Small-scale Fisheries
SSS	Sulu-Sulawesi Seas Seascape
SuFiA TS	Sustainable Fish Asia Technical Support
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WLF	Women Leaders Forum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Coral Triangle region, known for its marine biodiversity and vital role in supporting millions of livelihoods through fisheries and other ecosystem services, faces significant challenges due to climate change. These challenges have a disproportionate impact on women and other marginalized communities in the fisheries sector, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. This policy recommendation document focuses on these challenges and proposes recommendations for gender-responsive climate adaptation and risk management strategies.

The Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF) has recognized the urgency of addressing climate change, gender equality, and social inclusion in its Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) 2.0. This document supports CTI-CFF member countries in designing their programs and activities in subregional seascape management and their national plans aligning with the RPOA 2.0 targets.

A review of existing key policies and stakeholder consultations has revealed gaps and needs in integrating gender and climate adaptation in fisheries management. Key challenges include limitations in institutional capacity, socio-cultural barriers, and knowledge and data gaps.

To address these challenges, this document makes recommendations to enhance gender-responsive climate adaptation in fisheries. These include conducting gender analysis, enhancing data collection, strengthening collaboration and capacity building, allocating adequate resources to mainstream gender, and developing robust implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability and progress.

Implementing these recommendations would allow policies and programs within CTI-CFF member countries to be more targeted in addressing the specific vulnerabilities and needs of women and other marginalized groups in the fisheries sector. This would contribute to building the resilience of coastal communities, ensuring sustainable fisheries, and promoting gender equality and social inclusion in the face of climate change threats.

INTRODUCTION

Renowned for its extraordinary marine biodiversity, The Coral Triangle region is a vital source of livelihood and food security for millions across Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste. Within this vibrant region, fisheries play a crucial role in local economies. However, the escalating impacts of climate change pose a significant threat to the Coral Triangle's delicate ecosystems and the communities that depend on them. Rising sea levels, ocean acidification, extreme weather events, and shifting fish distributions disrupt marine environments and coastal livelihoods.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Assessment Report (2022) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report on Climate Change Impact in Fisheries (2018) underscore the urgency of addressing these challenges and the necessity for adaptation strategies that are equitable and inclusive. It is imperative to acknowledge that the consequences of climate change are not distributed evenly. Vulnerable groups, including women, indigenous communities, ethnic minorities, and economically marginalized individuals, often experience disproportionate impacts due to pre-existing inequalities, limited access to resources and information, and marginalization in decision-making processes.

The escalating impacts of climate change in the fisheries sector within the Coral Triangle region are not gender-neutral. As highlighted in the Gender in Civil-Military Climate Security and Disaster Response: Co-Creating Gender-Transformative Approaches report (Pacific Forum, 2024), women in fishing communities often face heightened vulnerabilities due to climate change, including increased risks of displacement, economic hardship and gender-based violence. Therefore, as the CTI-CFF member countries finalize their national plans of action (NPOAs) and implement subregional seascape fisheries management, this paper presents a set of recommendations to address climate vulnerability and risk management with a focus on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI).

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL

This policy recommendations document aims to provide a framework for integrating gender equality and social inclusion considerations into climate change adaptation plans and risk management strategies within the fisheries sector of the Coral Triangle region between 2026 and 2030. By addressing the specific vulnerabilities and needs, it seeks to enhance the resilience and sustainability of coastal and fisheries communities in the face of climate change.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Identify and assess** existing CTI-CFF and CT6 member countries' policies in climate change adaptation and gender equality and social inclusion, focusing on the fisheries sector.
2. **Develop policy recommendations** to integrate gender equality and social inclusion and climate change adaptation in fisheries management strategies at the regional and national level.
3. **Provide support** to CT6 member countries in addressing gendered impacts of climate change in fisheries, particularly in planning seascape activities and in finalizing the National Plan of Action (NPOA) that aligns with the CTI-CFF RPOA 2.0.

METHODOLOGY

The Policy Recommendations on Gendered Climate Vulnerability and Risk Management of Subregional Seascapes in the CT Region is grounded in a structured review of existing reports and policy documents and uses RPOA 2.0 as the basis to guide the analysis. Other related documents, such as the SuFiA TS GESI Analysis (2023) and “Climate Risk and Resilience: Reimagining Small-Scale Fisheries in Southeast Asia” (Stiles et al. *in prep*), have also been reviewed. The process of developing the recommendations involved three (3) main stages:

(1) A systematic review of policy documents on climate change and GESI in fisheries

This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the existing policy landscape and helps identify shared priorities and gaps. Current CTI-CFF regional policies were reviewed first to lay the foundation, supported by other relevant international and regional policies (i.e., UNFCCC, ASEAN, SPREP). Subsequently, an initial review of national policies examined the intersection with existing GESI and fisheries management policies, identifying mentions of gender-specific vulnerability and action in coastal and fisheries management in the National Adaptation Plans and specific GESI policies and coastal and fisheries management policies.

(2) Stakeholder consultations with CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat and Member Countries

Interviews and group discussions with key stakeholders of CTI-CFF provided valuable insights into the countries’ priorities and needs. Several TWG members were consulted during TWG meetings: CCA TWG, EAFM TWG, Seascope TWG and WLF. This report also refers to relevant workshop/meeting minutes to support the review of documents (i.e., CCA REX, SSS-BSS REX, and the GESI Regional Exchange). A final consultation session was conducted on September 11, 2024, to discuss the overall document, especially the policy recommendations.

(3) A gap analysis to identify the discrepancy between the target outcome and the current policy landscape

A systematic comparison of existing policies against the needs of vulnerable communities in the fisheries sector and the relevant target outcome in the RPOA 2.0 involved identifying discrepancies between policy objectives and targets and the current landscape (Gupta, J. 2011).

The insights gleaned from these three (3) stages—the systematic policy review, stakeholder consultations, and gap analysis—have directly informed and shaped the policy recommendations presented in this document.

EXISTING POLICY LANDSCAPE

CTI-CFF REGIONAL PRIORITIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the CTI-CFF RPOA 2.0

The Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) 2.0 of CTI-CFF has identified Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) needs in all three (3) objectives, particularly in Target B2 (GESI) and Target B3 (Climate Resilient Communities). In addition to Target B3, climate change adaptation is relevant to Target A1 (Coral Reefs, Mangroves, and Seagrass Beds) and Target A3 (Healthy and Productive Fisheries), especially the Ecosystem-based Adaptation Approach. GESI is also relevant to Target C1 (Good governance, effective leadership and productive strategic partnership). A summary of the relevant RPOA targets is presented in the box below.

Climate Change Adaptation and GESI in the CTI-CFF RPOA 2.0

- 1. Ecosystem-based Adaptation (Target A1 and A3)**
 - a. Mainstream Ecosystem-based Adaptation Approaches in regional agreements, frameworks, plans, specific guidelines, building on CTI-CFF LEAP and REAP
 - b. Integrate Ecosystem-based Adaptation approaches into Fisheries Management
- 2. GESI Mainstreaming (Target B2)**
 - a. GESI Policies/Regulations are adopted and mainstreamed into coastal livelihood, sustainable fisheries, and food security including COASTFISH framework
 - b. Integrate and mainstream CTI-CFF GESI Policy in all programs, projects and activities
- 3. Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments and Countries' Action Plans (Target B3)**
 - a. Conduct vulnerability assessments for men, women, youth and other social groups within the communities including projections on climate change risks in the CT region
 - b. Update relevant climate change adaptation action plan from CT6, guided by current climate change projections and technology, as well as Gender mainstreaming.
- 4. CCA Programs and Capacity Strengthening (Target B3)**
 - a. Develop and/or implement CCA projects and programs that integrate gender mainstreaming guided by GESI Policy, supported by partners
 - b. Design courses or trainings for governments, coastal communities, and other stakeholders to strengthen adaptive capacity
 - c. Implement community-resilient and adaptation programs
 - d. Mobilize climate financing/investments from partners for coastal communities
- 5. Governance incorporating GESI considerations (Target C1)**
 - a. Conduct trainings and monitor participation of men, women and different social groups
 - b. Take into account opportunities for gender and youth specific capacity development in annual SOMs, regional workplans and budgets, TWG and CCIs meetings.

(Adapted from CTI-CFF RPOA 2.0)

CTI-CFF Region-wide Early Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation for the Nearshore Marine and Coastal Environment (REAP CCA)

In 2011, CTI-CFF developed the “Region-wide Early Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation for the Nearshore Marine and Coastal Environment (REAP-CCA).” The plan was developed to proactively

address the impacts of climate change on the region's marine and coastal ecosystems and to promote and enhance the adaptation capacities of communities whose livelihoods depend on fisheries. The objectives of the REAP-CCA include enhancing climate resilience, safeguarding biodiversity, supporting livelihoods, incorporating climate change adaptation into planning, building capacity, facilitating research and monitoring, and encouraging regional collaboration.

CTI-CFF Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy

CTI-CFF has committed to mainstream gender in all activities and programs by endorsing the CTI-CFF GESI Policy in 2019 and the GESI Policy Implementing Guidelines in 2022. With the endorsed GESI Policy, CTI-CFF aims to provide direction for incorporating GESI into its programs and activities. The objectives include incorporating gender concerns into policies and programs, ensuring equal participation in decision-making, and fostering institutional change for effective GESI mainstreaming. Recognizing that climate change and environmental degradation affect people differently based on gender and social status, it is crucial to develop targeted risk management strategies and policies. It is also aligned with one of the targets in the RPOA 2.0, which is to have updated action plans incorporating gender, guided by the GESI Policy. Given the comprehensive nature of this task, the GESI Policy has not yet been fully implemented; this document hopes to facilitate this process.

CTI-CFF Seascapes General Model and Regional Framework for Priority Seascapes

The CTI-CFF Seascapes General Model and Regional Framework for Priority Seascapes (2017) emphasizes integrated planning and management across sectors and stakeholders. Climate change mitigation and adaptation were highlighted as vital elements of seascape management. This focus can be leveraged to develop gender-responsive climate actions that address the specific vulnerabilities of marginalized groups. Building upon the CTI-CFF Seascapes framework and incorporating gender-responsive approaches, member countries can develop policies and activities that address the ecological and economic dimensions of climate change and promote social equity.

Sulu-Sulawesi Seas Seascape (SSS)

The CTI-CFF Subregional Strategy for Managing Transboundary Fisheries in the Sulu Sulawesi Seascape (SSS) 2018 adopts an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM). With 75 per cent of the world's coral reefs reported to be in danger from overfishing, pollution and climate change, the Strategy intends to prevent the large-scale degradation of marine ecoregions in the Coral Triangle. The Sulu Sulawesi Seas Seascape spans the boundaries of the three (3) CTI countries: the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. The objectives of the Strategy include cross-cutting elements from sustainable fisheries management, water quality maintenance, habitat restoration and biodiversity conservation, by-catch control, environment impact minimization, scientific research and information sharing, income generation, community resilience and livelihood diversification, human well-being and equality, food security, combating illegal unreported or unregulated (IUU) fishing, capacity building, climate change resilience, regional monitoring control and surveillance (MCS), improve judicial and enforcement capacity, stakeholder participation, to regional coordination and governance.

Bismark-Solomon Sea Seascape (BSS)

The Bismark Solomon Sea Seascape stretches from the Birds Head Peninsula of Papua Province in Indonesia across the admiralty and Bismark archipelagos of Papua New Guinea to Makira of Solomon Islands. A plan for the Bismarck Solomon Seascape (BSS) was explored in the Sulu Sulawesi Seascape Regional Exchange and Technical Working Group meeting held in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

from August 12-16, 2024. Discussions for the BSS plan focused on reviving sub-working groups to progress in defining objectives and goals as well as identifying potential transboundary synergies

Lesser Sunda Seascape (LSS)

The Lesser Sunda Seascape (LSS) covers the waters of Indonesia and Timor-Leste, encompassing the chain of islands from Bali in the west to Timor-Leste in the northeast along the Nusa Tenggara Islands and to the south of Sumba and Rote Islands. Like the BSS, the development of the Lesser Sunda Seascape plan was also explored during the Sulu Sulawesi Seascape Regional Exchange and Technical Working Group meeting in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, from August 12-16, 2024. The discussions highlighted transboundary cooperation between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, especially concerning the migratory corridor for Pygmy blue whales. There is potential for stronger cooperation in marine protection, sustainable resource use and conservation efforts through an agreed MOU between Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

CTI-CFF MEMBER COUNTRIES' CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The CT6 member countries have recognized the importance of addressing climate change impacts and gender equality within their national policy frameworks. National policies provide a crucial foundation for integrating climate and gender considerations across sectors, including fisheries.

Country	Policy on Climate Change Adaptation	Policy on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
Indonesia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation (RAN-API) 2. Climate Resilience Development Policy. 	National Gender Mainstreaming Policy (Presidential Instruction Number 9 of 2000)
Malaysia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Twelfth Malaysia Plan 2021-2025 (Theme 3: Advancing Sustainability) 2. National Policy on Climate Change 	The Twelfth Malaysia Plan 2021-2025 (Theme 2: Strengthening Security, Wellbeing and Inclusivity)
Papua New Guinea	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Papua New Guinea National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2. Papua New Guinea and the Green Climate Fund - Gender Mainstreaming Guideline for Project Implementers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The National Public Service Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy 2013 2. Papua New Guinea Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence 2016-2025 3. National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015
The Philippines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Adaptation Plan (NAP) of the Philippines 2023 – 2050 2. National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2011-2028 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Republic Act 9710, also known as the Magna Carta of Women 2. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Plan 2019-2025
Solomon Islands	The Solomon Islands National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) 2023-2032	National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (GEWD) 2021-2027
Timor-Leste	Timor Leste National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2020-2030	Article 6, 16 and 17, 2002 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

CTI-CFF MEMBER COUNTRIES' CLIMATE ADAPTATION POLICIES IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

CTI-CFF member countries' commitment to addressing the escalating threats to climate change in marine and coastal communities is evident in the various climate adaptation policies and plans. While some of these policy documents feature dedicated subsections specifically addressing the marine and fisheries sector, others adopt a broader approach to climate adaptation encompassing multiple sectors in a single policy.

Shared Priorities and Strategies:

A common thread running through the national adaptation plans of CT6 member countries is the focus on enhancing community and ecosystem resilience. This overarching objective finds expression in strategies to promote sustainable fishing practices, strengthen fisheries management frameworks, and foster community preparedness for climate-related disasters. For instance, Indonesia's National Action Plan for Climate Adaptation (RAN-API) and Papua New Guinea's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) both emphasize bolstering the resilience of coastal communities and ecosystems. Similarly, the Philippines' National Adaptation Plan and the Solomon Islands National Climate Change Policy highlight sustainable fisheries management and community empowerment for climate change adaptation.

Livelihood diversification is another common theme. Many national plans aim to expand alternative livelihood options for fishing communities, to reduce their dependence on vulnerable marine resources. Malaysia's Twelfth Malaysia Plan under theme 3: Advancing Sustainability and Timor-Leste's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) advocate for climate-smart agriculture and aquaculture to diversify income and enhance food security.

Distinct Approaches and Focus Areas:

While sharing overarching goals, each country's plan has unique approaches and focus areas. Malaysia's Twelfth Malaysia Plan emphasizes infrastructure resilience by integrating climate change into planning and development. The Philippines' NAP prioritizes improving climate information gathering and reporting. Timor-Leste's NAP focuses on developing community-based adaptation through traditional practices (*Tara Bandu*) and aims to build climate-resilient livelihoods through sustainable resource management. Indonesia's National Action Plan for Climate Adaptation (RAN-API) stresses integrating community-based adaptation and nature-based solutions, while Papua New Guinea's NAP focuses on building resilience through information sharing and capacity building. The Solomon Islands National Climate Change Policy emphasizes mainstreaming climate change into all sectors and enhancing institutional coordination.

These distinct approaches reflect each country's unique challenges and priorities in adapting to climate change. The common goal, however, remains: to protect marine and coastal communities and ensure the sustainability of fisheries in the face of a changing climate.

CTI-CFF MEMBER COUNTRIES' GESI POLICIES IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

Current national policies in the CTI-CFF region acknowledge the importance of inclusive policy implementation. Each member country possesses its own distinct set of policies aimed at considering the needs and rights of vulnerable groups and communities. All member nations have developed national gender policies that express the necessity of integrating gender considerations into multiple sectors, including fisheries. While some countries articulate more comprehensive guidelines and actionable strategies focused on GESI within the fisheries domain, others tend to provide more generalized references indicating a range of commitment and progress towards achieving equality and inclusivity in this sector.

Shared Priorities and Strategies:

National GESI policies across the CT6 countries, in general, share a common commitment to gender equality and sustainable development. Where the fisheries sector is mentioned, common themes include empowering women economically by providing them with better access to resources, credit, and markets, building women's capacity and leadership skills in decision-making roles, including vulnerable and marginalized groups in community-based approaches, and ensuring target groups have adequate food security.

Distinct Approaches and Focus Areas:

The gender policies across the CT6 countries reflect distinct national priorities and contexts. In the Philippines, the focus is on empowering women economically, reducing poverty and enhancing market access for indigenous women in fisheries. Papua New Guinea emphasizes mainstreaming GESI in all aspects of national development policy, confronts gender-based violence, and enhances women's roles in decision-making. Indonesia focuses on gender equality as a foundational aspect of national development planning and implementation, including policies on gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries. Malaysia highlights the promotion of gender equality through empowering the role of women in all sectors via multiple economic platforms and enhancing legal protections. The Solomon Islands focus on broad gender equality and equity through community engagement and advancing the leadership of women, boys, and girls in natural resources management and climate change adaptation. Timor Leste prioritizes GESI across various sectors including fisheries, with a strong focus on promoting women's participation in economic development and combating gender-based violence.

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICIES

The policies of CT6 member countries incorporate several global and regional agreements and guidelines. These established international policies and guidelines underscore the importance of integrating gender perspectives into climate policies and actions, recognizing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and vulnerable groups.

UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have recognized the importance of implementing gender-responsive national climate policies. The UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (2017) aims to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in climate policy and action. The UNFCCC provides guidance and toolkits to support countries in developing gender-responsive National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). Countries are encouraged to report their progress on gender integration in climate action through their National Communications.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)

The FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines) (2015) recognizes the significant role of women in small-scale fisheries and emphasizes gender equality as an integral component of sustainable fisheries management. The SSF Guidelines recognize the disproportionate impacts of climate change and disasters on vulnerable groups in small-scale fisheries and call for gender-responsive approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) State of Climate Change Report (2021) acknowledges the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and vulnerable groups. Additionally, the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework (2021) encourages the integration of gender perspectives into all ASEAN sectoral working groups, including on climate change (AWGCC) and on fisheries and aquaculture (ASWGFi). The report emphasizes the need to collect sex-disaggregated data, conduct gender analysis and ensure equal participation in decision-making.

EXISTING GAPS AND NEEDS TO ADDRESS GESI AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION IN FISHERIES

The EAFM and Seascope Technical Working Group members identified several critical gaps and the need to integrate gender considerations into climate change adaptation strategies within the fisheries sector. These insights, drawn from the SSS-BSS Regional Exchange in August 2024, highlight opportunities for regional leadership in gender-responsive climate adaptation in fisheries. A comprehensive summary of the group discussions and country-specific challenges can be found in Annex 1.

- **Institutional Governance and Capacity.** Member countries identified the need for stronger political commitment and institutional capacity at all levels of government to prioritize and implement gender-responsive climate adaptation in fisheries. This includes ensuring adequate resource allocation, effective implementation mechanisms, and improved coordination among relevant agencies to avoid fragmented approaches.
- **Socio-Cultural Barriers.** Deeply rooted socio-cultural barriers that hinder gender equality in the fisheries sector remain a challenge that needs to be addressed. There is a need to promote equitable power relations, challenge gender stereotypes and transform gender norms to enable women's full participation in climate and fisheries decision-making and access to resources for adaptation. Additionally, promoting a more equitable division of labor in fisheries and addressing the specific challenges faced by women in accessing resources and technologies remain crucial steps toward ensuring their engagement in climate adaptation efforts. Similar challenges face other marginalized groups.
- **Knowledge and Data Gaps.** While most countries are in the process of conducting national and local vulnerability assessments for climate change, few of these assessments consistently collect, analyze and report gender-disaggregated data. In order to adequately prepare for climate-related disasters, reduce climate risks and accurately evaluate adaptive capacity in the fishing sector, governments at all levels need gender-specific information on climate change impacts, vulnerabilities, and adaptation gaps in fisheries. This data is essential for developing targeted, evidence-based policies and programs that effectively address the diverse experiences and needs of all individuals in coastal and fisheries communities, particularly for the most vulnerable populations. Current fisheries policy lacks consideration of the social and cultural dimensions of fishing communities that can shape economic marginalization and instability in the sector. Socioeconomic considerations and non-market values of fishing have the potential to contribute to sustainable practices and gender-inclusive decision-making (Fache and Breckoldt, 2023)

Experts consulted during the CTI-CFF/SuFiA TS organized 2024 GESI Regional Exchange highlighted several barriers to integrating gender equality and social inclusion in climate adaptation and fisheries, such as a lack of gender awareness, gaps in the implementation of gender policies, cultural barriers, and limited knowledge and data on gender-specific vulnerabilities and adaptation needs. Addressing these challenges necessitates a multi-pronged approach that combines capacity building, policy reform, and data-driven decision-making.

Anonymous self-assessment polls conducted among the 2024 GESI Regional Exchange participants reveal that the current integration of GESI in Climate Adaptation and the Fisheries sector in the region is moderate; GESI experts and professionals from CT6 and ASEAN countries stated that efforts are there but largely siloed. This indicates room for improvement in coordination and underscores the urgency of implementing targeted interventions.

FIRST STEPS IN ADDRESSING GENDERED CLIMATE VULNERABILITY IN FISHERIES

Gender mainstreaming is progressing as leaders in fisheries and aquaculture broaden their agendas to integrate gender considerations, including in climate adaptation (Williams et al. 2019). In the Coral Triangle region, this has encouraged value-addition and alternative income sources for small-scale fishing households to become more financially resilient to climate change and other shocks. In the Philippines and Indonesia, women entrepreneurs process seafood to obtain higher prices at the market and farm seaweed for sale as an additive in food and cosmetics products (<https://rarecampaigns.shorthandstories.com/women-in-coastal-fisheries/index.html>). Similarly, organizations in the CT6 countries are recognizing the need to empower women and other marginalized groups in the fishing sector and the need to manage the impacts of climate change on fisheries management (<https://tambuyog.org/campaigns-and-projects/>).

CT6 countries can scale these improvements through continued policy reform and increased implementation on the ground. For example, the Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme for South and Southeast Asia (RFLP), a four-year initiative funded by Spain and implemented by the FAO, sought to empower women and reduce the vulnerability of small-scale fishing communities in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. With RFLP support and advocacy, the Sri Lankan government revised the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act No. 2 of 1996, which changed legislation and policy, recognizing women as legal members of Fisheries Committees and participants in fisheries planning and management (RFLP, 2013). With similar changes in the laws throughout the Coral Triangle addressing gender and climate issues, policies now exist at national and some local levels to lay the foundation for integrating GESI and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) into small-scale fisheries management. The next steps are to follow through by managing fisheries in a way that integrates the 1) key role of women and marginalized groups, 2) projected climate change impacts, and 3) differential vulnerability to climate change for some groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO INTEGRATE GESI AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION INTO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

The following recommendations aim to strengthen the integration of GESI and CCA into fisheries management policies and programs across the Coral Triangle region. They are informed by valuable insights gathered from discussions with CT6 member countries during the EAFM and Seascope Technical Working Group meetings during the SSS-BSS Regional Exchange in August 2024 and the Women Leaders Forum (WLF) and CCA Technical Working Group during the GESI Regional Exchange and Climate Adaptation Policies and Strategies Training in September 2024. The recommendations leverage existing CTI-CFF policies and focus on supporting the implementation of CTI-CFF RPOA 2.0.

The CTI-CFF GESI Policy provides guidance for mainstreaming gender considerations into all CTI-CFF programs and activities, including seascope management at all stages, from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. This policy provides an opportunity for CT6 member countries to leverage regional leadership and advocate for dedicated resources at the national level to address gendered climate risks within priority seascapes. For gender-transformative adaptation, ministry and agency leaders must establish clear mandates, allocate adequate resources, prioritize implementation, and create monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability.

The proposed recommendations provide a starting point for raising necessary resources and country-specific timelines for implementation.

REGIONAL-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing the transboundary nature of many challenges and the significance of collaborative action, the following recommendations are proposed at the regional level.

1. **Strengthen regional coordination and collaboration.** Building upon the principles outlined in the CTI-CFF RPOA 2.0 and the existing governance structure, the regional platform can be utilized to:
 - **Facilitate knowledge exchange:** Organize regular regional exchanges (e.g., workshops, webinars) focused on GESI and CCA integration in fisheries. These exchanges should actively involve every CT6 member country and potentially other Southeast Asia and Pacific countries with support from CTI-CFF partner organizations, aiming for at least two annual exchanges. To increase accessibility, a combination of virtual and in-person workshops is recommended where funding is available. The focus should be on sharing practical case studies and lessons learned from successful climate change adaptation programs that effectively address GESI considerations.
 - **Establish a regional knowledge hub:** Under the CTI-CFF Capacity Building Roadmap 2024-2027 pillar 1: Tools & Packages, there are two critical priorities identified; (1) the development of a capacity building repository and (2) the advancement and development of online learning platform. Building upon this framework, a dedicated section on climate change adaptation and best practices in fisheries with a focus on gender-responsive approaches could be included within the repository. The content could consist of case studies and best practices showcasing successful gender-responsive climate adaptation strategies, training materials and information on relevant policies, programs and initiatives.

Regional Knowledge Hub for Climate Adaptation and GESI in Fisheries

A dedicated section within the CTI-CFF capacity-building repository that focuses on climate adaptation and best practices in fisheries, emphasizing gender-responsive approaches.

Resources and Information to be Shared

- Practical Guidance: Case studies, best practices and adaptation strategies for different groups of people
- Capacity Building: Training materials and resources on gender and climate adaptation in fisheries.
- Policy and Program Information: Details on relevant policies, programs and initiatives at regional and national levels.
- Collaborative Space: Discussion forums and other interactive features to facilitate learning and exchange.

Benefits for CT6 Countries

- Enhanced understanding of regional trends: By sharing data, countries can gain a broader perspective on how climate change and gender issues affect fisheries across regions, identifying common challenges and opportunities.
- Supported evidence-based policymaking: Data and information sharing enable policymakers to make evidence-based decisions, leading to more effective and targeted policies.
- Informed targeted interventions: Understanding specific vulnerabilities and needs allows for developing programs and initiatives that directly address the challenges faced by different groups.
- Improved resource mobilization: Demonstrating the need for gender-responsive climate adaptation through data can help attract support from other organizations.

Existing Example: The Pacific Climate Change Portal by SPREP (<https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/>), a regional knowledge hub on climate change in the Pacific.

2. **Enhance regional data collection and research.** To support evidence-based decision-making and enable the development of targeted and responsive regional policies and programs, CTI-CFF could:
 - **Develop and implement standardized tools and methodologies:** Promote and develop user-friendly, standardized methodologies and tools for collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data related to climate change impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation needs in fisheries. Implement these tools to support the CTI-CFF Monitoring and Evaluation framework and provide capacity-building workshops to member countries on their effective use and data interpretation. However, flexibility should be built into these tools to account for varying technical, financial and capacity levels across CT6 countries.
 - **Foster collaborative research:** Enhance collaboration with the CTI-CFF University Partnership to coordinate this joint research and data collection and analysis related to GESI and climate change adaptation in fisheries.
3. **Provision of technical assistance and capacity strengthening:** the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat should establish a dedicated “help desk” or hire a focal point within the secretariat to address queries and provide technical support on GESI and CCA integration to member countries.
 - **Hire dedicated GESI and CCA specialists:** As stated in the RPOA 2.0 Target B2.1 (“GESI policy mainstreamed”), CTI-CFF aims to have a dedicated GESI specialist. In addition, a CCA specialist would help provide technical assistance to member countries. An integrated option is to have a dedicated “cross-cutting specialist” that oversees both GESI and CCA integration. With this improved capacity, the Regional Secretariat could be more equipped

to facilitate regional dialogues and campaigns to address GESI and CCA issues in fisheries, identify local experts, and network, with the goal of GESI and CCA integration becoming embedded in the core work of all staff and the overall program.

- **Capacity assessments on GESI and CCA:** In addition to regional knowledge exchanges and learnings, each member country's capacity for tools and methodologies for research on GESI and CCA in fisheries should be analyzed in collaboration with national experts and networks. The CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat could provide targeted technical assistance to ensure effectiveness in program implementation.
4. **Seek funding to ensure dedicated resourcing** for GESI and CCA mainstreaming in the Coral Triangle region. CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat should actively explore potential funding opportunities and partnerships and collaborate with member countries to develop multilateral proposals highlighting the importance of GESI and CCA integration in fisheries in the region.

NATIONAL-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

While regional collaboration is essential, national-level action is equally crucial for effective implementation. The following recommendations focus on strengthening national policies and programs:

1. **Strengthen national-level commitment and capacity** to prioritize and implement gender-responsive climate change adaptation in fisheries governance by developing clear national regulations, integrating GESI and CCA into fisheries management plans and national budgets with specific gender objectives, targets and activities at all levels of governance.
 - Strengthen institutional capacity in ministries and agencies to mainstream GESI and CCA through targeted training supported by grants. Capacity-building initiatives will include site visits, regional staff exchanges, internships, and awareness programs, both in person and online.
2. **Conduct gender and climate change vulnerability assessments.** Prioritize gender-specific analysis and vulnerability assessments during the planning and formulation of climate change adaptation and fisheries management plans. Local governments should lead these efforts in collaboration with universities and research institutions—and partner with stakeholders to develop programs informed by these assessments.
 - Undertake intersectional analysis to identify the unique challenges and vulnerabilities of women, men, indigenous people and other marginalized groups, including participation in decision-making processes.
 - Partner with universities for GESI inclusive vulnerability assessments and develop targeted solutions that address gender inequality and promote equitable access to resources and opportunities.

Gender-Disaggregated Data: A Crucial Foundation for Inclusive Adaptation

Effective climate adaptation in fisheries necessitates a nuanced understanding of how climate change impacts diverse groups within communities. This requires going beyond simple sex-disaggregated data collection. By also considering intersecting factors like age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disability, we can identify specific vulnerabilities and adaptation needs. Furthermore, actively involving women and marginalized groups in the data collection process empowers them to voice their experiences and priorities, ensuring that adaptation strategies are truly inclusive and equitable.

3. **Enhance national data collection and monitoring** to generate gender-disaggregated data on climate vulnerabilities, adaptive capacities, and the effectiveness of interventions in the fisheries sector. Data should be used to inform and drive better policies and management of fisheries resources. CT6 countries could:
 - Establish national databases or information systems to facilitate data sharing and access among relevant stakeholders. For example, data on workdays and/or income lost in fisheries due to climate-related disruptions and data on changes in fishing practices in response to climate change.
4. **Foster collaboration and participation** to promote multi-stakeholder collaboration and ensure the meaningful participation of women, men, Indigenous communities, and other marginalized groups in decision-making processes.
 - Establish national inclusive platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue and consultation.
 - Ensure gender-balanced representation in decision-making bodies and committees.
 - Include women representatives in fisheries, climate change boards, and project steering committees.
5. **Appoint national focal points for GESI and CCA** within relevant ministries or agencies to oversee the integration of GESI and CCA considerations into fisheries management policies and programs.
 - The focal points will facilitate inter-agency collaboration and coordinate massive socialization up to the village level—possibly also having contact persons/focal points at the village level.
 - Monitor implementation and ensure GESI and CCA considerations are integrated into all relevant processes.

CONCLUSION

The Coral Triangle region faces significant challenges due to climate change, which disproportionately impacts women, indigenous communities, and other marginalized groups dependent on marine resources for their livelihoods. This policy recommendation document emphasizes integrating GESI and CCA into fisheries governance. It analyzes CTI-CFF's relevant targets on CCA and GESI in the fisheries sector, as stated in the RPOA 2.0, and highlights the urgency of integrating GESI and climate change adaptation and risk management strategies in the fisheries sector. Through regional collaboration, national-level commitments, and targeted interventions, CTI-CFF member countries and partners can develop sustainable, equitable fisheries policies that build resilience and ensure equal and active participation by marginalized communities. The recommendations presented offer a guiding framework for CT6 countries to advance gender-responsive climate change adaptation in fisheries to promote, sustain, and build resilient coastal communities.

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Annex 1. CTI-CFF Member Countries' Priorities on Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Fisheries

CTI-CFF member countries' priorities for Climate Change Adaptation and GESI in Fisheries are taken directly from the National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and the National GESI Policies, except when otherwise noted. At the time of writing this document, CT6 Member Countries were still in the process of finalizing their NPOAs; therefore, countries' priorities in the NPOA are not yet included.

Country	National Documents
Indonesia	National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation (RAN-API)
	Climate Resilience Development Policy (PBI)
	National Adaptation Plan (<i>finalization process</i>)
	National Gender Mainstreaming Policy (Presidential Instruction Number 9 of 2000)
	Gender Equality in the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2005-2025 (Law Number 17 of 2007 National PJP for 2005-2025)
	Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries 51 of 2016 concerning Guidelines for Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming Mapping in Marine and Fisheries Sector Areas
	Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Number 43 of 2023 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in MMAF
	Inspector General Decree 106 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for Supervision of Gender Mainstreaming in MMAF
Malaysia	The 12 th Malaysia Plan 2021-2025
	National Policy on Climate Change
	National Policy on Women (1989, updated in 2009)
	The Sarawak state post COVID recovery plan
	Sabah Maju Jaya
	National Policy on Biological Biodiversity 2022-2030
Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea National Adaptation Plan
	Climate Mobility and Planned Relocation Policy (<i>drafting process</i>)
	Blue Carbon Policy (<i>drafting process</i>)
	Papua New Guinea and the Green Climate Fund – Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for Project Implementers
	The National Public Service Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy 2013
	Papua New Guinea Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence 2016-2025
	National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015
Philippines	National Adaptation Plan of the Philippines 2023-2050

Country	National Documents
	National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2018-2022
	Republic Act 9710 or the Magna Carta for Women
	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Plan 2019-2025
	Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2028
	(RA 10121) Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act of 2010
	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan 2020-2030
	(RA 11995) Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System (PENCAS) Act of 2024
	Tracking Philippine Climate Public Expenditures using CCET
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands National Climate Change Policy
	National Development Strategy (2016-2035)
	National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA)
	Community Based Resource Management
	National Adaptation Plan (<i>planning process with GGGI</i>)
	National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (2021-2027)
	National Fisheries Policy 2019-2029
	Solomon Islands Ministry of Marine Resources GESI Policy 2024-2029
Timor-Leste	Timor-Leste National Adaptation Plan (2020-2030)
	Gender Equality Strategy (2022-2025)
	Timor-Leste Aquaculture Strategy Plan (2011-2024)
	Article 6, 16 and 17, 2002 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste