

Proposal Pitch Notes

Climate Smart Agriculture and Economic Empowerment of Women

Developed for UN Women East and Southern Africa Region

January 2021

# Checklist of key questions for proposal design

* Determine what distinguishes this proposal from other conventional agriculture supply chain proposals that effectively enables women and men to prepare for, mitigate against and adapt to climate change?
* Which CSA-sensitive practices are being promoted through this proposal? (Refer for example to [Table 2 in this FAO brief.](http://www.fao.org/3/a-be879e.pdf)
* What is it about the proposal that aligns with national and regional commitments to climate change as outlined in climate change adaptation and mitigation policies? How are the ministries of agriculture and of environment engaged as partners in this proposal?
* Is the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAi) and the Reach, Benefit and Empowerment framework incorporated into the proposal’s impact indicators and measures? What are the key gender-responsive or women focused factors of CSA identified for this region? How are the root issues such land tenure security addressed in this proposal?
* Is the concept of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA)clearly established throughout the proposal - CSA is an approach to developing the technical, policy and investment conditions to achieve sustainable agricultural development for food security under climate change. It integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) by jointly addressing food security and climate challenges. It is composed of three main pillars: (1) sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes; (2) adapting and building resilience to climate change; and (3) reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible. Which of these aspects is measured throughout the proposal? Refer to the following briefing note: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-be879e.pdf> for further concepts.
* Is there a ‘natural’ ecosystem approach that lends itself to a sub-regional proposal, for instance watersheds, coastal zones, semi-arid zones or across pastoral communities, fisheries communities, areas with food insecurity (e.g. IDP camps). Refer to GEF Sept 2020 report: <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2020_04_adv.pdf> for examples of climate smart projects in the region.
* And finally, how does the proposal build on current UN Women training materials and modules on CSA and on the UN Women studies on gender-gaps in agriculture?

# This is a watershed moment for RESILIENCE

## Reference UN Documents

For most people, climate change will be primarily experienced through water: droughts, storms, floods, and result in displacement and lost livelihoods. To ensure that the proposal content, objectives and aspirations align with future climate mitigation and adaptation: refer to the following documents for gender differentials and data for the region.

* <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/73800_theclimatecrisisreportesawcarsep20.pdf>
* <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/gender-climate-and-security#view>.
* UN Women gender – gap studies in agriculture (add link)

## Defining “Resilience” in the context of climate change

The official Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) definition of resilience is

“the capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity, and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning, and transformation.”

According to the IPCC, resilience is the capacity of systems to absorb disturbances while “maintaining the same structure and means of functioning” and to “adapt to stress and change.”

The Post-Carbon Institute (PCI) uses a version of this definition:

“Resilience is the ability of a system – like a family, a country, or Earth’s biosphere – to cope with short-term disruptions and adapt to long-term changes without losing its essential character[[1]](#endnote-1)”

The PCI further identifies four crises confronting societies today:

* environmental (ecosystems in crisis);
* energy (dependence on fossil fuels);
* economic (structures geared for constant growth); and
* equity (promotion of the worst inequalities).

### The socio-ecological dimensions of resilience

A comprehensive climate resilience agenda could address all four spheres of resilience and formulate a ‘higher consciousness’ of what is at stake. Resilience therefore is multifaceted concept to be understood and measured across multiple social dimensions, including physical, social, economic, institutional, and ecological fronts.

## Align proposal to existing UN frameworks

Build on empowering women in their knowledge of and roles in reinforcing and stewarding through nature-based solutions (NBS) by referring to the commitments outlined in the 2021-2030 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, shows promising [signs of new energy](https://www.forest-trends.org/blog/five-things-we-can-do-in-the-next-24-months-to-mobilize-major-investments-in-ecosystem-restoration-and-climate-resilience/) in NBS commitments from governments, companies, and communities.

A review of project [proposals submitted to the GEF](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2020_04_adv.pdf) shows the interest in building resilience into climate projects. Protecting and restoring natural places and resources (e.g forests), is a public health issue, just as much as it is a climate action issue, a biodiversity conservation issue, and a water security issue. Far from fearing nature as a source of pandemic, we need to recognize that we depend on our Earth’s good health. Healthy ecosystems provide food, timber, and medicine; sequester carbon; absorb floods and storm surges; filter our air; purify our water; and provide us with an endless source of beauty, recreation, and spiritual and cultural well-being. Empowering women through their control, management of and reproduction of local indigenous knowledge on local seeds, biodiverse eco-systems, natural based integrated pest management, nurturing of soils, sequestering carbon is the niche area for UN Women to lever.

Investments in healthy landscapes cost-effectively help ensure clean, reliable water supplies. They prevent soil erosion, improve soil fertility and aquatic productivity, and help to buffer against storms and floods. These investments also have climate co-benefits, especially if carefully designed. Landscape management interventions like reforestation programmes or wetland restoration support not only water security but also climate mitigation, through enhanced carbon sequestration and by reducing the need for carbon-intensive infrastructure. All these investments enhance resilience.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) is an important reference point, Global and regional frameworks have recognized the role of gender in DRR and building resilience of communities. The Sendai Framework makes provision for the consideration of gender equality. The framework states that governments should engage all relevant stakeholders (including women, children, young people and people with disabilities) in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards. The POA for implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa also seeks to strengthen mechanisms, frameworks and capacities at national and sub-national and local levels for mainstreaming, implementing and coordinating gender-sensitive DRR strategies and programmes.

## The systems of resilience

Most definitions of resilience, whether given by the [IPCC](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg2/WGIIAR5-AnnexII_FINAL.pdf), or the [Third National Climate Assessment](https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/response-strategies/adaptation), characterize it as an “ability” or a “capacity” or a “capability.” Yet conceiving of resilience as a capability (as opposed to a process, for example) does not necessarily imply its inherent presence in systems, networks, or structures.

Systems’ resilience capacity is a function of managing risk across three factors: hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. In other words, the extent to which systems can withstand and recover from climate change impacts depends on the severity of a given hazard, the likelihood that the hazard will affect the system, and the vulnerability of the system assuming it’s fully exposed to the hazard.

Applying a gender-based analysis within this context requires a two-pronged approach to support a symbiotic relationship between eco-systems and social systems (which is also referred to in some disciplines as human ecology). The unintended consequences of further entrenching economic and political systems (business as usual) that deepen / widen society inequalities and that favour one section of society over another, will serve only to undermine or compromise society’s resilience to and recovery from climate related hazards or disasters.

## Resilience from a relational and gender perspective

The PCI approach, for example, puts its emphasis on *community* as the key to resilience.

“Resilience breaks the mammoth of climate change into locally manageable tasks such as reducing increased flood risk due to sea-level rise or preparing agricultural markets for longer droughts due to higher temperatures. Resilience underscores the specific impacts of climate change for individual communities.”

This is where developing community cohesion, social inclusion[[2]](#endnote-2) and gender relationships with natural and built environments and institutions becomes fundamentally important to climate-related resilience.

Applying gender and relational dimensions of resilience to disasters and climate change enables policy makers and practitioners to consider people's relationships with each other and their individual and collective responsibilities for the environment. This includes how to care and steward (for each other and for natural environments), how to manage multiple stressors and risks, how to access and replace resources (through tree planting or stewarding water sources) and how to contribute to decisions that have a long-term resilience impact (such as early warning systems or tree planting). In so doing, the end objective is to address and overcome disparities, biases, and discrimination between and among peoples and to transform societal, economic and political relationships for the benefit of all inhabitants.

## Apply a systems approach to the proposal design

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1. Daniel Lerch, ed. Community Resilience Reader: Essential Resources for an Era of Upheaval. Island Press, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “Social Inclusion” refers to equality of treatment and opportunity as it relates to gender, culture, regional, income, and age diversity, among others. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)