Brief

Gender equality targeting in adaptation finance

2021 snapshot

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Key messages

Climate impacts are likely to aggravate existing gender inequalities and marginalisation patterns as a result of distinct gendered vulnerabilities and capacities to face and recover from climate impacts. Supporting greater gender equality helps increase the adaptive capacity of women, and more largely of human systems.

While no gender-specific target exists in adaptation finance or climate finance, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Parties have committed to 'increase the gender-responsiveness of climate finance'. The topic is likely to be discussed under the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance and at the 2024 Standing Committee on Finance forum.

In 2021, out of a total of $28 billion in adaptation funding by developed countries, providers reported that $12.2 billion also had gender equality as an objective. However, $11.2 billion (40%) of adaptation finance is not screened for gender equality targeting when reported, which leaves great uncertainty over precisely how much adaptation finance also targets gender equality.

To improve accountability and the tracking of flows, developed countries need to track their bilateral finance using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) gender markers, as they have committed to. Multilateral entities need to consider adopting, if not the OECD gender markers, then a joint approach interoperable with these, for systematic screening for gender equality targeting of all adaptation and climate finance.

Flood Resilience Alliance

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AF	Adaptation Fund
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
COP	Conference of the Parties
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
LCDF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MCF	multilateral climate fund
MDB	multilateral development bank
NCQG	New Collective Quantified Goal
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UK	United Kingdom
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
US	United States

1 Context

Gender norms shape and often constrain access to resources, representation and equal rights (Harper et al., 2020). These norms structure women's adaptive capacities by influencing roles, expectations and attitudes. Meanwhile, climate impacts are likely to aggravate existing gender inequalities and marginalisation patterns, while lack of gender-responsive policies reinforces the effects of climate impacts. Climate change impacts are likely to disproportionately affect women and girls compared with men and boys in the same community. Because gender norms mediate women's vulnerabilities to climate change, adaptation needs are not gender-blind (Andrijevic et al., 2020).

Supporting greater gender equality helps increase the adaptive capacity of women, and more largely of human systems, as highlighted since 2007 in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on vulnerability (Parry et al., 2007). Addressing gender inequalities is also one of the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation adopted by the Sharm-El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda of the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27), which frames the 30 global adaptation outcome targets to be achieved by 2030 (COP27 Presidency, 2022). The distinct gendered[1] vulnerabilities and capacities to adapt to climate impacts, hence entail support for greater gender equality in the finance for adaptation.

This brief focuses on public adaptation finance, which is finance committed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that flows from developed[2] to developing countries. This finance is key to support climate action in developing countries, along with finance for mitigation and private finance for climate action as per the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015).

The Paris Agreement, and before that the Cancún (2010) and Durban (2012) decisions, recognise the principle of gender equality as central to climate policy and as especially relevant to adaptation (UNFCCC, 2011, 2012, 2015). While no gender-specific quantitative target exists in adaptation finance or climate finance, the UNFCCC's

[1] Gender and biological sex are different concepts; however, Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reporting system appear to report on gender understood as the male–female binary.

[2] In the absence of a UNFCCC definition of 'developed countries', the brief follows the Annex II country categorisation of the UNFCCC and considers as developed Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the US.

Enhanced Lima Work Programme[3] on gender and its action plan agreed by all Parties invites public and private relevant entities:[4]

> ‘to increase the gender-responsiveness of climate finance with a view to strengthening the capacity of women’

in the understanding that gender-responsive finance is a core tool for implementation (UNFCCC, 2022). Gender-responsive finance under the UNFCCC ‘ensures the respect, promotion and consideration of gender equality and the empowerment of women’ as defined by the Enhanced Lima Work Programme and its Gender Action Plan.[5]

There are two potential entry points in the UNFCCC finance discussions in the short term to pursue greater financial support for gender equality. First, one stream of the UNFCCC negotiation cycle is currently focused on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), to be finalised by COP29 in 2024. The NCQG is widely seen as the renewal of the climate finance goal, previously set at $100 billion per year.[6] Its structure is one point for negotiation: it could be multi-layered, with sub-targets for specific sub-groups in developing countries – such as women and girls on low incomes. Second, ‘Accelerating climate action and resilience through gender-responsive finance’ will be the theme of the 2024 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance,[7] ahead of the review of the Lima Work Programme at COP29.

All developed countries have committed to gender-responsive finance in the UNFCCC and to gender equality in several international development platforms (the Beijing Declaration in 1995, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and, for some countries, their individual feminist development policies), but how such commitments have translated into their adaptation finance portfolio remains to be understood.

The objective of this brief is to support greater accountability and transparency regarding how much adaptation finance from developed countries also pursued greater gender equality in 2021. It further analyses the dataset built for the ODI report series ‘A fair share of climate finance?’, now in its third edition. We make two contributions: we show how much adaptation finance also actively supported greater gender equality objectives in 2021 and also how much each individual developed country provided bilaterally towards this goal in that year. As the NCQG negotiations related to the structuring of the new goal are underway, evidence on provision will be valuable to inform civil society, negotiators and concerned observers.

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[3] Established in 2014, by Decision 18/CP.20.

[4] Decision 3/CP.25, paragraph 14.

[5] Paragraph 7 of the Gender Action Plan.

[6] Technically, the NCQG may not be strictly understood as the renewal of the $100 billion, given that the NCQG is mandated by the Paris Agreement adopted by all Parties, whereas the $100 billion was a political decision of which the COP took note and that some Parties formally supported.

[7] The Committee promotes coherence across bodies and entities dealing with climate finance.

2 Method

We use the adaptation finance dataset developed in Pettinotti et al., (2023), which includes bilateral and multilateral climate finance. In that report, bilateral data are originally sourced from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) climate-related finance database.[8] Finance through multilateral channels is attributed back to each developed country using data in the Joint Report on Multilateral Development Banks' Climate Finance (AfDB et al., 2022) and the Climate Funds Update.[9] For the full methodology, see Pettinotti et al. (2023).

In this piece of research, we further analyse the adaptation finance dataset, disaggregating it between adaptation finance that does and does not target gender equality objectives, using the OECD gender policy markers. These are markers used to track finance committed to supporting greater gender equality (Box 1). Adaptation finance not screened using the OECD gender markers is also presented.

Not all adaptation finance reported to the OECD is screened and tagged with the OECD gender markers: most bilateral finance is[10] but only some of the multilateral finance. Multilaterals – that is, multilateral development banks (MDBs) and multilateral climate funds (MCFs) – are not required to report their adaptation finance to the OECD using the gender markers. Only a fraction of multilaterals' portfolio is screened using the OECD gender markers in OECD data (see discussion in Section 3). The OECD counts data reported by multilaterals not tagged with the OECD gender markers as 'not screened'.

Box 1 Gender markers of the OECD Development Assistance Committee

The DAC gender equality policy markers are a 'tool to record aid activities that target gender equality as a policy objective' (OECD, 2016). They track aid providers' intentions on gender equality at the design stage, and as such cannot be used as a proxy for disbursement, actual implementation or effectiveness of a project. Originally designed to be a qualitative tool for monitoring and

[8] Development Finance for Climate and Environment: www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/climate-change.htm
[9] https://climatefundsupdate.org/data-dashboard/
[10] The use of the gender markers is a reporting requirement for bilateral finance.

accountability in the context of SDG delivery, in the absence of other tracking frameworks the markers have become an imperfect way to track commitment of aid to gender equality. Reporting using the gender markers is compulsory for all OECD DAC members, which includes all developed countries providing adaptation finance.

There are three markers (OECD, 2016):

- not targeted: where an aid activity has been screened but is found to not target gender equality
- significant: where gender equality is an important and deliberate objective in the activity design but not the principal reason for undertaking the activity
- principal: where gender equality is the fundamental objective of the activity, which would not have been undertaken otherwise

In addition, OECD guidance clarifies that activities left ‘blank’ are those that have not been screened for gender aspects.

To estimate how much multilateral adaptation finance goes in support of gender equality, we use the OECD climate-related finance dataset from the ‘recipient perspective’ – that is, developing countries’ receipt of funding that uses the OECD gender markers for some of its adaptation finance. We calculate the share of the multilaterals’ projects tagged as principal, significant, not targeted and not screened using this dataset.

Next, we apply the shares of projects tagged with the OECD gender markers and of projects not screened to each individual MDB and MCF. We then attribute the estimated adaptation finance targeting gender equality to developed countries based on their share of capital subscription (or voting power or paid-in capital) in these multilateral organisations.

As per OECD recommendation and the gender in development literature, we do not ascribe any weighting or hierarchy between finance targeting gender as a principal or a significant objective. In other words, finance scored with a principal gender policy marker is not better than that scored with a significant one (OECD, 2016). They simply reflect two approaches in development practice, whereby some projects may target only women as primary beneficiaries while others focus on the enabling environment with a specific lens on access conditions for women (Moser and Moser, 2005; Derbyshire, 2012). The OECD recommends a dual approach that combines both in development cooperation portfolios (OECD, 2016). Therefore, we consider 100% of the financial value of projects tagged with either gender marker.

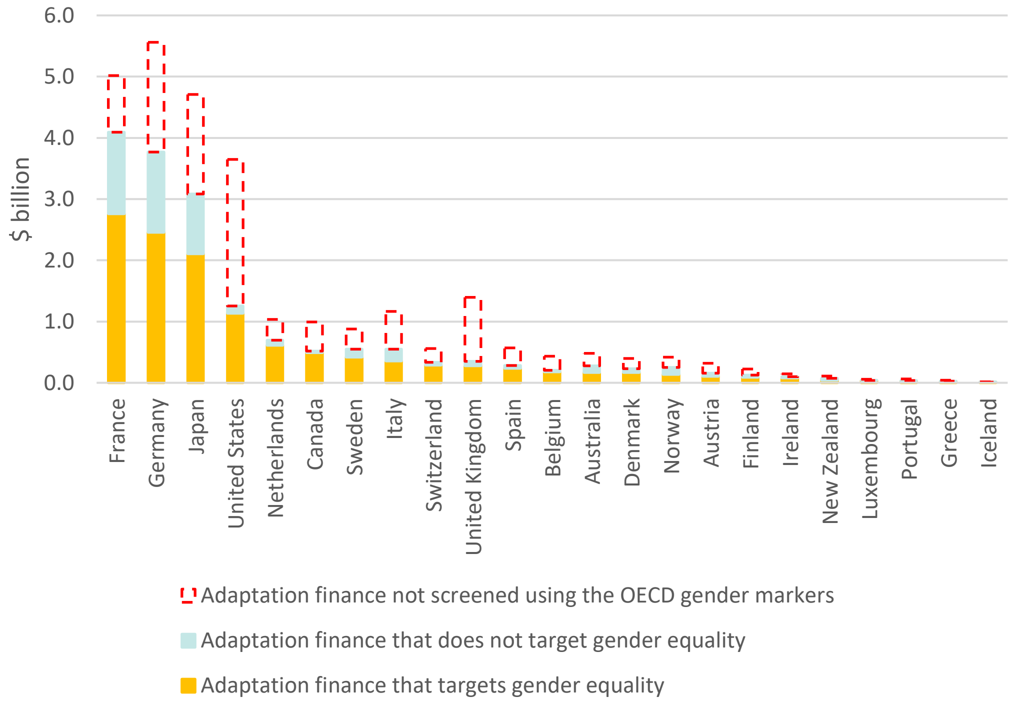
Last, the OECD gender markers were originally *not* designed for financial reporting. Their purpose was to track targeting of a specific policy element (i.e. gender equality) in aid projects. Therefore, they are better suited to assessing the share of a country’s aid activities that supports specific policy objectives than to estimating the accurate financial spending tied to those objectives (OECD, 2022). Nevertheless, in the absence of better self-reported information from countries, the use of OECD markers to proxy financial spending is a widely adopted practice. Hence, the data presented below represent estimates rather than exact quantification, and Box 1 mentions, do not reflect potential outcome or effectiveness.

3 Gender equality targeting in adaptation finance in 2021

All developed countries report that a share of their adaptation finance in 2021 also actively sought to support greater gender equality. Out of a total of $28 billion in adaptation finance overall, gender equality was targeted in $12.2 billion. The remainder ($16 billion) either did not target greater gender equality ($4.8 billion) or was not screened with the OECD markers for gender equality ($11 billion) and cannot be accounted for (Figure 1).

The largest adaptation finance providers, France, Germany and Japan, targeted gender equality in $7.3 billion of their adaptation finance provision (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Developed countries' bilateral and multilateral finance provision for adaptation and gender equality, 2021



Source: Authors calculations based on AfDB et al. (2022); OECD Development Finance for Climate and Environment dataset; Climate Funds Update
Note: See Appendix for underlying data.

As detailed in Section 2, multilaterals do not necessarily screen their projects for gender objectives. In total, about $11.2 billion was not screened by multilaterals with the OECD gender markers and could not be analysed. As a result, the figures presented for adaptation finance that targeted gender equality (Figure 1) represent a low estimate and could be higher if all multilaterals' project portfolios were screened with the OECD gender markers. Consequently, we present the percentages of bilateral adaptation finance that targeted gender equality for each developed country (Figure 2) along with the share of MDB and MCF adaptation finance screened with the OECD gender markers (Figure 3).

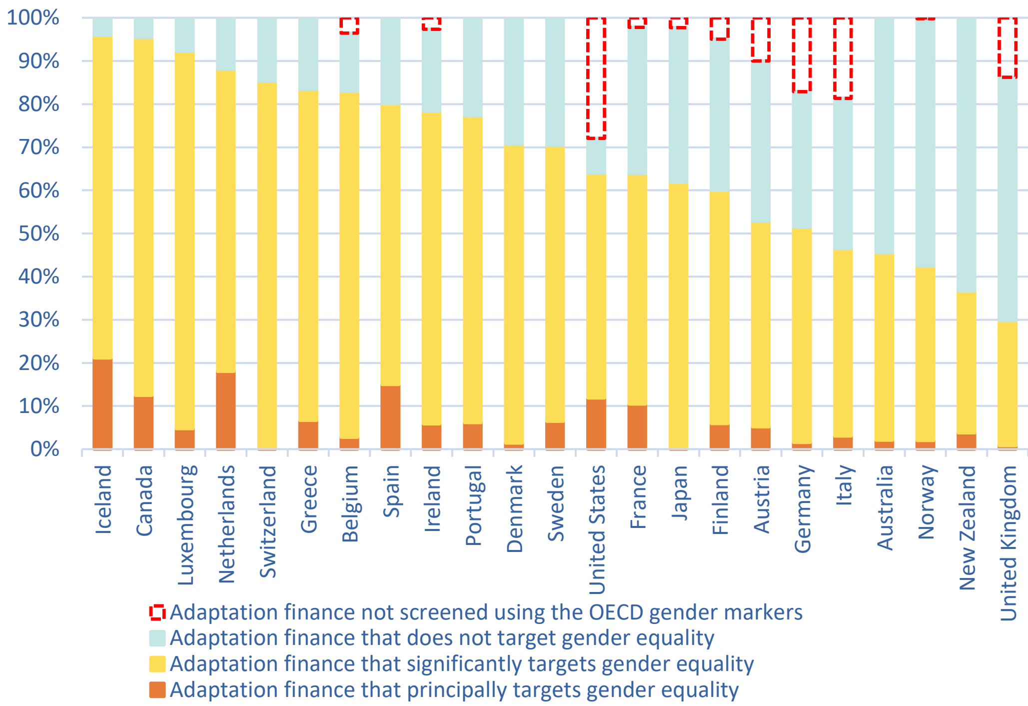
Gender equality targeting in bilateral adaptation finance, 2021

More than 90% of Iceland, Canada and Luxembourg's reported bilateral adaptation finance also targeted gender equality (Figure 2).

However, the overall quantity of adaptation funding provided by Iceland and Luxembourg is small (Figure 1).

The largest bilateral adaptation finance providers – France, Germany and Japan – report that about half to almost two-thirds of their finance also targeted gender equality.

Figure 2 Share of developed countries' bilateral finance that went to adaptation and gender equality, 2021



Source: Authors' calculations based on OECD Development Finance for Climate and Environment dataset
Note: There is no hierarchy of effectiveness or value between adaptation finance that principally or significantly targets gender equality. They are counted as equal (see Section 2). See Appendix for underlying data.

Almost half (11) of the countries do not screen all of their bilateral adaptation finance using the OECD gender markers. Countries that do not screen a considerable portion (above 10%) of their bilateral adaptation finance are the US (28% of its bilateral adaptation finance portfolio in 2021 was not screened), Italy (19%), Germany (17%), the UK (14%) and Austria (10%). This is despite the countries' mandatory reporting to the OECD using the OECD gender markers (see Box 1).

Without having these countries' entire bilateral adaptation finance screened with the OECD gender markers, it is challenging to accurately assess how much of their adaptation finance targets gender equality, resulting in a higher risk of misrepresenting their results. For example, the US bilateral adaptation finance's share targeting gender equality would go from 64% when accounting for total adaptation finance (i.e. the orange, yellow, blue and red dash coloured bars in Figure 2) up to 89% when only accounting for the finance screened with the OECD gender makers (i.e. excluding the red dashed bars). Similarly, Italy's share of adaptation finance also targeting gender equality would go from 47% to 57%; Germany's from 52% to 62%; the UK's from 30% to 35%; and Austria's from 53% to 59%.

If these countries' full bilateral portfolios were screened, a higher volume of adaptation finance might be counted as targeting gender equality. However, in the absence of full screening, we recommend interpreting the results of Figure 2 taking into account the share of unscreened finance for an accurate comparison between countries.

Canada, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Spain have all adopted a feminist foreign affairs policy. While adopting such a policy does not necessarily mean greater finance to gender equality objectives, it has nonetheless translated into greater attention to and better gender screening of their bilateral adaptation finance. In fact, Canada, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Spain screened 100% of their bilateral adaptation finance, France 98% and Germany 83%. Additionally, Canada, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Spain are among the leading countries, with more than 80% of their bilateral adaptation finance targeting gender equality.

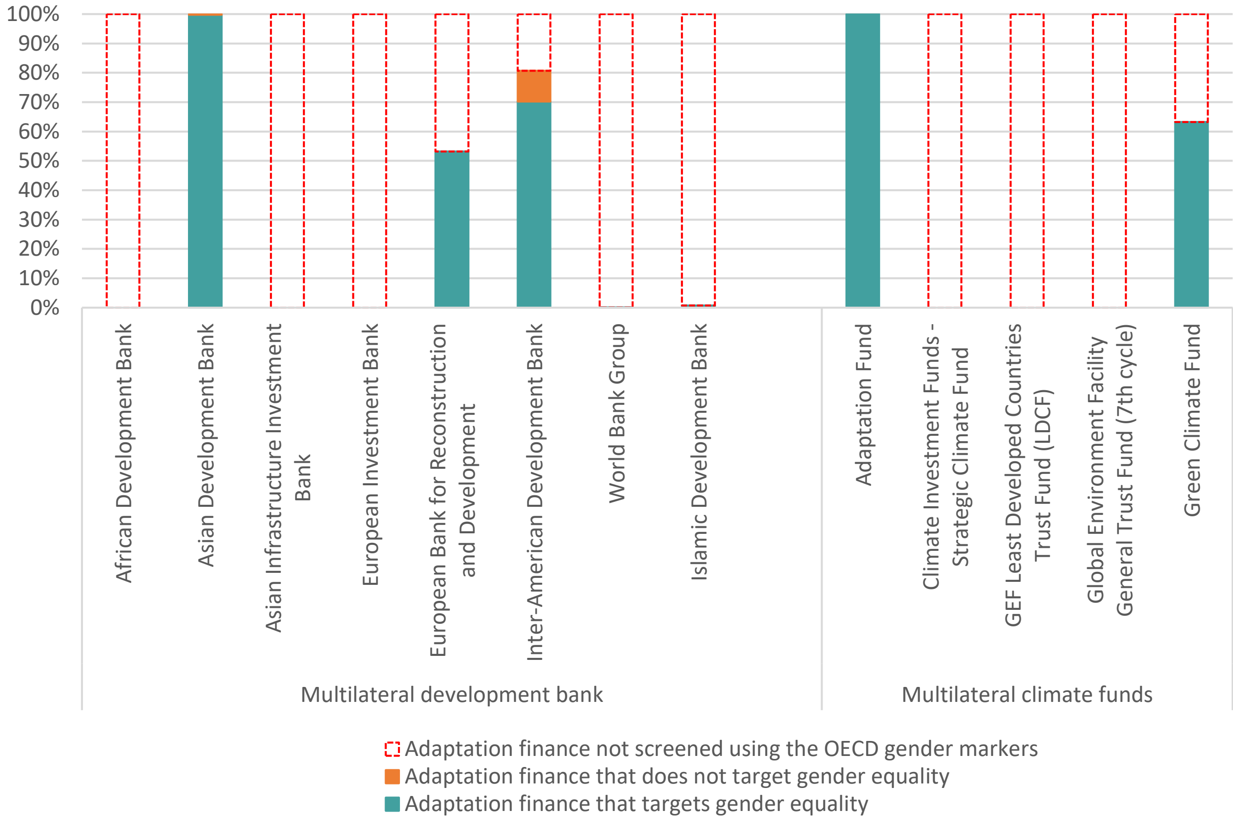
Gender equality targeting in multilateral adaptation finance, 2021

Virtually all the MDBs and MCFs in the dataset have a gender policy and strategy for their operations (GCF, 2017; GEF, 2018; Kyeyune, 2018; ADB, 2021b; EIB, 2021; AF, 2022; IADB, 2022; EBRD, 2023; World Bank Group, 2023; AF, 2022; GEF, 2018; GCF, 2017) but little information is publicly available as to their use of OECD gender markers.

In 2021, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Adaptation Fund (AF) screened all their adaptation finance using the gender

OECD tags; the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) screened some but not all of their adaptation finance; and the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the World Bank, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) did not screen their portfolios with the OECD gender tags (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Finance for adaptation tagged with the OECD gender markers from the MDBs and MCFs reporting to the OECD, 2021



Source: Authors' calculations based on OECD Development Finance for Climate and Environment dataset, using the recipient perspective database
Note: See Appendix for underlying data.

This does not mean that these entities do not have internal procedures to track those flows. In fact, the World Bank, EBRD, EIB, AF, GEF and GCF have documented internal gender tagging frameworks or require project implementers to report on gender indicators (see GCF, 2017; GEF, 2018; EIB, 2021a; AF, 2022; EBRD, 2023; World Bank Group, 2023), allowing them to estimate the share of their funding targeting gender equality objectives. They simply do not report this information to the OECD using the latter's gender markers system, as they are not required to do so and may find it challenging as a result of definitional and process differences between systems.

4 Conclusion

In 2021, out of a total of $28.2 billion in adaptation funding provided by developed countries, $12.2 billion (43%) was reported to also have gender equality as an objective.

Our analysis highlights a clear gap on reporting: of the total $28.2 billion of adaptation finance provided in 2021, $11.2 billion (40%) was not screened with the OECD gender markers, creating uncertainty on precisely how much adaptation finance is actually targeting gender equality.

To improve accountability on gender equality targeting in adaptation finance provision, better tracking is needed at the bilateral and multilateral levels. First, all adaptation finance provided bilaterally should be screened using the OECD gender markers. OECD DAC countries have already agreed to doing so but the US, Italy, Germany and the UK still do not use the OECD gender markers on 15% or more of their bilateral portfolio. Second, multilaterals could adopt systematic screening of all adaptation (and more generally climate) finance for gender equality using the common OECD gender markers, just like bilateral providers. Alternatively, the multilaterals could work towards joint reporting like they already do on their disbursement for climate finance, and work towards an interoperable standard with the OECD gender markers system.

Joint coordination efforts to apply a common gender equality markers system would allow for comparison and aggregation. These efforts would need to also cover consistency in understanding the markers' use. There is persistent differentiated understanding between countries on what counts as targeting gender equality. A United Nations-led assessment (UNEP, 2023) evaluated that, over 2017 - 2021, only 2% of the adaptation finance reported as having gender equality as a principal objective was in fact gender-responsive. Another quarter was considered to have a gender equality element (evaluated as gender-'specific' or -'integrative') and the remaining two-thirds was found to be gender-blind or not targeting adaptation.

As the climate finance community attempts to take stock of decades of provision, consistent and transparent reporting is key to understand progress and gaps. However, improved screening and tracking of funds for gender equality in itself does not improve gender equality. It is, however, a step towards greater inclusivity and women's participation in adaptation decision-making.

Finally, the issue of how to improve provision for gender equality could be considered as a point of discussion under the NCQG negotiations: would a quantitative sub-target lead to greater funding? And, if so, what thresholds would be deemed as appropriate – 50%, 100% of finance to target gender equality? Tracked with what markers?

Alternatively, should it be considered as a qualitative element of the new goal – either as a thematic sub-goal, on the same level as adaptation and mitigation, or included in other qualitative elements under consideration by the NCQG Ad Hoc Work Programme, such as access, effectiveness and efficiency (UNFCCC, 2023)? Should it have both a quantitative sub-target and qualitative provisions?

Or should it take the form of guidance on what constitutes gender-responsive finance? The term agreed in the Lima Action Plan lacks guidelines on operation and implementation, including on the type of financial instruments to be used – for example what balance there should be between the use of grants and loans.

Then, how should monitoring and tracking of gender equality targeting in adaptation funding and outcomes be structured? Should there be mandatory reporting that tracks gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries in the NCQG reporting mechanism that may be adopted?

We hope this brief can inform and catalyse conversation on these issues and related questions, to increase ambition and lead to joined-up approaches on finance for both climate adaptation and gender equality.

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Appendix: Supplementary data

Table 1 Developed countries' bilateral and multilateral finance provision for adaptation and gender equality, 2021 (Figure 1 underlying data) ($ billion)

	Gender equality targeting in adaptation finance		
Developed country	Adaptation finance that targets gender equality (principal and significant OECD gender markers)	Adaptation finance that does not target gender equality (not targeted OECD gender marker)	Adaptation finance not screened using the OECD gender markers
Australia	0.17	0.11	0.20
Austria	0.10	0.05	0.16
Belgium	0.18	0.03	0.23
Canada	0.49	0.02	0.48
Denmark	0.17	0.06	0.17
Finland	0.09	0.04	0.10
France	2.76	1.33	0.92
Germany	2.46	1.31	1.79
Greece	0.02	0.00	0.02
Iceland	0.01	0.00	0.01
Ireland	0.08	0.02	0.05
Italy	0.35	0.19	0.62
Japan	2.11	0.98	1.62
Luxembourg	0.04	0.00	0.02
Netherlands	0.61	0.08	0.34
New Zealand	0.04	0.03	0.03
Norway	0.14	0.11	0.17
Portugal	0.03	0.01	0.03
Spain	0.23	0.05	0.29
Sweden	0.42	0.13	0.33
Switzerland	0.29	0.04	0.23
UK	0.28	0.07	1.05
US	1.13	0.12	2.39

Source: Authors calculations based on AfDB et al. (2022); OECD Development Finance for Climate and Environment dataset; Climate Funds Update

Table 2 Developed countries' bilateral finance for adaptation and gender equality, 2021 (Figure 2 underlying data)

	Bilateral adaptation finance that principally targets gender equality as per OECD gender markers ($ million)	Bilateral adaptation finance that significantly targets gender equality as per OECD gender markers ($ million)	Bilateral adaptation finance that does not target gender equality as per OECD gender markers ($ million)	Bilateral adaptation finance not screened using the OECD gender markers ($ million)	Share of bilateral adaptation finance that targets gender equality out of total bilateral adaptation finance	Share of bilateral adaptation finance that targets gender equality out of bilateral adaptation finance screened using OECD gender markers
Australia	4	89	111	-	46%	46%
Austria	8	70	55	15	53%	59%
Belgium	5	147	25	6	83%	86%
Canada	46	305	17	-	95%	95%
Denmark	3	143	60	-	71%	71%
Finland	7	60	39	6	60%	63%
France	411	2,099	1,331	87	64%	65%
Germany	64	2,084	1,308	714	52%	62%
Greece	2	19	4	-	83%	83%
Iceland	2	8	0	-	96%	96%
Ireland	5	68	18	2	78%	81%
Italy	17	238	190	102	47%	57%
Japan	6	1,674	969	63	62%	63%
Luxembourg	1	26	2	-	92%	92%
Netherlands	119	461	78	-	88%	88%
New Zealand	2	18	34	-	37%	37%
Norway	4	78	110	0	43%	43%
Portugal	2	22	7	-	77%	77%
Spain	33	145	44	-	80%	80%
Sweden	28	279	129	-	70%	70%
Switzerland	1	252	43	-	85%	85%
UK	1	36	71	17	30%	35%
US	105	461	71	247	64%	89%

Source: Authors' calculations based on OECD Development Finance for Climate and Environment dataset

Note: The last column shows percentages where the denominator corresponds to adaptation finance screened using the OECD gender markers. While some countries screen all their adaptation finance using the OECD gender markers, others do not and hence the last and before last column show different percentages.

Table 3 MDB and MCF adaptation finance portfolios tagged with OECD gender markers and not screened, 2021 (Figure 3 underlying data)

	Not targeted	Principal	Significant	Not screened
Multilateral development bank				
AfDB	0%	0%	0%	100%
ADB	0.18%	6.67%	93.15%	0%
AIIB	0%	0%	0%	100%
EIB	0%	0%	0%	100%
EBRD	0%	53.18%	0%	46.82%
IADB Group	10.38%	0.94%	69.32%	19.36%
World Bank Group	0%	0.03%	0%	99.97%
Multilateral climate funds				
AF	0%	100%	0%	0%
GEF LDCF	0%	0%	0%	100%
GEF General Trust Fund (7th cycle)	0%	0%	0%	100%
GCF	0%	0%	63.23%	36.77%

Source: Authors' calculations based on OECD Development Finance for Climate and Environment dataset, using the recipient perspective database