



CORPORATE FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF
**UN WOMEN'S WORK IN THE
AREA OF CLIMATE CHANGE**



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The evaluation was conducted by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES). The IES team included Shravanti Reddy, Evaluation Specialist; Ross Tanner, Evaluation Specialist; Tania Gatto, Research Assistant; Mariam Nasser, Evaluation Analyst; Nidhi Tandon, Gender Equality and Climate Change Evaluation Consultant; and Yulia Krylova, Data Analyst Consultant.

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INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND AUDIT SERVICES (IEAS)

Independent Evaluation Service (IES)

UN WOMEN

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FOREWORD

The immediate and growing threat of climate change is one of the most significant and complex challenges facing us. The impacts of climate change intersect with other crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting significant numbers of people across the globe, particularly the most vulnerable. Women and girls experience disproportionate and distinct effects of climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. At the same time, women's leadership has been crucial for effective adaptation and mitigation efforts. Women are on the frontlines of the climate crisis and are often recognized as stewards of environmental resources, integral to natural resource management and central to building climate-resilient communities. Increasingly, the intersection – or nexus – between gender equality and climate change is being recognized as critical to our collective response to climate change.

UN Women has engaged in the gender equality and climate change space in a number of critical ways across the Entity's integrated mandate of normative support, UN system coordination and operational work. Alongside other key actors, UN Women has helped strengthen the gender responsiveness of international and regional climate and environment frameworks and national policies. Through the Entity's coordination mandate, UN Women has brought a strong gender lens to climate-related inter-agency forums and coordination mechanisms. Operationally, UN Women has engaged in climate-related work across its thematic areas, including through Flagship Programme Initiatives and now the Gender Equality Accelerators being implemented to support the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

This formative evaluation examines UN Women's work and the evolving gender equality and climate change nexus to identify future opportunities, potential partnerships and avenues for UN Women to strengthen its climate change work. In particular, the evaluation identified opportunities for UN Women to bring greater strategic focus to its work within the nexus and enhance internal organizational coordination of colleagues engaged in climate-related work.

There is growing momentum for UN Women to build on as it moves forward within the gender equality and climate change nexus. For example, the Commission on the Status of Women 66 (which focused on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes) and the Feminist Action for Climate Justice Action Coalition of the Generation Equality Forum have both advanced gender equality and women's empowerment within climate change at the global level. Internally, the operationalization of UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022–2025, which highlights the need to mainstream climate change across the Entity's thematic areas, provides UN Women with a platform to further articulate and chart its path forward within the nexus.



Lisa Sutton

Director, Independent Evaluation and Audit Services

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
COP	Conference of Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAMS	Donor Agreement Management System
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
FACJ	Feminist Action for Climate Justice
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IEAS	Independent Evaluation and Audit Service
IES	Independent Evaluation Service
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IS4GEMs	Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender equality, Environments and Marginalized voices
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations
MOPAN	The Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
PS/HA/DRR	Peace & Security, Humanitarian Action, and Disaster Risk Reduction
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RBM	Results-Based Management
RMS	Results Management System
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCT	UN Country Teams
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN Habitat	The United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN-SWAP	UN System-wide Action Plan



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CORPORATE FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN'S WORK IN THE AREA OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Photo: *The Drought* ©Md Harun

BACKGROUND

This formative evaluation focused on UN Women's work on climate change from 2011 to 2022, where climate change is linked to related environmental areas of UN Women's portfolio (e.g. biodiversity and land degradation) and disaster risk reduction (DRR).¹ It was conducted from October 2021 to August 2022 and addressed work across UN Women's three mandate areas, six geographic regions, four strategic priority areas and relevant institutional outcome areas. Given the formative nature of the exercise, the team focused on assessing the comparative advantage of UN Women and its potential role in this space, as well as the architecture, modalities and resourcing in place to play this role. The evaluation conclusions and practical recommendations draw on 12 key evidence-based findings and aim to support UN Women's learning and decision-making for implementation of its corporate commitment to mainstream climate change within its work.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation used the *Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender Equality, Environments and Marginalized Voices (ISE4GEMs)* methodology.² This approach draws upon systems thinking, with a focus on mainstreaming and prioritizing three dimensions: gender equality, environments and marginalized voices.

The evaluation sought to answer three overarching evaluation questions:

1. What is **UN Women's comparative advantage/value added** in the climate change and gender equality nexus?³
2. What **strategic approaches** could UN Women apply in advancing the climate change and gender equality nexus going forward?
3. What **opportunities** can UN Women leverage to mitigate its climate footprint and improve sustainability and habitability?⁴ How?

EVALUATION DATA COLLECTION



Mixed-methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods.

90

individuals reached through **59 semi-structured key informant interviews**, **four focus group discussions** and four written responses.



2 surveys conducted internal and external surveys yielded responses from **218 personnel within UN Women and 54 external stakeholders**.



Network mapping undertaken to **understand existing partnerships** and identify opportunities for future partnership.



Capacity assessment to analyse organizational strengths and gaps, which contributed to the development of a Climate Change and Gender Equality Maturity Matrix (see Annex 12).

¹ The evaluation includes climate-related aspects of UN Women's DRR portfolio and recognizes that DRR also encompasses many hazard types which are not environmental.

² Stephens, A., Lewis, E.D. and Reddy, S.M. 2018. *Inclusive Systemic Evaluation (ISE4GEMs): A New Approach for the SDG Era*. New York: UN Women

³ The gender equality and climate change nexus refers to the relationship between gender and climate change.

⁴ The degree to which a particular habitat or environment, whether natural or human-made, rural or urban, is hospitable to living things.

Source: ISE4GEMs

CONTEXT

The intersection between gender equality and climate change – the nexus space – stems from the recognition that climate change can magnify gender inequalities and poses different and disproportionate risks for women and girls. The gender equality and climate change nexus is multifaceted and complex. It requires that gender relations and gender equality targets be systemically integrated into climate change policies and action to achieve both gender equality and climate-related goals at global, regional, national and local levels. Women and girls are differentially and often disproportionately affected by climate change given inequitable and discriminatory social norms; their role in the household; their disproportionate care responsibilities relative to men and boys; and barriers that affect their voice, participation and agency.⁵

There is also growing recognition within the international community of the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women in climate mitigation and adaptation, and the transition to green and blue economies – as part of the just transitions discourse.⁶ This is reflected in internationally ratified conventions which recognize the critical role that women do and must play as agents of change, participants and leaders in climate change decision-making and planning.

FINDINGS

The evaluation found that despite common use of the term “climate change,” **UN Women’s climate change work is interlinked with a broader range of environmental issues, including biodiversity and land degradation, and DRR (Finding 1)**. It is difficult to adopt a siloed approach for categorizing climate change work as it is often inextricably linked to other environmental and social issues. As UN Women moves forward with climate and environmental work, the Entity should clarify key terminology and consider whether the “climate change” label is the most appropriate or whether broader terminology should be adopted that reflects the many interconnected dimensions of climate and gender work and represents the breadth of work being undertaken.

The evaluation examined UN Women’s climate change work within the Entity’s normative, coordination and operational mandate areas. At the normative level, **UN Women has contributed to tangible results to enhance gender equality and women’s empowerment in some key climate change and environment frameworks.**

This has created the foundation to develop a more strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach to normative support going forward (Finding 2). In particular, UN Women has supported the integration of gender equality within Rio Convention frameworks and their gender-responsive implementation. The Entity has had strong engagement with normative processes related to DRR, including support to gender-responsive implementation of the Sendai Framework.

UN Women has participated in several stand-alone global and regional UN system coordination forums. At the regional and country level, UN Women has engaged in climate change-related thematic coordination groups. However, although there are some areas of strength (e.g. DRR mechanisms), engagement has been more limited. The evaluation noted the potential for UN Women to deepen its coordination work but **UN Women has not yet fully engaged its widely recognized UN system coordination and stakeholder convening capacity to address the gender equality and climate change nexus (Finding 3)**.

At the operational level, UN Women’s operational climate change and environmental work has not yet been fully mainstreamed across thematic areas as set out in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025. **Climate change work has mainly been concentrated in work related to women’s economic empowerment and DRR, but there are opportunities to further incorporate climate change and environmental programming across the organization’s work programme (Finding 4)**. Analysis of a portfolio of 82 climate change-related programmes that UN Women was engaged in found that the work was concentrated within Women’s Economic Empowerment (48 per cent), and Peace and Security, Humanitarian Action and DRR (33 per cent). Governance and Participation in Public Life made up 12 per cent of the programmes and 4 per cent Ending Violence Against Women. UN Women’s operational work was often more expansive than stakeholders realized, spanning all regions (even if coverage was uneven). UN Women’s contributions to data and research were also noted, including efforts to collect national-level data on gender and climate indicators. This existing work, when evaluated and assessed, provides a foundation for operational opportunities within each of UN Women’s thematic areas.

⁵ UNEP Global Gender and Environment Outlook (2016), 30. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/global-gender-and-environment-outlook-ggeo>

⁶ Just transitions refers to a principle, process and practice of transitioning to a green, regenerative economy in a fair and inclusive manner “that redresses past harms and creates new relationships of power for the future.” The goal of a just transition is to create social and economic opportunities for all groups. “Just transition strategies were first developed by labor union and environmental justice groups rooted in low-income communities of color, who saw the need to phase out the industries that were harming workers, community health and the planet; and at the same time provide just pathways for workers to transition to other jobs” (Climate Justice Alliance).

There is a clear desire by UN Women personnel to draw deeper and establish more intentional links between the gender equality and climate change nexus with the intersectionality of marginalized voices. There were also many examples of UN Women engaging in the nexus with marginalized populations. However, stakeholders also felt that the efforts made and results achieved are not yet sufficient. The evaluation found that UN Women personnel are committed to integrating the leave no one behind principle within the Entity's climate change and environmental work. **The limited data on this topic in some regions and countries is a key barrier to better understanding and designing policy and praxis around gender, marginalization, environment and climate change but there are opportunities to strengthen engagement with marginalized groups (Finding 5).**

The evaluation examined the strategic approaches that UN Women could apply to advance its climate change work. **Both internal and external stakeholders overwhelmingly want to see the organization take a greater leadership role and an integrated and strategic approach to climate change (Finding 6).** Partnership has been a key approach for UN Women and will be a key aspect of a more strategic and intentional approach to its climate change work. UN Women is considered a valuable partner for mainstreaming gender equality into climate change and environmental work by a wide range of stakeholder types. **UN Women now needs to establish partnerships that will support the mainstreaming of climate change within its gender equality work (Finding 7).** Through partnership mapping, the evaluation found many potential partnership opportunities at global, regional and national levels.

Another key component to advancing UN Women's climate change work is the Entity's internal architecture. **UN Women personnel expressed the need for a corporate focal point at a minimum to coordinate and bring coherence across all UN Women's climate change and environmental work, as well as a formalized network that connects personnel working on climate change and the environment across the organization (Finding 8).** Appropriate human and financial resources are critical for UN Women's work. The evaluation found that **the scale of UN Women's work in the area of climate change is affected by uneven competencies and variations in human and financial resources (Finding 9).** In addition to identifying and filling key positions, most UN Women stakeholders considered one of the best ways for the Entity to increase its overall capacity was to strengthen the technical knowledge of existing personnel in the climate change area. Partnerships have also been leveraged to complement UN Women's existing capacity.

With no specific climate-related indicators, the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan's monitoring and reporting framework was not conducive to making UN Women's work within the climate change and gender equality nexus visible. UN Women's 2022–2025 Strategic Plan includes the first indicator related to environmental sustainability under Organizational Effectiveness And Efficiency Output 1; however, **corporate results-based management (RBM) and knowledge management systems provide limited means to make the breadth of the organization's climate change and environmental work visible (Finding 10).**

There is an immediacy and urgency to developing a concerted response to the gender equality and climate change nexus as the just transition agenda gains ground globally. While UN Women has recently started to have greater involvement in movement building, the absence of clear narratives, supported by robust data and evidence, that effectively communicate the importance of gender equality for addressing the climate change crisis is a key obstacle. Through its communications and advocacy, **UN Women has a critical role to play in changing the narrative to make intersectionality and gender central to the mainstream discourse on climate change and the environment (Finding 11).**

The evaluation explored opportunities for UN Women to mitigate its own climate footprint and improve sustainability. **Overall, UN Women has taken initial steps towards becoming a climate neutral and environmentally sustainable organization, but there is opportunity to improve UN Women's policies and procedures to enhance environmental sustainability and reduce the Entity's carbon footprint (Finding 12).** UN Women has made some progress towards climate neutrality and environmental sustainability since 2011, mainly through the UN-wide Greening the Blue initiative. UN Women actively identifies climate risks to its operations as part of its Enterprise Risk Management System; and a system-wide indicator to measure and report on efforts towards climate and environmental mitigation was introduced in the Entity's Strategic Plan 2022–2025. However, despite the efforts outlined above, there remains scope to improve UN Women's methods and strategies to move closer to full climate neutrality and environmental sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

1

Although awareness among UN Women personnel of the totality of UN Women's climate change and environmental work is limited, the organization has engaged in a significant amount of work in this area. While some of this work has tended to be ad hoc, it represents a foundation for more strategic engagement in the longer term on the gender equality and climate change nexus.

Operationally, UN Women can build on lessons from its successful projects and programmes; showcase existing results; and utilize lessons learned to improve programming. There are opportunities to both mainstream gender equality within the existing climate work led by more traditional environmental partners and to develop programming with higher-level outcomes focused on the gender equality and climate nexus. UN Women has demonstrated success with joint programming, which serve as models for future programme development. At the normative level, UN Women's contributions prepare the organization for more consistent and strategic involvement with international frameworks, such as UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD, the Sendai Framework and New Urban Agenda. If and as UN Women builds capacity in different spheres within its climate change and environmental work, the organization will be well placed to identify and engage new coordination mechanisms. In the meantime, the evaluation identified more immediate opportunities, such as engagement in UN Country Team (UNCT) thematic groups; United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) processes; and by using its broader coordination/convening capabilities to support the nexus.

2

There is an expectation that UN Women play a more proactive role (and demonstrate leadership) to ensure that gender equality and leave no one behind perspectives are central to climate change and environmental work.

UN Women is well positioned to play a unique and important role to establish the parameters of just transitions and climate justice on behalf of marginalized populations and those who are systematically excluded from national climate policies and climate-related resources. There are two key prerequisites for UN Women to play an effective role within this space. First, UN Women needs to define what constitutes climate change work and adopt appropriate terminology to clearly describe the work. Second, UN Women should articulate its strategic direction, objectives and interventions/strategies for its climate change work.

3

Partnerships, although often ad hoc, have been central to UN Women's climate change and environmental work to date. Going forward, forming longer-term, strategic partnerships will be critical for UN Women to magnify its impact in the climate change and environment space.

UN Women has engaged with a wide variety of partners within the complex climate change and gender equality nexus. UN Women is well regarded as a partner (particularly for its technical expertise in gender equality, as a convenor, and for augmenting the visibility of women and girls); however, partnerships for climate change were often opportunistic and ad hoc. While this often served the immediate purpose, there is opportunity for UN Women to form partnerships more strategically and leverage these partnerships to magnify its influence and impact.

To maximize the benefit of its partnerships, partners need to be identified and targeted based on a clear strategic direction. There are opportunities for UN Women to partner with organizations that are well established within the climate and environmental sphere to better mainstream and integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into their work. Partnerships strengthened UN Women's engagement at the normative level. Engagements with organizations such as UNFCCC, UNEP, UNDP, IUCN and ASEAN serve as models for how such partnerships can enhance gender equality integration in international and regional frameworks.

4

The absence of a corporate coordinating structure for climate change and environmental work has negatively affected the coherence and visibility of UN Women's work in this area among both internal and external stakeholders.

To support the coordination of relevant personnel, greater understanding and cohesiveness of UN Women's climate change work and the development and implementation of a strategy for gender equality and climate change (if one is to be developed), an overall corporate level coordinator/coordination function is needed. This lead/coordinator role should be connected to a broader inter-divisional task force or network representing climate change and environmental work across UN Women's thematic areas.

5

UN Women requires some additional capacity to successfully mainstream its work on climate change and the environment, but also needs to build organizational competencies by strengthening the knowledge of all personnel.

Existing capacity and competency levels across the organization to effectively address the climate change, environment and gender equality nexus are not sufficient to meet the needs expressed by partners. UN Women needs to have a better understanding of its existing capacity (across all personnel) and clarity on the minimum requirements (competencies) for various office types. While additional capacity is needed, building the competencies of UN Women personnel to mainstream climate change is also a priority, with particular emphasis on greater technical expertise to identify and mainstream climate change issues into programming.

6

UN Women's reputation and credibility may be affected if it does not demonstrate and amplify its own institutional climate mitigation efforts.

UN Women has a nascent environmental management system in place in terms of facilities management; monitoring and offsetting carbon emissions; and identifying and adapting to climate-related risks. However, UN Women may fall short of meeting the commitments of the System-Wide Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System 2020–2030. A first step to address this would be the development of an environmental sustainability policy that would address management functions (e.g. ICT, procurement, facilities management, etc.) and environmental and social safeguards for programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation developed four recommendations for UN Women's gender equality, climate change and environmental work. To support implementation of the recommendations, the evaluation team developed a Climate Change and Gender Equality Maturity Matrix (Annex 12) which provides a road map for UN Women to strengthen its work on climate change in the short, medium and long-term.



RECOMMENDATION 1

UN Women should develop a strategy to guide the mainstreaming of its climate change and environmental work across thematic areas and ensure resources are available to implement it.



RECOMMENDATION 2

UN Women should develop an environmental sustainability policy.



RECOMMENDATION 3

UN Women should develop and strengthen the organizational architecture for its gender equality, climate change and environmental work.



RECOMMENDATION 4

UN Women should formalize further partnerships at the corporate level with key stakeholders for a more coordinated and comprehensive approach.



Photo: Unsplash/Tobias Rademacher

1. BACKGROUND

UN Women corporate formative evaluations⁷ are conducted by the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) to inform decision-making and contribute to learning. IES initiated a corporate formative evaluation of UN Women’s work in the area of climate change as part of the IES workplan (2018–2021) in October 2021 and the report was completed in January 2023.

1.1 Evaluation purpose, objectives and use

Internal discussions and dialogues with external stakeholders and the Executive Board regarding the role of UN Women in the area of climate change took place as part of consultations to develop the new UN Women Strategic Plan (2022–2025). The final document called for climate change to be mainstreamed across thematic areas⁸ and this evaluation is intended to support the organization in implementing this commitment. In addition, the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) had the theme climate change, environment and DRR, the evaluation supports UN Women’s implementation of the agreed conclusions arising from the session. The primary intended users of the evaluation are the UN Women Senior Management Team and UN Women personnel.⁹

1.2 Evaluation scope

This formative evaluation focused on UN Women’s work in climate change from 2011 to 2022, where climate change is linked to related environmental areas of UN Women’s portfolio (e.g. biodiversity and land degradation) and disaster risk reduction (DRR).¹⁰ The evaluation team wanted to capture the early work conducted in the intergovernmental space and – as formative evaluation – provide more focus on breadth versus depth of information. Therefore, the period 2011–2021¹¹ and all thematic areas across all six regions were included to enable the development of conclusions and recommendations on where UN Women’s prospective added value may be in the climate change space.

KEY EVALUATION OBJECTIVES



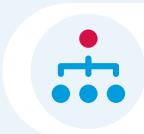
SCOPE OF WORK AND RESULTS IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE SPACE

Assess the scope of work and results achieved by UN Women in the climate change space to date, including the Entity’s environmental sustainability efforts.



COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF UN WOMEN

Assess the comparative advantage of UN Women in terms of its current and potential gender and climate change work, in relation to other actors and in terms of existing gaps.



ARCHITECTURE AND RESOURCING FOR GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORK

Assess the architecture, modalities and resourcing for gender and climate change work considering its status as a mainstreaming area within the UN Women Strategic Plan (2022–2025)



RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT A CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Provide evidence-based conclusions and practical recommendations to support decision-making in the development and implementation of a climate change strategy.

⁷ As a formative evaluation, it will not be presented to the Executive Board but will be made publicly available through UN Women’s GATE system.

⁸ Strategic Plan 2022–2025: “Recognizing the significant and disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls, as well as the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment for advancing climate change outcomes, climate change will be mainstreamed across thematic areas. Focus will be on supporting the integration of a gender perspective in climate policies and programming to involve and benefit women and girls, in line with UN-Women’s mandate.”

⁹ Secondary intended users include the UN Women Executive Board and other actors working in climate change, e.g. civil society, UN agencies, international NGOs and NGOs, government partners, and international and regional development partners, including those formally engaged in the Action Coalition on Feminist Action for Climate Justice (FACJ) of Generation Equality.

¹⁰ The evaluation includes climate-related aspects of UN Women’s DRR portfolio and recognizes that DRR also encompasses many hazard types which are not environmental.

¹¹ Selected key updates from the first quarter of 2022 were included as relevant. The CSW 66 took place during the analysis phase and the outcomes of the forum were considered in the final analysis.

1.3 Evaluation approach, criteria and questions

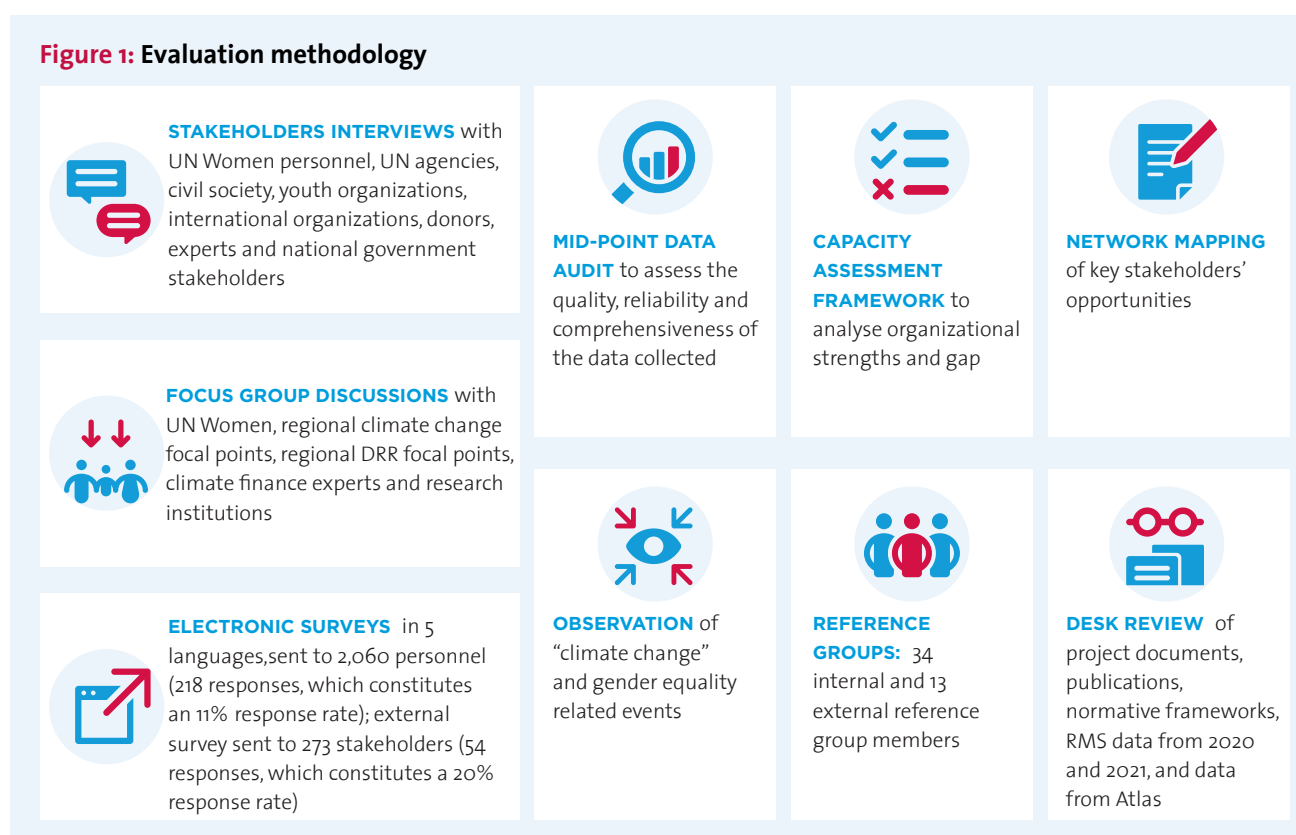
APPROACH: *Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender Equality, Environments and Marginalized Voices (ISE4GEMs)* draws upon systems thinking and complexity science with a focus on mainstreaming and prioritizing three dimensions: gender equality, environments and marginalized voices. Its emphasis on examining the interlinkages between these dimensions made it particularly well suited for this evaluation as two of the three dimensions are central to its scope and the third is an organizational priority.¹² The evaluation explored three questions that address substantive issues, approaches and competencies, and institutional culture:

1. What is UN Women's comparative advantage/value added in the climate change and gender equality nexus?¹³
2. What strategic approaches could UN Women apply to advance the climate change and gender equality nexus going forward?
3. What opportunities can UN Women leverage to mitigate its climate footprint and improve sustainability and habitability?¹⁴ How?

1.4 Evaluation methodology, data management and ethics

A mixed methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods was deployed (see Figure 1). Primary and secondary data was collected. A set of data collection tools and consent forms were developed to systematize data collection and a data management plan was developed and implemented. Data analysis involved using NVivo software to support synthesizing and triangulating the data collected to develop the evidence-based preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations.¹⁵ The evaluation was conducted in accordance with United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and adhered to the four ethical principles for evaluation. No major ethical issues occurred during the course of the evaluation.¹⁶ Internal and external reference group members were constituted and consulted on key deliverables for the evaluation: Inception Report, Preliminary Findings and Draft Report. Stakeholder verbal and written comments were considered when finalizing the evaluation report.

Figure 1: Evaluation methodology



¹² Stephens, A., Lewis, E.D. and Reddy, S. M. 2018. Inclusive Systemic Evaluation (ISE4GEMs): A New Approach for the SDG Era. New York: UN Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/9/ise4gems-a-new-approach-for-the-sdg-era>

¹³ The gender equality and climate change nexus refer to the relationship between gender and climate change. In this report we also discuss the gender equality and climate change nexus, which refers to the relationship between gender and the broader environment.

¹⁴ The degree to which a particular habitat or environment, whether natural or human-made, rural or urban, is hospitable to living things.

¹⁵ Please see Annex 4 for a description of the evaluation methodology, Annex 5 for survey results and Annex 16 for the Data Management Plan.

¹⁶ See Annex 4 for more detailed information on the ethical safeguards and mitigation strategies deployed.

1.5 Evaluation constraints and limitations

The evaluation encountered some constraints and limitations including:¹⁷

- The lack of a defined boundary and standardized reporting on climate change work created a risk that not all climate change related work undertaken by UN Women was identified. Combined with the breadth of UN Women's climate change work, this made it difficult to identify, report and assess results and the sustainability of programming. This limitation also made it difficult to determine the overall financial commitment to this area of work. To mitigate this, the evaluation team factored into its data analysis that all climate change work undertaken may not have been captured and that financial figures are provided as estimates. The team also consulted with UN Women personnel on the programme mapping it carried out to enhance validation.
- Given the breadth of the gender equality and climate change nexus space, identifying a comprehensive sample of external stakeholders was challenging. The varying comprehensiveness of stakeholder lists affected the responses. For example, more stakeholders were identified in the Europe and Central Asia region resulting in a slightly higher proportion of survey respondents from that region. To mitigate this, the evaluation team acknowledged and factored it into its analysis.
- While the targeted sample size was achieved for data collection, not all identified stakeholders were able to be interviewed due to the remote data collection and evaluation time frame. UN Women personnel made up the largest proportion of stakeholders reached, with a more limited response from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and a wider gap in national government stakeholder responses. To mitigate this, the evaluation team conducted targeted outreach and extended the data collection phase in an attempt to organize additional interviews in January 2022. However, these efforts had limited success.
- Consistency in the availability and quality of documentation varied across programme/projects and mandate areas. The number of programme evaluations available was also limited. This impacted the evaluation team's ability to assess previous and ongoing work. As a mitigation mechanism, a purposive sample of programme/projects was chosen for comprehensive review that represented UN Women's climate change work. This, together with mainly Results Management System (RMS) and annual report data was analysed and triangulated with other data sources for evaluation purposes.¹⁸ The latter were not independently validated. Finally, the ability to answer the evaluation sub-questions was limited by stakeholder availability and data availability and quality.

¹⁷ Further limitations and constraints for each data collection method are described in Annex 4.

¹⁸ It was not possible to validate RMS and annual report data given the limitations around data collection and the evaluation budget and time frame.



Photo: ©2012CIAT/NeilPalmer

2. EVALUATION CONTEXT

Recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reporting demonstrates the severe and growing threat posed by human-induced climate change.¹⁹ Even if the international community succeeds in holding temperatures at the aspirational 1.5 degrees Celsius of pre-industrial levels proclaimed in the Paris Climate Agreement, the world still faces unavoidable climate hazards over the next two decades.

The scale, complexity and intensity of climate change-related shocks have immediate and existential impacts for huge numbers of people and intersects with multiple other crises. The 2022 IPCC Working Group II Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) also recognized the interdependence of climate, ecosystems and biodiversity, and human societies. It outlines the imperative for reducing social inequalities as central to just transitions and climate neutrality.²⁰ This is an important acknowledgement that a focus on climate change alone will not address the connected environmental crises.

The intersection between gender equality and climate change – the nexus space – stems from the recognition that climate change can magnify gender inequalities and poses different and disproportionate risks for women and girls. The gender equality and climate change nexus is multifaceted and complex. It requires gender relations and gender equality targets be systemically integrated into climate change policies and action to achieve both gender equality and climate-related goals at global, regional, national and local levels. Women and girls are differentially and often more adversely affected by climate change given inequitable gender norms; their role in the household; their disproportionate care responsibilities relative to men; and barriers that affect their voice, participation and agency.²¹

There is also growing recognition within the international community of the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women in climate mitigation and adaptation, and the transition to green and blue economies – as part of the just transitions discourse.²² This is reflected in internationally ratified conventions which recognize the critical role that women do – and must increasingly play – as agents of change, participants and leaders in climate change decision-making and planning. In some cases, climate finance institutions are increasingly aware that to achieve an equitable transition to green and blue economies and to tackle climate change at multi-scale levels, gender equality policies, guidelines and targets must be established, and resources mobilized to support and provide opportunities to women.

Finally, public sector organizations that work in international development and humanitarian affairs are increasingly being called on by donors and the wider public to integrate climate friendly and environmentally sustainable policies and protocols to guide their day-to-day functions; transition their operations in line with green and circular economy principles; and incorporate net zero goals.

¹⁹ AR6 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability — IPCC

²⁰ AR6 Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability — IPCC

²¹ UNEP Global Gender and Environment Outlook (2016), 30.

²² Just transition refers to transitioning to a green economy in a fair and inclusive manner. The goal of a just transition is to create social and economic opportunities for all groups, upholding the leave no one behind principle.

3. CLIMATE CHANGE WORK AT UN WOMEN

As part of the ISE4GEMs approach, a Boundary Story²³ was developed for UN Women’s work in the area of climate change to better define and clarify the subject (or system) that the evaluation team was tasked to assess.

While not a dedicated thematic area, many of UN Women’s interventions address a range of climate change issues and programming takes place in areas where climate change threatens security, livelihoods and the futures of women and girls. This has meant pursuing specific and targeted climate change work, but also making efforts to integrate climate change considerations within existing thematic, management and mandate areas.²⁴ While UN Women has engaged in climate change work, there is no single or clear definition within UN Women of what types of work can and should be included under this label. Although UN Women’s corporate Strategic Plans since 2011 have included references to climate change, it has never been included under an impact, goal or outcome area. The related area of DRR was explicitly added to a strategic priority area in 2018. The current Strategic Plan (2022–2025) includes climate change as an area to be “mainstreamed across thematic areas” without any further definition of what work this term includes. UN Women does not have a specific climate change strategy or environmental sustainability policy that further defines the boundary of this work, nor is there any corporate Theory of Change.

Some of the climate change work undertaken by UN Women has been structured and guided by three related Flagship Programme Initiatives developed in 2015: Women’s Access to Land and Productive Resources for Climate-Resilient Agriculture; Addressing the Gender Inequality of Risk & Promoting Community Resilience to Natural Hazards in a Changing Climate; and Transformative Financing for Gender Equality & Women’s Empowerment. Although these initiatives were not a comprehensive strategy or policy, they did provide a framework (including theories of change) that helped guide UN Women personnel working in these areas. In 2021, two new initiatives were launched by UN Women that included a vision and plan for addressing climate change from a gender perspective: the Feminist Action

for Climate Justice Action Coalition of the Generation Equality Forum (a global multi-stakeholder partnership promoting collective action to an inclusive green transition) and *Beyond COVID-19: A Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice* (a framework for a new feminist and eco-social contract in the wake of COVID-19).

UN Women’s Strategic Plan 2022–2025 saw the introduction of Signature Interventions (now called Gender Equality Accelerators). Women’s Climate Action and Green/Blue Economies is designed to promote women and girl’s resilience through gender-responsive green and blue economies, including climate-resilient agriculture and women’s leadership in climate action. The Women’s Resilience to Disasters Signature Intervention includes a comprehensive package to strengthen the resilience of women and girls to disasters and threats, including climate-induced disasters; and the Women Count Signature Intervention includes gender–environment data as a priority and reflects UN Women’s strong contribution to gender-environment research and data.

Climate change work has been pursued across UN Women’s triple mandate that cuts across all thematic and mandated areas and several management functions. This includes:

- **Normative support** to mainstream gender equality into climate change-related intergovernmental conventions and frameworks, as well as supporting government agencies to mainstream gender equality into climate change-related national policies and strategies.
- **UN system coordination** and broader convening through support to mainstream gender equality in the climate change work of other UN agencies or pursuing joint initiatives; engaging in climate change-related inter-agency forums to advocate for a gender equality perspective to prioritized and integrated in harmonized reporting; and convening diverse stakeholders as part of advocacy and movement building work to create gender equality focused climate action.

²³ The Boundary Story describes the content, context and perspectives on UN Women’s climate change work since its inception (see the Inception Report in Annex 1 for the full Boundary Story developed to guide the evaluation design).

²⁴ See Finding 1.

- **Operational work**, within all substantive thematic areas and one management outcome area of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, including:
 - » *Ending Violence Against Women* in the context of disasters and climate change, Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, etc.
 - » *Governance*: national climate-related action plans, gender-responsive budgeting in the context of climate financing, women’s participation and leadership in climate action, etc.
 - » *Women’s Economic Empowerment*: sustainable/green energy, green economy, climate-resilient agriculture and food security, natural resource management, land rights and security of tenure, etc.
 - » *Women, Peace and Security/Humanitarian Action/DRR*: gender-responsive climate security, climate-related migration, climate-related DRR, etc.
 - » *Research and Data*: production of gender research and statistics related to climate change and the environment.
- **Management functions**: adopting environmentally sustainable management practices at the corporate level, including the Greening the Blue initiative to reduce the environmental footprint of UN Women’s facilities and operations and engaging with the UN Environmental Management Group.

The financial and human capacity allocated and available for climate change-related work was not explicitly tracked in related corporate systems. As accurate information on the level of financial and human investment is not available, only estimations were possible. The estimated financial investment on climate change programming from 2018 to present was US\$ 40 million, while expenditure to date amounted to US\$ 30.6 million.²⁵ In terms of dedicated human resources – the capacity and competencies of personnel available – to lead and implement climate change work across the organization is unknown. The human resources reporting available indicated that capacity (# of personnel) was low (nine staff) but had risen from three in 2017.²⁶



²⁵ While more details and breakdown are available in Finding 4, it is important to note that these figures are only indicative, given that climate change-related work was not specifically tracked within ATLAS.

²⁶ UN Women’s human resource reporting provided in August 2021 is based on a search for “climate” within job titles only and is not comprehensive. Personnel may have contributed significantly to climate change work, but do not have “climate” in their job titles. The evaluation team’s review of data in One App revealed potentially additional personnel with climate change, environment, etc. as part of their titles. Internal stakeholders indicated that some efforts were under way to map capacity in specific thematic areas, but these data were not yet available.



Photo: ©2016CIAT/NeilPalmer

4. FINDINGS

Question 1. What is UN Women’s comparative advantage/value added in the climate change and gender equality nexus?

FINDING 1

UN Women’s climate change work is interlinked with a broader range of environmental issues, including biodiversity and land degradation, and disaster risk reduction.

Although the topic selected for evaluation was climate change, the definition or scope of work to be included under this label – *the boundary* – was not clearly defined by within UN Women.²⁷ The evaluation team’s boundary analysis found it was difficult to adopt a siloed approach for categorizing climate change work as it is often inextricably linked to other climate-related areas of work that focus on biodiversity, land degradation and DRR.

Evaluation stakeholders acknowledged the siloed approach taken in some international agreements related to environmental issues. The Rio Conventions consist of three separate agreements – for climate change (UNFCCC), biodiversity (UNCBD) and land degradation (UNCCD); and although these three conventions are linked together, they contain different sets of commitments which are implemented in parallel through separate processes including COPs, gender equality strategies and action plans. The Sendai Framework on DRR is further separated from the Rio Conventions but is also clearly linked to them. Having different normative and political frameworks for related environmental issues influences the way in which organizations then approach the topic – including UN Women.²⁸

The evaluation team found that classifying all climate-related work under the label of climate change also came with its own issues because the label does not allow for capturing the complexity of the work under way. It can perpetuate a siloed approach to addressing a systemic problem that could potentially impede actual progress. Conservation and restoration of the environment involves balancing synergies and trade-offs in relation to biodiversity, land use and tenure, natural resource management, climate change and DRR. Even when UN Women interventions have been approached more holistically, the work undertaken and results achieved may end up being rendered invisible because the systems and mechanisms available for reporting are also siloed (e.g. for DRR versus climate-resilient agriculture).

Recent trends observed, and evaluation data indicate a shift is under way to a more systems thinking approach to addressing climate and environmental issues. For example, the UN Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) 2020 noted “...that climate change is one of the growing drivers of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ecosystem functions and services, contribute significantly to climate change mitigation and adaptation...” Similarly, the first joint workshop between the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the IPCC in June 2021 clearly recognized the synergies and trade-offs between biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation. These considerations should inform UN Women’s decision on the boundary of its climate change work, including efforts to define its climate change and environmental work; strategic planning; and the development of any organizational architecture to support this work.

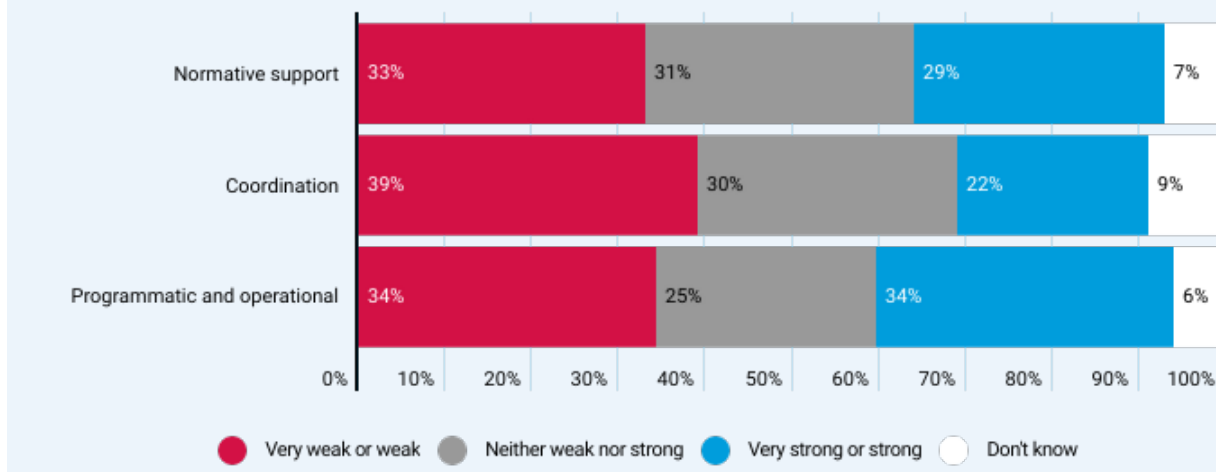
UN WOMEN’S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE/VALUE ADDED IN ITS MANDATE AREAS

Findings 2–4 focus on UN Women’s comparative advantage and value added in the climate change and gender equality nexus space. The findings are organized around UN Women’s mandate areas: normative support, UN system coordination and convening, and its operational work (Annex 6 presents a comprehensive description of UN Women’s operational work). The evaluation team notes that UN Women’s work on climate change and gender equality is often overlapping across its mandate areas and therefore it is important for such work to be structured to achieve maximum co-benefits. The evaluation team has addressed this where possible but found that overall UN Women’s work on climate change required strengthening and/or more visibility, as demonstrated in Figure 2 below.²⁹

²⁷ Desk review, key informant interviews and focus group discussion data indicated this to be the case.

²⁸ Evidence derived from desk review, interviews, focus group discussions and observational data.

²⁹ The survey data was triangulated with document review, key informant interviews and focus group discussion data to arrive at this overarching finding.

Figure 2: Responses to the survey question: How do you assess the results of UN Women’s climate change work to date?

Source: Online surveys conducted by the evaluation team, question 10 in the internal survey and question 9 in the external survey (Annex 5).

FINDING 2

UN Women has contributed to tangible results to enhance gender equality and women’s empowerment in some key climate change and environment frameworks. This has created the foundation to develop a more strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach to normative support going forward.

Over the past ten years, UN Women has positively influenced a number of key normative frameworks on climate change. These contributions have led to some tangible gains which have helped to raise the Entity’s profile in the climate change space.³⁰ This work has mainly focused on the Rio Convention processes, normative processes related to DRR and more recently the CSW 66. UN Women has had some engagement on climate-related commitments with the General Assembly and the High-Level Political Forums on Sustainable Development, including the Secretary General’s Climate Action Summit and with the New Urban Agenda in support of safe and resilient cities which intersects with UN Women’s work in ending violence against women and post-COVID recovery. Work in this area has mostly been led and coordinated by the Intergovernmental Support Unit, the Women’s Economic Empowerment Unit and the DRR and Resilience team, often in collaboration with the Executive Director’s Office, the UN System Coordination Division and Country Offices.³¹

In 2011, UN Women had some limited engagement with the COP 17 of the UNFCCC, but it was the Rio +20 process in 2012 where UN Women established a more visible presence within this space. Some examples of the work undertaken in the early years include:

- dedicated support to national delegations with the goal of better integrating a gender equality perspective into the outcome document;
- technical inputs into the first Lima Work Programme on Gender (COP 22, 2016) and the first Gender Action Plan which focused mainly on gender parity and women’s representation and participation;³²
- focus then shifted towards the development of the enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and the five-year Gender Action Plan (COP 25, 2019) which went beyond gender parity to address other substantive issues within the gender equality and climate change nexus;³³

³⁰ Please see Annex 8 which identifies 29 climate change-related normative support interventions that are indicative of the work undertaken, rather than a comprehensive listing of activities and interventions. More work is likely to have been undertaken – especially at regional and country level – that has not been adequately documented in corporate reporting systems and the documentation available for the evaluation.

³¹ UN Women’s DRR team was established in 2017 with headquarters in Geneva, prior to which DRR work was carried out under the Women’s Economic Empowerment section.

³² For example, UN Women advocated for gender balance within national delegations; provided resources for women from developing countries to participate; and contributed to the UNFCCC Secretariat’s monitoring and reporting of national delegations’ gender composition, as well as of the UNFCCC’s decision-making and governing bodies. Despite these efforts, stakeholders noted mixed progress in achieving parity.

³³ This included explicit identification of five priority areas: 1) capacity building, knowledge management, communication; 2) gender balance, participation and women’s leadership; 3) coherence; 4) gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation; and 5) monitoring and reporting. Key areas of focus included collection of sex disaggregated data, gender analysis and supporting grassroots and indigenous participation.

- consistent engagement in COPs focusing on sponsorship of women (including those who are marginalized) to attend and speak at meetings and side events; and
- some limited engagement with the UNFCCC financing mechanisms – namely the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) – that consisted of gender mainstreaming support (e.g. the GCF project manual) and training.

UN Women was often considered a valuable actor simply by virtue of being at the table as the UN entity representing and speaking for gender equality issues. However, not all stakeholders believed UN Women had achieved strong normative results in the climate change area. Only 29 per cent of internal and external survey respondents rated UN Women's normative work in this area as strong or very strong (33 per cent rated it as weak or very weak, 31 per cent as neither weak nor strong, and 7 per cent did not know). Stakeholders indicated that much more work was needed to bring about gender-responsive implementation of the Rio Convention frameworks. Consistent engagement was noted to be hampered by the limited personnel available to provide coverage across all climate change-related normative frameworks. While its continued sponsorship of women (including marginalized women) to attend and engage with normative forums was appreciated, there was widespread agreement that it would be more effective and meaningful if this were driven by an explicit strategy to achieve defined results around COP processes.³⁴ Stakeholders expressed strong support for UN Women to take a more consistent and clearer role in this work, including providing UN entity leadership on the gender equality and climate change nexus. UN Women's leadership was something stakeholders could rally around and provide support to within their own specific capacities and niches – especially if this was consulted on and shared with them in advance.

Finally, with its operational capabilities, UN Women is also well placed to support implementation of gender-responsive climate change frameworks at the country level. Limited communication and reporting of normative support results, both internally and externally, have made this work less visible (reflected in the survey results), and it is often pursued in an ad hoc or opportunistic fashion especially efforts to mainstream gender and strengthen the capacities of convention secretariats and parties. The small teams leading UN Women's normative work are already engaged in numerous normative processes, while also often providing support to Regional and Country Offices.

UN Women would require greater capacity to deepen its normative support work at global, regional and country levels. In relation to UNCCD, although a significant part of the organization's operational work is in climate-resilient agriculture, which is very closely linked to the land degradation, the frameworks and action plans are not prominently featured or explicitly identified as guiding the work. This indicates an area for improvement in UN Women's normative and operational feedback loop.

UN Women has had strong engagement with **normative processes related to climate DRR**, including support to gender-responsive implementation of the Sendai Framework and the participation of women in global platforms for DRR, such as the 2019 Global Platform for DRR and COP 26, where UN Women raised awareness of the gender equality dimensions of DRR and promoted speaking opportunities for women from disaster contexts; the Global Platform on DRR held in May 2022 in Bali, Indonesia; and the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference held in September 2022 in Brisbane, Australia. UN Women has also contributed technical support to regional platforms, such as the *2021–2030 European Roadmap for DRR*, the *Asia Pacific Action Plan for the Sendai Framework 2021–2024*, and the **African Union's plan of action to implement the Sendai framework** and the **Economic Community of West African States' DRR strategy**. At country level, UN Women has integrated gender into the DRR policies and plans of several countries, including Kenya, Malawi, Fiji, Nepal, Bangladesh and Jamaica.³⁵ UN Women also supported development of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation 37 on gender and DRR by providing technical support and continues to work with UNDRR on its implementation.³⁶ UN Women's normative support on DRR benefits from the consolidation of a small unit that can take leadership and actively drive engagement.

UN Women played a key role in the **CSW 66** in 2022 with the theme of climate change, environment and DRR.³⁷ While it was not possible to analyse fully the outcomes of the process and UN Women's support as the session happened after the evaluation data collection was finalized, the process seems to have galvanized more support for addressing the gender equality and climate change nexus internally and externally, bringing the topic to the attention of more Member States for prioritization. It also provided UN Women with a key role in implementing the Agreed Conclusions.³⁸ The Agreed Conclusion called for the creation of a Gender Action Plan for the Sendai Framework and recognized UN Women's role in DRR.

³⁴ For example, stakeholders noted that UN Women's capacity building with UNCCD was positive, constructive and well-received but would have been more effective if it had been part of a systematic approach to integrating gender equality and building capacity within the process.

³⁵ Source: RMS, programme reporting, interview data.

³⁶ CEDAW General recommendation No. 37 | UNW WRD Knowledge Hub (unwomen.org)

³⁷ UN Women acts as the Secretariat for the CSW.

³⁸ For example, the Regional Declaration of the League of Arab States explicitly mentions UN Women's support role in implementation.

The evaluation identified significant potential opportunities for UN Women to deepen its normative efforts on climate change in the near future as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Potential opportunities to expand UN Women’s normative work on climate change

PROCESS	OPPORTUNITIES
UNFCCC	Support national governments with mainstreaming gender into national climate change and environment-related plans (e.g. Nationally Determined Contributions) and integrate climate change considerations within national gender action plans. Engage in the review of the Gender Action Plan in June 2022 and the Enhanced Lima Work Programme in 2024.
UNCBD	Strengthen gender integration into the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) process through the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Support national governments with mainstreaming gender into national biodiversity actions plans. Develop a capacity building strategy for the UNCBD Secretariat and its partners.
UNCCD	Develop a capacity building strategy for the UNCCD Secretariat and its partners to support implementation of the gender action plan.
SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DRR	Strengthen awareness and measurement of gender equality and DRR through the ongoing midterm review of the Sendai Framework, including by supporting member states in the development and implementation of a Gender Action Plan.
CEDAW	Support countries in reporting on CEDAW General Recommendation 37. Support national governments with mainstreaming gender into national DRR laws, policies, strategies and plans.
NEW URBAN AGENDA	Support the development of safe, resilient and sustainable cities through the New Urban Agenda and post-COVID urban recovery ³⁹ by providing technical support on gender mainstreaming and catalytic programming in cities. Upcoming engagement opportunities include participation in the Local 2030 Coalition launched by the UN; the mid-point for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the United Nations General Assembly high-level week in September 2023, and the Twelfth World Urban Forum (November 2024).

Source: Created by the evaluation team

³⁹ UN Habitat. [Cities_and_pandemics-towards_a_more_just_green_and_healthy_future_un-habitat_2021.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/cities-and-pandemics-towards-a-more-just-green-and-healthy-future-un-habitat-2021.pdf) (unhabitat.org)

FINDING 3

UN Women has not yet fully engaged its widely recognized UN system coordination and stakeholder convening capacity to address the gender equality and climate change nexus.

UN Women's UN system coordination mandate⁴⁰ and its broader convening role to pursue gender equality objectives with a wider range of stakeholders was widely recognized by stakeholders. UN Women has demonstrated itself capable of effectively implementing this aspect of its mandate when working towards critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action (e.g. ending violence against women, women's economic empowerment etc.) and is seen as having the *potential strength* to play this role in climate change related forums – although it is not yet considered to have fully realized this potential.

UN Women has participated in several stand-alone global and regional UN system coordination forums or processes related to climate change mainly led by the UN System Coordination Division; the Executive Director's Office; Policy, Programme & Intergovernmental Division (especially the intergovernmental team, the DRR team and Political Analysis and Programme Development Unit), and the Facilities Unit. Please see Annex 9 for a more detailed description of UN Women's contributions to key coordination mechanisms but some examples include:

- UN Women's DRR and Resilience team has consistently engaged with the Inter-Agency Team on DRR (coordinated by UNDRR), which brings together DRR focal points across the UN to develop a UN system plan to support implementation of the Sendai Framework.
- UN Women was represented at the UN Plan of Action on DRR – Senior Leadership Group 2021 meeting and presented a joint study undertaken with UNFPA and UNDRR that identified changes needed across the UN system to make progress on gender equality in DRR.
- The Women, Peace and Security Unit engages with the UN Climate Security Mechanism jointly established by DPPA, UNDP, UNEP and DPO in 2018. The unit is also part of the internal reference group for the 2023 Peacebuilding Support Office Thematic Review on Climate Security and Peacebuilding, which provides insights for future investments in climate security initiatives in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

The Women's Economic Empowerment Unit represents the organization in UN Energy and two focal points (from Women's Economic Empowerment Unit and Coordination Division) have been assigned as representatives for UN Water.

- The Data and Statistics Unit co-leads with UNSD efforts to mainstream gender across climate change statistics, as mandated by the UN Statistical Commission, and in partnership with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the Expert Group on Environment Statistics. UN Women is also a member of the Technical Working Group on Disaster Statistics.
- Finally, UN Women participates in the UN Environmental Management Group – Environmental and Social Sustainability which has worked to develop the UN Sustainability Strategy 2020–2030, the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standard, and the Greening the Blue initiative to achieve carbon neutrality within the UN system.

At regional and country level, UN Women has engaged in climate change-related thematic coordination groups. For example, UN Women participates in the Resilience Working Group of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel which coordinates work to build resilience among communities in the face of land degradation. There is also some evidence that UN Women has engaged in relevant UN Country Team (UNCT) thematic groups and UNSDCF processes (e.g. in Ethiopia), but this remains an area of opportunity for the Entity to advance the gender equality and climate change nexus.

UN Women's engagement within these mechanisms has been mixed with some areas of strength (e.g. DRR mechanisms) but more often, limited engagement. This is largely attributed to both the prioritization of this work and the capacity of overstretched personnel to engage. Survey results (see Figure 2 above) also indicated that coordination is the weakest area of UN Women's climate change work across UN Women's integrated mandate.

⁴⁰ UN Women's founding resolution (RES 64/289) describes one of the key elements of the Entity's mandate as "leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women" for the purpose of achieving "more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system."

Both internal and external stakeholders cited UN Women's **convening** power to be one of its comparative advantages. The Entity is recognized for its significant role as a neutral actor that works closely with both governments and civil society. This enables it to provide support and technical advice to stakeholders which supports and opens spaces for dialogue on contentious issues. There are examples of UN Women convening stakeholders around the gender equality and climate change nexus at the regional and country level (mainly in the context of programmes such as EMPOWER in Asia and the Pacific), but the most significant initiative to date has been at the global level: the **Feminist Action for Climate Justice (FACJ) Action Coalition** of the Generation Equality Forum.

The FACJ Action Coalition was created in 2021 and includes government representatives, UN agencies, private sector actors, donors and CSOs – including grassroots organizations and those representing marginalized and/or vulnerable groups.⁴¹ UN Women acts as the Secretariat of the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalitions and convenes the FACJ. UN Women's role in the FACJ was unclear to both internal and external stakeholders, including in the development and implementation of FACJ's blueprint for action. However, external stakeholders see the FACJ as an important space where UN Women could and should take a more proactive and greater leadership role. Internal stakeholders expressed concern about potential risks given they did not have clarity about how the FACJ's work fits within UN Women's broader work. Stakeholders were also not clear about plans to localize the FACJ's work; what it would entail; and envisioned risks to this process. Despite these concerns, the FACJ is still considered a critical entry point for UN Women to advance its work in the climate change sphere.

A number of coordination opportunities were identified:

- UN Women Country Offices often chair the **UNCT Gender Theme Groups** and are well positioned to introduce gender equality and climate change nexus issues within these groups.
- UN Women could strategically integrate gender equality and climate change nexus data and analysis within the **Country Gender Equality Profiles** that feed into Common Country Assessments to ensure nexus issues are more visible to UNCTs and are better integrated within Cooperation Frameworks.
- UN Women could integrate climate change within both the **UN SWAP and the UNCT UN-SWAP Scorecard**, which have had a strong track record of uptake in reporting by UN entities.
- **UN Environmental Management Group** – The group's anticipated work on a UN Common Approach to Biodiversity, as well as groups on pollution and infrastructure provide an opportunity for UN Women to advocate for the inclusion of gender perspectives.
- **UN Water and UN Energy** both provide potentially robust platforms for mainstreaming gender equality within sustainable energy initiatives.
- Clarifying UN Women's engagement with the Feminist Action for Climate Justice Action Coalition and articulating how this Action Coalition's work integrates with UN Women's climate change objectives.

⁴¹ The Generation Equality Forum was convened in 2021 by UN Women and co-hosted by the Governments of France and Mexico in close partnership with civil society and youth. The forum aims to accelerate action and implementation on global gender equality through its Action Coalitions. These are global, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships that are mobilizing governments, civil society, international organizations and the private sector to catalyse collective action; spark global and local conversations among generations; drive increased public and private investment; and deliver concrete, game-changing results for girls and women.

FINDING 4:

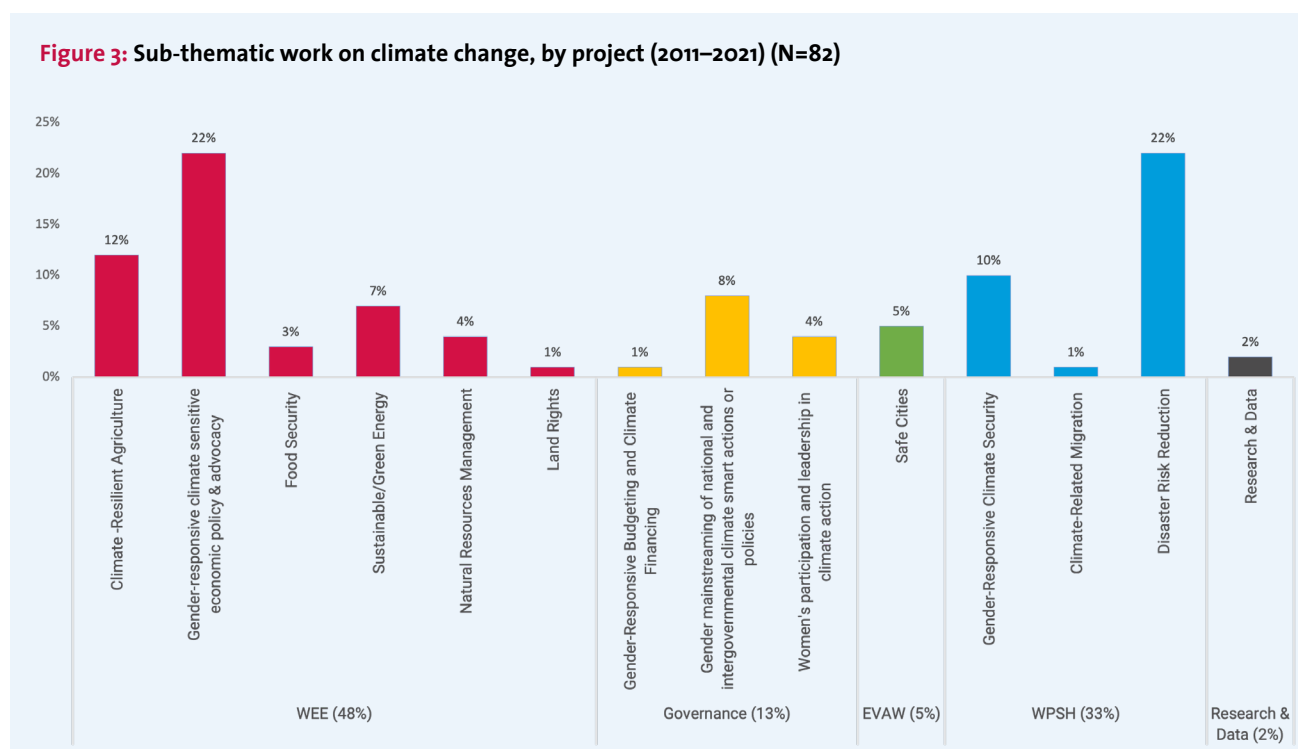
UN Women’s operational climate change and environmental work has not yet been fully mainstreamed across thematic areas as set out in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025. Climate change work has been concentrated in Women’s Economic Empowerment and DRR thematic areas, but there are opportunities to further incorporate climate change and environmental programming across the organization’s work programme.

While not a dedicated thematic area or systemic outcome, many of UN Women’s interventions address a range of climate change issues and programming takes place in areas where climate change threatens security, livelihoods and the futures of women and girls. This has meant pursuing specific and targeted climate change work, but also making efforts to integrate climate change considerations within existing thematic, management and mandate areas.

Analysis of a portfolio of 82 identified climate change programmes and projects that UN Women was engaged in between 2011 and 2021⁴² with a combined budget of approximately US\$ 205 million, revealed that the work was concentrated within two of the four main thematic areas

of the Strategic Plan: Women’s Economic Empowerment (48 per cent) and Peace and Security/Humanitarian Action/DRR (33 per cent). Governance and participation in public life made up 12 per cent of programmes and 4 per cent of the work was classified under the Ending Violence Against Women thematic area.⁴³

A sub-thematic breakdown of operational work across and within these themes found that four areas – climate-sensitive economic policy and advocacy (22 per cent), climate-resilient agriculture (12 per cent), gender-responsive climate security (10 per cent), and climate-related DRR (22 per cent) – made up more than half of the overall portfolio in terms of the number of interventions.⁴⁴



Source: Data sourced from Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division’s draft mapping of climate change work, DAMs, OneApp, scoping interviews, UN Women SharePoint and UN Women GATE. 2011–2021

⁴² These were identified through a combination of information from DAMS, Atlas and information shared by stakeholders.

⁴³ While the assigned labels identify the programme/project’s overarching theme, many of the interventions intersect across other thematic and sub-thematic areas (e.g. WEE and PS/HA/DDR, Governance and WPSH, EAW and WEE, etc.).

⁴⁴ Although EAW appears to have a much higher investment than governance and participation, the EAW programme investment is related to the larger Safe Cities projects which only had a limited connection to climate change.

The financial investment largely aligned with this thematic mapping with budget allocated to Women's Economic Empowerment and Peace and Security/ Humanitarian Action/DRR far exceeding that of other thematic areas and accounting for approximately 77 per cent of the total portfolio budget.

While UN Women's climate change programme portfolio did span all regions within which UN Women operated, its work was concentrated in three regions: Asia and the Pacific (31 per cent), Eastern and Southern Africa (19 per cent) and in Latin America and the Caribbean (15 per cent). Global programmes made up 14 per cent of the portfolio. Table 2 provides a further breakdown of the total portfolio budget and regional expenditure with the financials partially aligning with regional mapping. Asia and the Pacific and East and Southern Africa regions have the highest budget and expenditure and the Americas and the Caribbean region the least.

COMPREHENSIVE DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONAL WORK: ANNEX 6

While the quantity and investment made thematically and regionally provide a broad overview of the portfolio of work, an analysis work within each thematic area provides insight into what UN Women has specifically undertaken. An understanding of UN Women's current and previous climate change work can inform opportunities to strengthen this work and fulfil the aim of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 to mainstream climate change across thematic areas.

A comprehensive description of UN Women's operational work is provided in Annex 6.

Table 2: Regional climate change programming budget and expenditure (2011–2021)

REGION	BUDGET (US\$)	EXPENDITURE (US\$)
Arab States	23,914,831	20,414,457
East & Southern Africa	49,036,610	42,897,681
Asia & Pacific	54,690,678	46,744,071
West & Central Africa	17,289,434	14,673,076
Americas & Caribbean	13,759,196	10,740,097
Headquarters	44,067,471	40,633,524
Europe & Central Asia	3,044,479	2,652,506
Total	205,802,699	178,755,412

Source: UN Women OneApp

Table 3: Potential opportunities for UN Women’s climate change operational work across thematic areas

SECTOR	OPPORTUNITIES
Women’s Economic Empowerment	<p><i>Climate-resilient agriculture:</i> Conduct a global assessment or evaluation of climate-resilient agriculture to reassess UN Women’s comparative advantage in this area, identify lessons and refine the approach.</p> <p><i>Transition to a green and blue economy:</i> Build knowledge among government and private sector stakeholders on the gender dimensions of the transition to a green economy through the production of data, evidence and knowledge. Support women through training and education to engage in the green economy. Engage the private sector to promote the inclusion of women in green jobs and training.</p> <p><i>Sustainable energy:</i> Promoting women’s entrepreneurship and jobs in the renewable energy sector.</p>
Peace and Security/ Humanitarian Action/ DRR	<p>Internally, develop climate change architecture that promotes greater interlinkages between those working on DRR, peace and security and climate change issues. UN Women could act as a knowledge hub to collect resources on women, resilience and climate and could coordinate a review on how the UN system could be strengthened to enhance and integrate climate change adaptation with gender-responsive DRR and climate security.</p> <p><i>Climate security:</i> Identify opportunities within the gender-climate-security nexus to build on UN Women’s nascent work in this area (utilize the results of the Thematic Review on Climate Security and Peacebuilding 2023). For example, women’s participation in resolving natural resource related disputes, participation in local decision-making and governance, and engagement in post-conflict economic recovery through sustainable livelihoods. Build on the <i>Gender, Climate & Security</i> report and contribute to research on the gender dimensions of climate-related security risks.⁴⁵</p>
Governance and Participation in Public Life	<p>Bringing ministries responsible for the environment or climate and ministries responsible for women’s empowerment and gender equality together for capacity development and other joint governance initiatives. Expand work on green gender budgeting to ensure that an adequate level of climate funding at the national level is allocated to address the gender equality and climate change nexus and to women’s organizations. Support the participation of women environmental defenders who are a sub-group experiencing higher levels of violence traditionally directed against both women who engage in political spaces as well as towards environmental defenders.</p> <p>Broadening the organization’s work on gender-responsive policies beyond climate change and DRR to include biodiversity, drought, natural resource management, food security and other areas related to the environment.</p>
Ending Violence Against Women	<p>Produce data, evidence and knowledge to build understanding of the interlinkages between ending violence against women and climate change. Work towards safe and resilient cities could be more intentionally and systematically included within the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces programming within the context of the New Urban Agenda.</p>
Research and Data	<p>Enhance the availability and quality of data on the gender-environment nexus, including by further supporting national governments in implementation of gender-environment surveys; expanding work on leveraging geospatial information and big data to generate estimates on gender and climate; and providing technical guidance and support to all other thematic areas to generate evidence on the intersections between climate and UN Women’s operational areas of work.</p>

Source: Created by the evaluation team

⁴⁵ UNEP, UN Women, DPPA, UNDP. Gender, Climate & Security: Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change. 2020.

FINDING 5

UN Women personnel are committed to integrating the leave no one behind principle within the Entity's climate change and environmental work. The limited data on this topic in some regions and countries is a key barrier to better understanding and designing policy and praxis around gender, marginalization, environment and climate change but there are opportunities to strengthen engagement with marginalized groups.

There is a clear desire by UN Women personnel to draw deeper and establish more intentional links between the gender equality and climate change nexus, with the intersectionality of marginalized voices. The Strategic Plan 2022–2025 establishes the importance of integrating marginalized voices in operations by committing to the “leave no one behind” principle and to an “intersectional” and “participatory” approach to gender analysis and consultations.⁴⁶ This aligns with the IPCC's framing of vulnerability, marginalization and intersectionality in the climate change context.⁴⁷

There is general agreement among UN Women personnel that identifying marginalization is context specific. Broadly speaking, interview data show that UN Women proposals tend to categorize marginalization by gender; exposure to risks (e.g. gender-based violence, conflict, disasters, livelihood, etc.); physical attributes (such as age) or health and ability status (e.g. women living with disabilities, women living with HIV/AIDS); reliance on natural resource-based livelihoods (fishers, farmers, foresters); household status (e.g. single head of household); or by location (rural, peri urban, urban). The majority of the UN Women personnel and external stakeholders surveyed (62 per cent of 152 responses) reported that vulnerable and marginalized groups were included as beneficiaries in UN Women's climate change-related activities with the top five groups involved being (1) rural women and women farmers; (39 per cent of 77 responses); (2) indigenous peoples (23 per cent); (3) persons with disabilities (22 per cent); (4) youth (18 per cent); and (5) migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (16 per cent).

There were also many examples of UN Women engaging in the nexus with marginalized populations, including:

- UN Women's **normative support** work has included efforts to ensure that women representing marginalized voices are able to attend and/or directly participate in intergovernmental negotiations at the global and regional level (e.g. sponsorship to attend CSW, facilitating participation in Rio Convention COP events, etc.).
- In some countries, marginalized voices were identified and then specifically **targeted for inclusion within broader programmes and projects**. For example, in China, Tibetan ethnic minority women from Xiaruoyao Village in Huangyuan County were identified for inclusion in a project that focused on grassroots communities vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards.
- There were also some examples of **programmes and projects targeting specific groups** that integrate a “climate change” component, such as the Making Migration Safe for Women programme in Niger in 2020.
- In other countries, UN Women **established connections with networks or coalitions of women's organizations, including at the grassroots level**, to better identify and respond to marginalization. In Bangladesh, UN Women's connection to a network of 56 grassroots women's community-based associations and CSOs allowed the Country Office to better identify which groups were most in need of assistance.
- UN Women has also taken steps to **ensure consultations around programme design include representatives of marginalized voices**. The Women's Resilience to Disasters Programme in the Pacific was developed based on consultations with over 250 global, regional and national stakeholders including CSOs.

⁴⁶The Strategic Plan clarifies this principle as follows: “Leaving no one behind means moving beyond considering results at the aggregate level towards ensuring progress for all population groups at a disaggregated level. In line with its intersectional approach, the Strategic Plan includes a focus on addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including on the basis of age, sex, race, ethnicity, location, disability, migration and displacement, and indigenous, socioeconomic, and other status”.

⁴⁷The IPCC notes that “Differences in vulnerability and exposure arise from non-climatic factors and multidimensional inequalities often produced by unequal development processes. These differences shape differential risks from climate change People who are socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally, or otherwise marginalized are especially vulnerable to climate change and also to some adaptation and mitigation responses ... This increased vulnerability is rarely due to a single cause. Rather, it is the product of intersecting social processes that result in inequalities in socioeconomic status and income, as well as in exposure. Such social processes include, for example, discrimination based on gender, class, ethnicity, age, and (dis)ability” (IPCC, 2014, p. 6).

Overall, the survey responses highlighted the perception that although most UN Women’s climate change-related activities place a focus on intersectionality and the leave no one behind principle (such as in the examples above), the efforts and results achieved are not yet sufficient.⁴⁸

Of 148 responses, only 50 UN Women personnel and external respondents (34 per cent) assessed these efforts as strong or very strong (Figure 4). At the same time, a significant number of the respondents (22 per cent) considered UN Women’s inclusion efforts in this area very weak or weak. This was supported by interview and focus group discussion data which indicated that while attention was paid to identifying and including marginalized groups, more meaningful engagement needs to be undertaken.

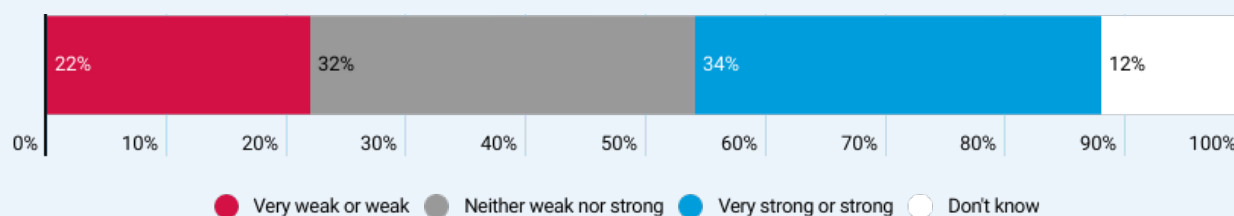
In terms of hindering factors, of 119 responses, 59 UN Women personnel (50 per cent) expressed the opinion that a lack or limited intersectional data for the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups represents a significant barrier for UN Women’s climate change work. In addition to limited intersectional data, significant gaps were observed in reporting on the benefits of UN Women’s climate change programming for different marginalized groups. In this regard, various comments received from the internal and external stakeholders surveyed supported the view that UN Women needs to enhance its collection and dissemination of relevant

intersectional data to be able to respond to the needs of a wide range of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the climate change area in an effective and timely manner. The lack of intersectional and strategic data – by sex, age and vulnerability to disasters and other effects of climate change – was mentioned by several participants. Where UN Women was instrumental in compiling this kind of data, it was considered invaluable.

According to survey respondents, the top priority groups for UN Women to focus on in the future included ethnic and racial minorities (15 per cent of 81 responses), poor women (14 per cent), the elderly (12 per cent), LGBTQI+ (11 per cent), coastal women (10 per cent), women entrepreneurs (6 per cent), urban women (2 per cent), single mothers (2 per cent), persons living with HIV/AIDS (2 per cent), religious minorities (1 per cent) and other vulnerable groups (19 per cent).⁴⁹

Interview data more specifically highlighted the need to focus support to indigenous groups, youth, LGBTQI+, women living with disabilities, and women in conflict or humanitarian settings. Women’s environmental human rights defenders were also identified within CSW 66 discussions as a particularly vulnerable and intersectional group that faces high levels of violence.

Figure 4: Responses to the online survey question: How do you assess the effectiveness of the inclusion efforts related to marginalized and vulnerable groups in UN Women’s climate change work? (n=148)



Source: Online surveys conducted by the evaluation team, question 13 in the internal and external surveys (Annex 5).

To strengthen its support to those marginalized by climate change, UN Women could focus more attention on:

- Explicitly linking agency and voice to efforts related to security of land tenure and the right to land ownership or inheritance to mitigate climate change. Women stewarding and producing from the natural environment are exposed to the immediate risks of climate change, both seasonal and non-seasonal, and are often pushed onto highly climate sensitive and fragile ecologies, with weak adaptive capacities.
- In the project documents reviewed, there was little mention of marginalized voices or **marginalization in the context of climate justice**, or those exposed

to higher climate risks (except with regards to youth and indigenous peoples – but the term “climate justice” was not used). This aspect should be reconciled with the FACJ which focuses on climate justice.

- Data and evidence is still required to better understand and design policy and praxis, although this is not a reason for non-action. The key opportunity here is to **build strategic alliances with institutions** (including National Statistics Offices, National Geographical Institutes and related institutions) **and with representative CSOs to underpin intersectional data collection and programming** in support of gender-just climate solutions and leave no one behind objectives.

⁴⁸The gap in documenting and reporting this work may have contributed to these results.

⁴⁹Such as gender-based violence survivors, women with vulnerable and informal employment, and women with low literacy.

- Identify and **target efforts in geographic regions exposed to more immediate and visible climate change impacts** – such as the small island developing states or coastal regions/deltas or the Middle East and Sahel countries where the water crisis is becoming more acute – which disproportionately affect women and girls living in these countries/regions.
- There is scope to be more influential in **supporting the inclusion of marginalized voices in UN Women’s normative work** with the Sendai Framework, UNCBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC and leveraging the

latter’s commitments to local communities, vulnerable groups and indigenous people. There is scope for **strategic and long-term partnerships with intergovernmental organizations** such as UNDRIP and IMO, and an opportunity to build synergies and collective voices with the UNFCCC Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples’ Platform.⁵⁰

- The **concerns of the elderly** are mentioned as potentially important, but at this point direct work with elderly marginalized groups or community members seems non-existent.

Question 2. What strategic approaches could UN Women apply in advancing the climate change and gender equality nexus going forward?

FINDING 6

Stakeholders overwhelmingly want to see the organization take a greater leadership role and an integrated and strategic approach to climate change.

Both internal and external stakeholders overwhelmingly expect UN Women to move towards adopting a strategic and integrated approach to the gender equality and climate change nexus. This includes the Entity taking a greater leadership role as well as developing a clear strategy.

Interview and survey respondents felt that UN Women’s current approach, which capitalizes on immediate opportunities, had significant limitations. Of 269 responses only 12 UN Women personnel and external stakeholders (4 per cent) consider this an appropriate approach (see Figure 5). Although the short-term utility of the approach was acknowledged, among the disadvantages interviewees mentioned that it lacks a strategic focus and positioning; undermines partnerships and organizational coherence; tends to create inter-agency competition; and is reactive or based on personal interests/projects.

A significant proportion of both the UN Women personnel and external stakeholders surveyed and interviewed (38 per cent) selected an integrated approach as the most effective and efficient in terms of planning and reporting on key climate change elements focused within the main pillars of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025. Among their reasons, they indicated that this approach is well articulated and gives a clear structure of how to implement

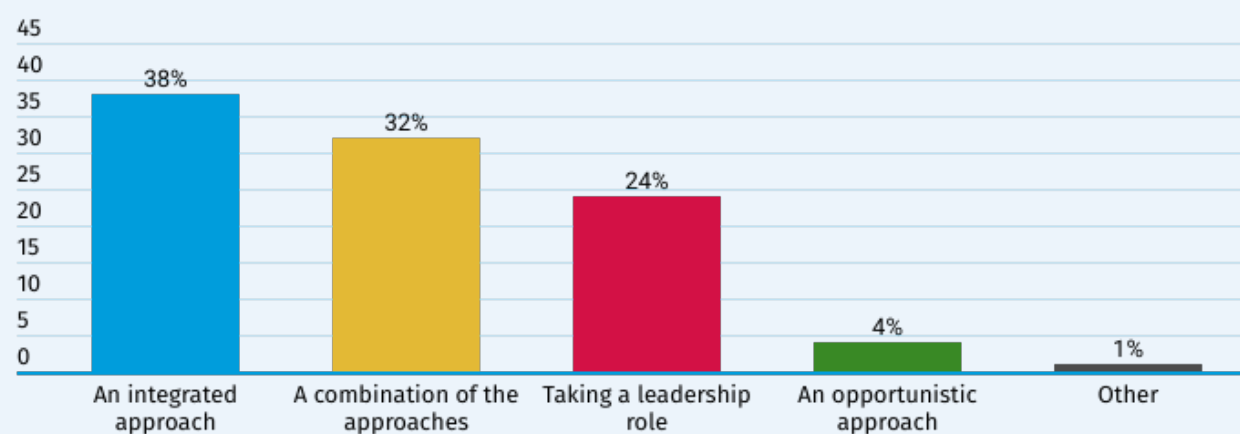
climate change work at various levels, facilitates fundraising and helps integrate climate change work into UN Women’s traditional domains.

Some stakeholders felt that UN Women should strive to become a thought leader on certain aspects of gender mainstreaming in climate change, which would increase recognition of UN Women in the climate change space and support resource mobilization efforts.

At the same time, some respondents mentioned that taking a leadership role might be challenging for offices that have not been as active in the climate change sphere to date. However, some offices are already taking steps to fill a gap in leadership in this area. For example, UN Women’s Fiji Multi-Country Office is positioning itself as a leading actor on the gender equality and climate change nexus in the Pacific region where it is partnering and convening many of the relevant actors from within and outside the UN system in the context of the Women in Resilience Programme. Finally, a third of the UN Women personnel and external stakeholders surveyed and interviewed (32 per cent) selected a combination of the various approaches as the most preferable options for UN Women’s climate change work to allow the Entity to adapt to immediate opportunities while executing a longer-term vision.

⁵⁰<https://unfccc.int/LCIPP>

Figure 5: Responses to the surveys and interview question: What approach would be most effective and efficient for UN Women to pursue on climate change? % (n=269)



Source: Interviews and online survey conducted by the evaluation team, question 24 in the internal survey and question 21 in the external survey (Annex 5).

As noted by interviewees and focus group discussion participants, both existing opportunities and unfulfilled needs in the climate change area suggest that UN Women requires a more coherent, strategic and balanced approach to its climate change work in the future. UN Women had an opportunity to address this within its new Strategic Plan (2022–2025): at the time of its development, an internal working group was established to consider how climate change could be integrated in a more explicit and elaborated manner and different options were considered.⁵¹ Despite these efforts, it was reported that some stakeholders questioned why UN Women – a gender equality agency – should work on climate change which was not its focus area of work. At the time, the Entity was not able to push back with a strong narrative on the importance of and unique aspects of the gender equality and climate change nexus that could have both allayed concerns regarding mandate creep and also raised awareness of the issues.

This was a lost opportunity; although climate change was still included explicitly with a reference to its mainstreaming throughout the Entity’s work, which provided

an opening for further defining what this entails and for flexibility to interpret it in different ways in documents outside of the Strategic Plan. With a clear demand from stakeholders for a more strategic approach, the development of a stand-alone climate change strategy would fill the gap between the Strategic Plan’s references to climate change and the work taking place across the organization. Stakeholders noted the absence of a shared corporate vision that could be articulated internally and externally and that developing a strategy would help UN Women outline its vision for climate change action. This may require some refinement of existing programmes and projects, as well as launching new initiatives at country, regional and global levels that contribute to the value of UN Women’s tripartite mandate.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER EQUALITY MATURITY MATRIX

Annex 12 presents a maturity matrix that could act as a road map for UN Women to strengthen its work on climate change and gender equality. The matrix covers eight domains, including governance and strategy.

⁵¹ This was supported by survey respondents who indicated that UN Women needs stronger partnerships with country-specific civil-society organizations working in the environmental area, as well as their global networks. Examples include the Climate Action Network, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, the Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network, and The Network of African Women Environmentalists. Stakeholders also identified organizations or coalitions that UN Women could support to elevate the voices of indigenous women. One example provided (among many possibilities) is the Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin Climate Alliance, an umbrella organization of indigenous organizations in the Amazon Basin.

FINDING 7

UN Women is considered a valuable partner for mainstreaming gender equality into climate change and environmental work by a wide range of stakeholders. UN Women now needs to establish partnerships that will support the mainstreaming of climate change within its gender equality work.

To date, UN Women has formed a range of key partnerships to support its normative, coordination and operational work in the gender equality and climate change nexus. A recurring theme throughout the evaluation was the value of partnerships in UN Women's existing and future climate change work. UN Women was recognized by stakeholders for its technical support for gender mainstreaming and it was noted that partnerships – many with organizations that focus specifically on

climate change issues – could be leveraged to support UN Women to further mainstream climate change within its own work programme.

As depicted in Figure 6, according to all stakeholders surveyed, the top five actors working with UN Women on climate change are national governments (71 per cent), CSOs (62 per cent), UNCT and UN agencies (61 per cent), other international organizations (45 per cent), and donor governments and climate change funds (45 per cent).

Figure 6: Responses to the internal and external survey question: Who are the top actors, stakeholders or partners working in this area with UN Women? (multiple responses possible) (n=152)



Source: Online surveys conducted by the evaluation team, question 18 in the internal survey and question 15 in the external survey (Annex 5).

- National governments:** UN Women has partnered with national governments to mainstream gender equality into national climate change plans (e.g. Nationally Determined Contributions, biodiversity plans, DRR plans). It was widely acknowledged there was significant need to continue this work to build capacity and ownership at the national level. Stakeholders also highlighted the need to work with national mechanisms for gender equality to integrate climate change into national gender action plans and other gender-related policies, such as national care policies. Partnering with other UN agencies in this work was seen as essential to engage with the range of different ministries. UN Women has worked with national statistics offices and national geographical institutes to collect data on gender and the environment.
- Civil society:** UN Women's strength is understood to be its ability to amplify the voices of women and girls by convening and engaging civil society and grassroots organizations, particularly in fostering their participation and engagement at the normative level. This perceived comparative advantage could be further leveraged to form and deepen relationships with CSOs operating in the nexus space, particularly those representing individuals and groups at the forefront of climate action and/or most impacted by the effects of climate change (i.e. rural women, youth and indigenous people).

- UN agencies:** UN Women has formed partnerships with other UN agencies in the climate change space including UNEP (e.g. Empower in Asia-Pacific), UNDP (e.g. Engender in the Caribbean), UN Habitat and UNOPS (Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces), UNDRR, UNIDO, FAO, IFAD, ILO, WFP, UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD and others. There is opportunity to form more long-term, formal and strategic partnerships centred on UN Women's priority areas with these actors. For example, the mandates of UNEP and UN Women were viewed as complementary and non-competitive, opening the door for strong collaborations across the nexus at normative and operational levels (such as enhancing women's leadership in climate decision-making).
- International and regional organizations:** UN Women's partnership with IUCN has focused on the normative sphere and has helped integrate gender equality into the Rio Conventions. There is further opportunity to deepen this work and collaborate on capacity development and training on the linkages between gender equality and biodiversity and strengthen the integration of gender perspectives in the measurement of biodiversity loss. UN Women is also a member of the Gender and Environment Data Alliance which is co-convened by WEDO and IUCN. UN Women has had some limited engagement with governance institutions, such as work with the Inter-parliamentary Union on women's leadership and gender responsive parliaments and the publication of global data on women in politics. There is an opportunity to further this work to promote women's leadership in national climate change and environment decision-making. At the regional level, UN Women has developed several important partnerships, including with ASEAN in the Asia-Pacific region and CDEMA in the Caribbean (EnGenDER). The League of Arab States' regional declaration prepared in advance of CSW 66 expressed an interest in "a joint regional initiative with UN Women on empowering women's participation in green and blue economies and climate-resilient agriculture." There is also opportunity within the European Union to support the development of the European Green New Deal.
- Climate finance institutions:** Outside of bilateral funding relationships, UN Women's engagement with climate finance institutions has been limited. UN Women produced a knowledge product with the Global Environment Facility and helped develop the Global Environment Facility Global Gender Partnership network in 2014. UN Women also worked with the GCF to develop a training manual. There was also interest in UN Women playing a role supporting accredited agencies with their gender action plans, gender assessment and integrating gender into their concept notes and proposals. A common theme among stakeholders was the need for UN Women to strengthen its engagement with climate finance institutions such as GCF, Global Environment Facility and the Adaptation Fund to strengthen the gender responsiveness of climate funding mechanisms; increase the level of financing for gender equality and climate change; improve access to climate finance by women's organizations; and to mobilize resources for UN Women's own climate change work.
- Private sector:** UN Women has cautiously engaged with the private sector on climate change, forming some relationships, for example with Standard Bank in support of climate-resilient agriculture programming in Southern Africa and funding from the L'Oréal foundation and the Chanel Foundation. Interviewed stakeholders and survey respondents identified the private sector as an area where UN Women could strengthen its relationships to advance climate action; however, given the breadth of actors, UN Women needs to clearly articulate its goals and value add to guide the identification of suitable private sector partners, as well as considerations related to the environmental sustainability practices of these actors (see Finding 11).
- Research institutions:** UN Women has had limited engagement with academic and research partners in the climate change space (although a different degree of engagement is found in different geographical areas). Key informants and survey respondents identified research institutions as a potential priority for new partnerships. Partnerships with research institutions can support the creation of up-to-date and accurate knowledge products to help close knowledge and data gaps in the gender equality and climate change nexus and support ex-post research and monitoring of effects that would help to better understand long-term impacts and develop more accurate theories of change and theories of action.

The evaluation found several challenges within UN Women's partnership approach to climate change work. First, the absence of a corporate strategy on climate change and a clear articulation of what UN Women's value add or defined role in climate change action makes it difficult for UN Women to form strategic partnerships at all levels. This is especially important for branching into partnerships with new stakeholder groups, such as the private sector and climate finance institutions. Second, UN Women's partnerships on climate change have often been opportunistic, time bound and geographically specific. While this can be effective for the immediate task at hand, longer-term strategic partnerships need to be built for more coherent action and lasting outcomes.

Effective partnerships that show immense potential for cross-regional implementation have not always been formalized at the corporate level to facilitate efficient implementation at lower levels. Finally, much of UN Women's climate change work and partners focus on adaptation work, and there was a noted gap in partnerships for mitigation efforts.

A visual **Network Map diagram is presented in Annex 10** depicting the array of actors and stakeholders within the gender equality and climate change nexus, and **Annex 11 presents a database of existing and potential partners, and examples of opportunities for engagement.**

Table 4: Potential opportunities to expand UN Women's partnerships in the gender equality and climate change nexus

STAKEHOLDER	OPPORTUNITIES
National governments	Strengthen linkages between national gender equality mechanisms and ministries engaged in climate change work, including ministries of environment and disaster management agencies. Identify specific opportunities, such as partnerships with ministries of industry to support the green economy and just transition and engage national statistical offices, geographical institutes and natural disaster management organizations to build capacity to collect data on gender equality, climate change and the environment. Support national governments to integrate climate risks into National Action Plans for implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
Civil society	Continue to bring CSO, grassroots and women's voices into climate change discussions at the national, regional and global level, including discussions on conservation, land use and climate security. Raise awareness among the broader women's movement of the importance of climate change and greater connection with environmental organizations, networks, coalitions and youth groups. UN Women can leverage civil society to reach a diverse range of stakeholders. Particularly relevant is to ensure indigenous communities are part of the discussion given their prominent role in climate change mitigation, adaptation and conservation.
Climate finance	Strengthen the gender responsiveness of climate funding within the Global Environment Facility, GCF, Adaptation Fund and others. For example, by increasing the focus of funding towards gender-responsive/transformational programming with a focus on achieving gender equality results at the outcome level; and by improving access to climate finance by women's organizations.
UN agencies	There are opportunities to deepen and formalize these partnerships, particularly at the organizational/headquarters level and in areas related to UN Women's forthcoming Signature Interventions on climate change. For example, UN Habitat is a critical partner for urban development and implementation of the New Urban Agenda to promote safe and resilient cities. UNIDO, ILO, IFAD and FAO are pertinent partners for work on the transition to green jobs and green industry (including agricultural work). UNDP is a key partner, particularly for collaboration on integrating gender into Nationally Determined Contributions. Partnerships with the Rio Convention Secretariats could be strengthened to support the implementation of their gender plans.
Research institutions	Partnerships with research institutions can add credibility to UN Women's research and knowledge products, elevating UN Women's role as a thought leader within the nexus.
Regional organizations	Mainstream gender equality into ASEAN climate change frameworks and support implementation of the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework 2021–2025. Integrate gender into national DRR plans in the Caribbean with CDEMA. Work with the EU to support gender-responsive implementation of the Green New Deal. Partnering with the League of Arab States on a regional initiative to empower women in green and blue economies and climate-resilient agriculture, as well as other areas of UN Women's work (e.g. climate security, etc.). ⁵²

Source: Created by the evaluation team

⁵² The Declaration issued by the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 66 CSW specifically sought to strengthen regional cooperation through a possible joint regional initiative of the League of Arab States and UN Women to empower women's participation in green and blue economies and climate-resilient agriculture.

FINDING 8

UN Women personnel expressed the need for a corporate focal point at a minimum to coordinate and bring coherence across all UN Women's climate change and environmental work, as well as a formalized network that connects personnel working on climate change and the environment across the organization.

Most stakeholders interviewed noted that UN Women's current corporate architecture did not effectively support its climate change work. One of the main issues is the absence of a single corporate focal point with responsibility for bringing together the different strands of the UN Women's climate work, identifying priority areas/opportunities and coordinating its mainstreaming across the organization.

At the time of the evaluation data collection, several key corporate focal points for climate change work were located in different units under the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division: intergovernmental division, women's economic empowerment, research and data, climate security and DRR (which resides in Geneva). Environmental sustainability management work is further divided among three different focal points within different divisions: Political Analysis and Programme Development Unit within the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division; Facilities Unit within the Division of Management and Administration; and the UN System Coordination Division. While cross-unit collaboration and engagement takes place, it is not institutionalized or systematic. Internal coordination on environmental sustainability management seems to be nascent and the connection between this and thematic areas (e.g. reducing the carbon footprint of operational work) is minimal. At the regional level, several offices have up to two focal points connected to Women's Economic Empowerment and DRR, and a focal point on gender statistics and one on climate security.⁵³ At the country level, specialization by thematic area is rarely possible.

Stakeholders expressed the need to bring together existing expertise and make networking and collaboration across this cross-cutting work more coherent and formal. Many stakeholders felt it was time to rethink existing architecture models for a cross-cutting issue such as climate change and some innovations are already being tested. The idea of a network, rather than a unit,

was raised by many colleagues as a potential way forward. Given the diverse geographic spread of climate change expertise, colleagues emphasized that any adapted model should not be headquarters centric. For example, the corporate focal point for Climate Change and Data and Statistics is the Regional Adviser for the Asia and the Pacific Regional Office – holding both a corporate and a regional role. This has worked well given the limited work at this stage but may prove more challenging as work grows in other regions. What is clear is that internal stakeholders would prefer to have clarity on overall roles and responsibilities for climate change and that this decision is crucial for implementing a mainstreaming approach and to address the gaps highlighted above.

In determining what may be the right architecture for climate change work within UN Women, there are several models from within UN Women and other agencies that may be useful:⁵⁴

- UN Women has assigned corporate focal points for addressing specific populations (e.g. people living with disabilities, etc.) that play a role in developing guidance, strategy and coordinating (some) work across the organization, as well as engaging with system-wide accountability mechanisms. Such a focal point could be established for climate change.
- Inter-disciplinary task forces have been created within UN Women to address temporary crises in a coordinated manner (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis in Afghanistan). A permanent inter-disciplinary task force or working group could be established to coordinate and share work on climate change, to act as an advisory and reference group on all climate change matters composed of focal points from across headquarters divisions and units, including those engaged in environmental sustainability management.

⁵³ For example, this was the case in the Asia and Pacific Regional Office.

⁵⁴ Identified by internal stakeholders and through desk review.

- Establishing a small unit or team to bring together and strengthen the work on climate change across all thematic and operational areas.⁵⁵ This could consist of thought leaders who could begin engaging across the organization and bring more credibility to UN Women's work in this space. The Safe Cities and Public Spaces headquarters team consists of two people: the work began at a small scale and was built up over time to the point that they now oversee, provide substantive support to and coordinate work involving many countries. A strong and active Community of Practice was cited as being instrumental in the success of the architecture. Having a high level and very knowledgeable person attending and speaking at events, bringing together a strategy, providing strategic inputs in knowledge/guidance produced by UN and other partners/networks positioned in this area, and supporting the development of programmes can be done on a shorter time frame.
- Other models include having a separate corporate climate change and DRR teams or placing a climate change focal point within Humanitarian Action/ DRR and Resilience team.

The maturity matrix (Annex 12) addresses governance and organizational structure under the "leadership and organizational ownership" domain.

FINDING 9

The scale of UN Women's work in the area of climate change is affected by uneven competencies and variations in human and financial resources.

Stakeholders generally felt that UN Women has made important contributions to climate change work relative to the size of the Entity's current capacity; however, UN Women's overall expertise in the gender equality and climate change nexus remained limited and skills varied across domains and regions.

Three main factors combine to present an ongoing challenge to UN Women's ability to deliver substantive, sustainable and coherent results in this area. First, stretched capacities of personnel working across themes and countries. Second, uneven competencies in the nexus of gender and climate change. Third, insufficient financial and human resources to develop, implement and lead on its climate change agenda.

According to HR data available at the time of the evaluation and survey responses, the number of UN Women personnel dedicated to climate change work is low but has increased from three in 2017 to nine in 2020.⁵⁶

The UN Women personnel surveyed expressed mixed views on the Entity's expertise and capacity within the nexus, with Figure 7 presenting respondents' capacity

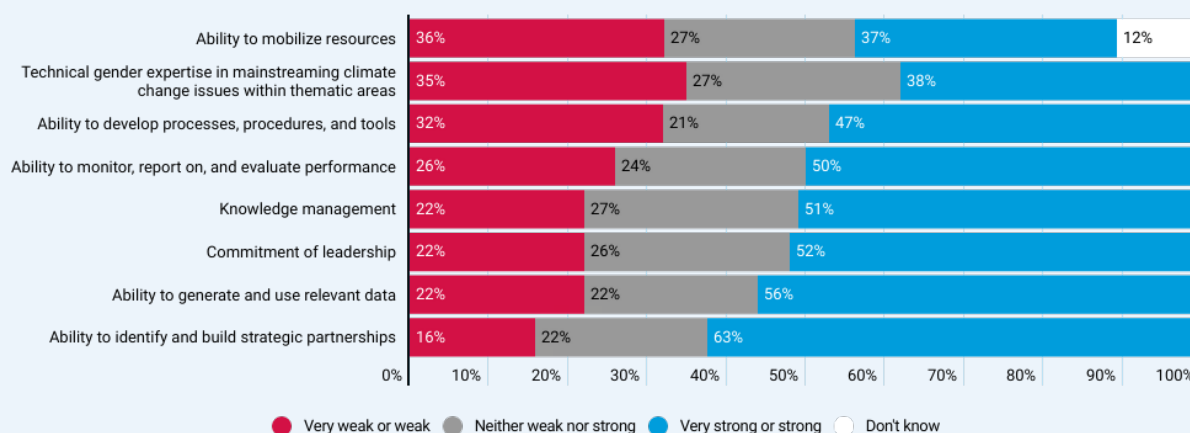
assessments as related to addressing the nexus and mainstreaming climate change considerations across eight domains. The most positive assessments of UN Women's capacities were related to the ability to identify and build strategic partnerships (63 per cent or 101 of 161 responses) assessing it as very strong or strong; the ability to generate and use relevant data (56 per cent or 88 of 156 responses), and leadership commitment (52 per cent or 78 of 149 responses). The least favourable capacity assessments were in relation to the ability to mobilize resources (37 per cent or 56 of 151 response); technical expertise in mainstreaming climate change issues within thematic areas (38 per cent or 54 of 142 responses); and the ability to develop processes, procedures and tools (47 per cent or 71 of 151). Interview data largely supported the survey results with two exceptions:⁵⁷ several respondents to the survey stated that weakness in the capacity to mobilize resources represented a significant constraint and others suggested it impacted the UN Women's ability to deliver substantial and sustainable results in the climate change area.

⁵⁵ Of 203 survey responses, the third most frequently cited recommendation by UN Women personnel and external stakeholders as the best way for the Entity to increase its overall capacity is establishing a climate change unit and the focal point system (51 per cent).

⁵⁶ UN Women Human Resources Reporting.

⁵⁷ Knowledge management and the ability to monitor and report on performance related to climate change work was noted by interviewees as a weak area for the organization.

Figure 7 Responses to the internal survey question: What specialized and general expertise and/or capacity does UN Women have to both address the nexus and effectively mainstream climate change considerations? (excluding “Don’t know” responses), (% of respondents)



Source: Online survey of UN Women personnel conducted by the evaluation team, question 25 of the internal survey (Annex 5).

Figure 8: Responses to the online internal survey question: How do you assess your own capacity/competency for working on the “climate change” and gender equality nexus?

Overall, the survey responses suggest that many of the UN Women personnel who responded to the survey have limited work experience in climate change. Fifty-one percent (71) of the UN Women personnel surveyed reported that they considered their own capacity and competency to work on the climate change and gender equality nexus to be strong or very strong, while 26 per cent (30) assessed their competency as very weak or weak and 24 per cent chose neither weak nor strong.

The survey results also indicate that a limited number of UN Women personnel spend a significant amount of time on climate change-related work, and interviews

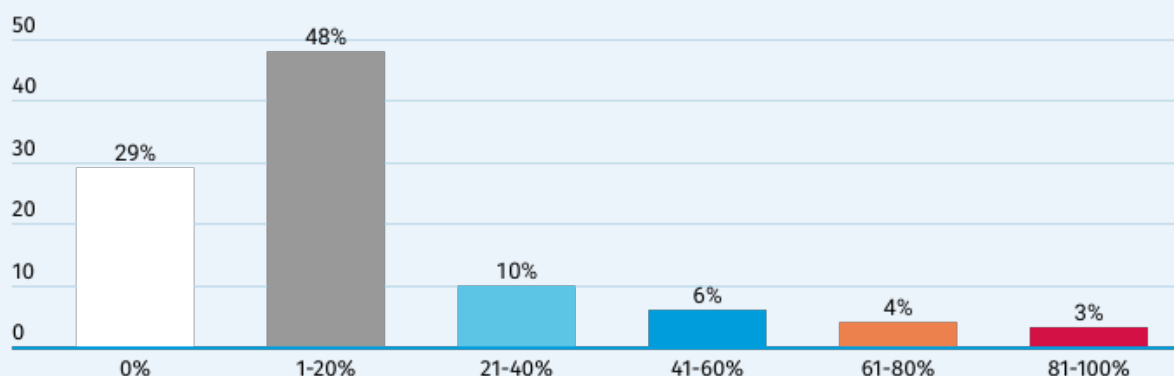
revealed that these personnel often balance their climate change work with other responsibilities. In the internal survey, of 217 UN Women personnel only 18 (8 per cent) stated that their titles or job descriptions had direct references to the climate change area. Furthermore, of 218 survey responses, 48 per cent of UN Women personnel reported that they spent less than 20 per cent of their time working on climate change issues, while 29 per cent of the UN Women personnel surveyed stated they were not involved at all in such work (Figure 9). The need and interest to develop capacity in gender-responsive climate change work was expressed in key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

Table 5: Responses to the online internal survey question: How do you assess your own capacity/competency for working on the climate change and gender equality nexus? Disaggregated by headquarters, Regional Office and Country/Multi-Country levels.

	Very weak or weak	Neither weak nor strong	Very strong or strong	Total responses (excluding “Don’t know” responses)
Headquarters	6 (35%)	3 (17%)	9 (50%)	18
Regional Office	6 (35%)	6 (35%)	5 (29%)	17
Country or Multi-Country Office	24 (23%)	24 (23%)	57 (54%)	105

Source: Online survey of UN Women personnel conducted by the evaluation team, question 26 of the internal survey (Annex 5).

Figure 9 Responses to the internal survey question: What percentage of your time do you spend working on climate change? % (n=218)

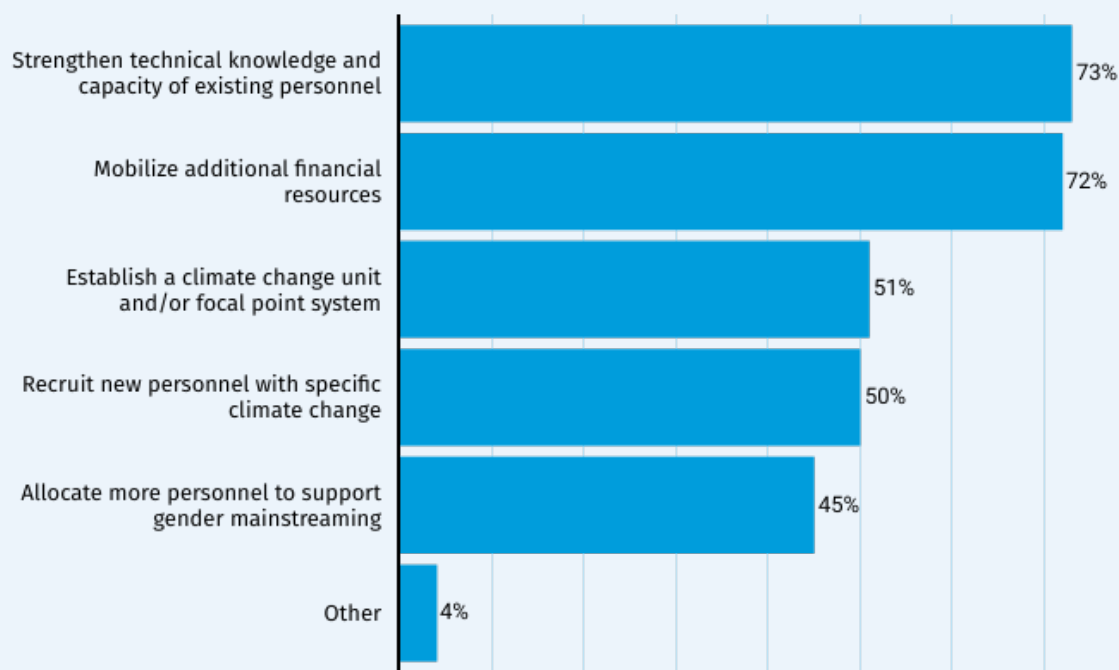


Source: Online survey conducted by the evaluation team, question 8 in the internal survey (Annex 5).

In addition, most UN Women personnel and external stakeholders considered that the best way for the Entity to increase its overall capacity is to strengthen the technical knowledge of its existing personnel in the climate change area (73 per cent of survey respondents) and mobilize additional resources (72 per cent of survey respondents). Specifically, their suggestions included developing e-learning courses, workshops, webinars and training programmes related to the climate change area, as well as providing incentives to personnel to enhance their knowledge. Stakeholders also foresaw the need

to enhance the related architecture (see Finding 8) and recruit new personnel with specific climate change-related expertise (50 per cent of survey respondents). Only 45 per cent of survey respondents indicated the need to allocate more personnel to support gender mainstreaming within climate change work, but this was often cited by external stakeholders as a key niche for UN Women (see Findings 3 and 4). Some interview respondents highlighted the role that partner organizations have played to complement UN Women's capacity.

Figure 10: Responses to the internal and external survey question: What would be the best way for UN Women to strengthen capacity in this area? (multiple responses possible) (n=203)



Source: Online surveys conducted by the evaluation team, question 28 in the internal survey and question 23 in the external survey (Annex 5).

FINDING 10

Corporate RBM and knowledge management systems provided limited means to make the breadth of the organization's climate change and environmental work visible.

With no specific climate-related indicators, the Strategic Plan 2018–2021's monitoring and reporting framework was not conducive to making UN Women's work within the climate change and gender equality nexus visible. This in turn affects UN Women's ability to develop a robust knowledge management system on its 'climate change' work.

The UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025 included the first indicator related to environmental sustainability under Organizational Effectiveness And Efficiency Output 1 related to 'assuring an accountable organization through principled performance'. This is a good first step to comply with QCPR and UN Sustainability Strategy requirements by adopting an indicator that was jointly developed through the UN EMG to harmonize system-wide reporting. However, interview data revealed that much still remains unresolved and unknown about how this new corporate indicator will be monitored and reported on, especially in the absence of an environmental sustainability management system (see Finding 12).

O 1.8 INDICATOR

Percentage of country offices applying environmental and social standards in UN-Women programmes in line with United Nations standards (QCPR).

In relation to the substantive work on climate change, one overarching narrative question was active in RMS from 2011 to 2015. However, a review of 2015 reporting demonstrated that very few Country Offices actually reported against this question. Beyond this one example, there have not been any corporate indicators on climate change in UN Women's Strategic Plans (including the current plan).⁵⁸ This is the key challenge for capturing climate change work going forward across all impact and outcome areas.

NARRATIVE SP QUESTION (2011 – 2015)

"If applicable, please describe interventions targeted to climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and how your programme may have taken into account the particular context of climate change."

As a mainstreamed area of work, climate change indicators could also be integrated within thematic impact and systemic outcome areas to ensure corporate level

reporting data. However, the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 includes only one indicator under Impact Area 4 related to DRR (which is also the only sub-thematic area explicitly included within an Strategic Plan impact area). Although the Women's Economic Empowerment thematic area was found to be where the bulk of climate change work takes place (see Finding 4), there were no corresponding corporate indicators. While this is an issue faced by other cross-cutting areas, many of these were remedied by the inclusion of a related systemic outcome in the current Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

INDICATOR NUMBER O.7.7

Number of UN entities implementing disaster risk reduction, resilience or recovery initiatives with a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment (UNDP, UNICEF)"

Although at the corporate level, climate change monitoring and reporting is not systematically collected, a document review revealed that relevant indicators do exist, mainly at the programme/project level. These programme/project level data reach the level of corporate reporting;⁵⁹ however, such reporting is not systematic and tends to focus on highlighting outputs rather than outcomes. This makes it difficult to grasp the potential impact of the results achieved when it is included in corporate reporting and serves as a barrier to ensuring robust corporate results reporting. Reporting of normative and coordination work face further difficulties as donor reporting is often not required as this work typically occurs outside of specific projects. The information on coordination work is noted as a major gap.⁶⁰

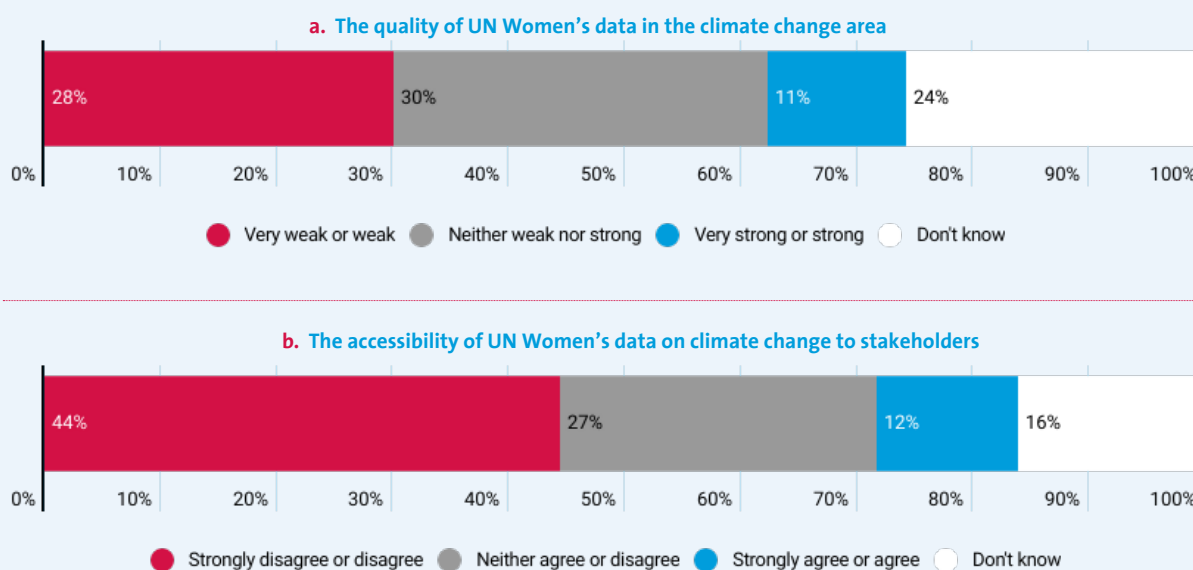
The above observations on monitoring and reporting gaps were further confirmed by the survey findings in which only 11 per cent of the UN Women personnel surveyed found the quality of climate change data available to be strong or very strong and only 12 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that this information was accessible to stakeholders (Figure 11a and 11b).

⁵⁸ Although previous drafts of the Strategic Plan included additional indicators to report on climate change work, these were ultimately not included. Interview data indicates that this was due to the need to reduce the number of indicators overall, but also due to the resistance or lack external support for UN Women to more visibly pursue climate change work.

⁵⁹ This is particularly the case for programmes/projects concerning climate-smart agriculture, access to land and green energy.

⁶⁰ This has meant that much of the results data is held by the UN Women personnel who were engaged in the work and is never fully documented. A mapping exercise was conducted to document what work had taken place on climate change at the normative level, which was a helpful first step but was not considered comprehensive. Efforts were also under way at the time of the evaluation to map existing work on climate security.

Figure 11: Responses to the internal survey questions: How do you assess the quality of indicators, data and evidence compiled by UN Women on the climate change and gender equality nexus? (n=171) and to what extent do you agree with the statement that UN Women’s data in this area are accessible to stakeholders? (n=178)



Source: Online survey conducted by the evaluation team, questions 22 and 23 in the internal survey (Annex 5).

The limitations of monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms are among the key factors that contribute to less than adequate knowledge management systems.⁶¹ Some UN Women personnel surveyed felt that the limited resources allocated to monitoring the results of UN Women’s climate change work was detrimental to organizational effectiveness, the quality of knowledge management and organizational ability to improve strategies, programmatic design and implementation based on the dissemination and sharing of good practices and lessons.

Despite efforts by some units to gather, map and make visible the work taking place across the organization, most staff members, including senior management, have limited awareness of UN Women’s overall work or the range of knowledge products the Entity produces in this area.⁶² There is also limited evidence that the knowledge products developed are leveraged and used internally to support design, implementation and advocacy and to build capacities.⁶³ There was substantial interest in putting in place a Community of Practice to support information sharing across the organization by UN Women

personnel, but responsibility for corporately compiling, managing and sharing institutional knowledge on the climate change and gender nexus is a gap (see Finding 8). Acting as a knowledge broker calls for UN Women to share its knowledge with stakeholders and this is an area that could be strengthened.

RBM and knowledge management are strongly inter-linked and, therefore, will need to be strengthened simultaneously to effectively enhance the UN Women’s accountability and capacity in ‘climate change. A key challenge for RBM is to establish a corporate monitoring and evaluation framework that allows for seamless integration of the data into the existing corporate monitoring and reporting framework. A corporate strategy on climate change is one avenue for doing so; the Signature Interventions provide another.

The “monitoring, evaluation and reporting” and “knowledge management” domains of the maturity matrix (Annex 12) further highlight avenues for strengthening corporate RBM and knowledge management processes.

⁶¹ See Finding 8, among other sections of this report for more key factors affecting knowledge management.

⁶² Finding 11 provides more information on how the development and dissemination of the data and knowledge products support establishing UN Women as a reliable actor on climate change,

⁶³ The use of knowledge products – internally and externally – is not monitored or tracked to better understand their relevance and effectiveness from a learning and/or advocacy standpoint, e.g. if and how findings and recommendations are integrated into climate change action plans, if and how guidance notes, toolkits and manuals are used by parliamentarians, policy advocates, decision makers and UN Women personnel.

FINDING 11

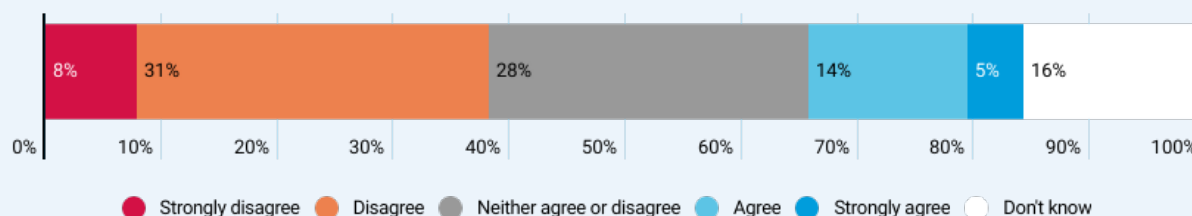
UN Women has a critical role to play in changing the narrative to make intersectionality and gender central to the mainstream discourse on climate change and the environment.

There is an immediacy and urgency to developing a concerted response to the gender equality and climate change nexus as the just transitions agenda gains ground globally. While UN Women has recently engaged in movement building (see Finding 2), several key opportunities for progress include:

- Develop clear narratives, supported by robust data and evidence, that effectively communicate the importance of gender equality in addressing climate change and environmental crises. Promote and build from the plan, Beyond COVID-19: A feminist plan for sustainability and social justice through any climate change strategy development (see Recommendation 1). Utilize Gender Equality Accelerators (Women's Climate Action & Green/Blue Economies, Women's Resilience to Disasters, and Women Count) as platforms for developing and sharing relevant data, evidence and knowledge.
- Engage in consistent effort to reframe and provide a more balanced message regarding how these crises are being experienced by women and girls. i.e. they are simultaneously more vulnerable to the effects of climate change but also have important agency in its mitigation and adaptation.
- Increase visibility on climate change issues as this was reported among many internal and external stakeholders to be low. See Figure 12.

Many stakeholders cited UN Women's unique global advocacy platform and its role in convening and coordination that involves regular engagement with a diverse set of stakeholders (see Finding 3) as a key rationale for the Entity to embrace this role.

Figure 12: Responses to the online survey question: To what extent do you agree that UN Women has visibility in the climate change and gender equality area? % (the number of responses)



Source: Online surveys conducted by the evaluation team, question 23 in the internal survey and question 18 in the external survey (Annex 5).

Many survey respondents stated that establishing UN Women as a credible actor in the gender equality and climate change nexus requires the Entity to systematically invest in developing communications and awareness-raising campaigns that increase the visibility of its contributions to its diverse stakeholders. Recent work (e.g. the Feminist Plan of Action, FACJ and CSW 66) are considered important steps towards building a narrative which can be built upon to bring the visibility and knowledge required. Systematic investment in implementing communications and awareness-raising campaigns and outreach strategies are needed to address this gap and could include:

- **An internal communications strategy** that allows personnel to have a clear view of the organization's ongoing work to increase awareness and understanding, but also supports identification of synergies and opportunities to collaborate. Internally, the qualitative data collected indicates that climate change initiatives are not always clearly communicated across different divisions and teams working on similar issues or across the organization.

- An **advocacy and communications strategy** that builds a narrative around the gender equality and climate change nexus and UN Women’s leadership’s vision for the nexus. Stakeholders highlighted the important role that senior management has when it comes to advocacy and communication and appreciated the impact when senior management engaged in the issue.⁶⁴
- **Evidence-based and targeted messaging** to strengthen the Entity’s communication and advocacy initiatives to external stakeholders who are not well-versed on gender equality and climate change nexus issues. For example, messaging that targets an ‘environmentalist’ audience, men and boys and/or aligning to regional and country contexts.⁶⁵
- Unpacking the **links between climate change and the different sub-thematic areas** which are not always clear to stakeholders. In some cases, UN Women has played a role in generating data that identifies and clarifies these linkages (e.g. violence against women and links with climate change and disasters), but for many other sub-thematic areas the link might not yet be fully understood or clear.
- Raising awareness and visibility of the **unique situation of groups who are marginalized** within the gender equality and climate change nexus.

Ultimately, UN Women’s strategic advocacy and communications framework has the potential to bring sophistication, clarity and focus to the gender equality and climate change nexus narrative.

Question 3. What opportunities can UN Women leverage to mitigate its own climate footprint and improve sustainability and habitability? How?

FINDING 12

UN Women has taken initial steps towards becoming a climate neutral and environmentally sustainable organization, but there is opportunity to improve UN Women’s policies and procedures to enhance environmental sustainability and reduce the Entity’s carbon footprint.⁶⁶

In recent years, there has been growing demand on UN system entities to become climate neutral and environmentally sustainable.

- In 2019, the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination endorsed the **UN Strategy for Sustainability Management (2020–2030)**.
- Subsequently, the **2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (A/RES/75/233)** called not only for the effective implementation of the strategy but also the development of “a system-wide approach for entities to measure (and report to their respective governing bodies) their efforts to reduce their climate and environmental footprint” and “ensure consistency with low emissions and climate-resilient development pathways”.
- Also in 2020, a **Joint Inspection Unit Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2020/8)** recommended that UN entities develop respective organization-wide policy for environmental sustainability in internal management functions by the end of 2022 – three years earlier than anticipated in the UN Strategy.

Achieving climate neutrality and environmental sustainability requires both adaptation and mitigation strategies to be adopted across an organization. To date, environmental sustainability has not been consistently addressed by UN Women, limiting its potential for achieving climate neutrality and mitigating its impact on the environment to meet commitments.⁶⁷ UN Women could also improve evaluation of its performance in terms of climate sustainability.

⁶⁴ According to the online surveys, when asked what UN Women leadership can do to support the transition to a climate-aware organization, 25 per cent of total respondents (internal and external stakeholders) answered “implementing awareness-raising campaigns.”

⁶⁵ This was second only to “conducting training, webinars, discussions” which received a slightly higher number of responses (26 per cent).

⁶⁶ In one region, external stakeholders expressed concern about how UN Women’s communication style can be locally perceived to pit men and women against one another, or as excluding men and boys.

⁶⁷ At the time of publication, the Political Analysis and Programme Development Unit, in collaboration with the Division of Management and Administration, is finalizing the development of UN Women’s Social and Environmental Sustainability Policy and Procedures.

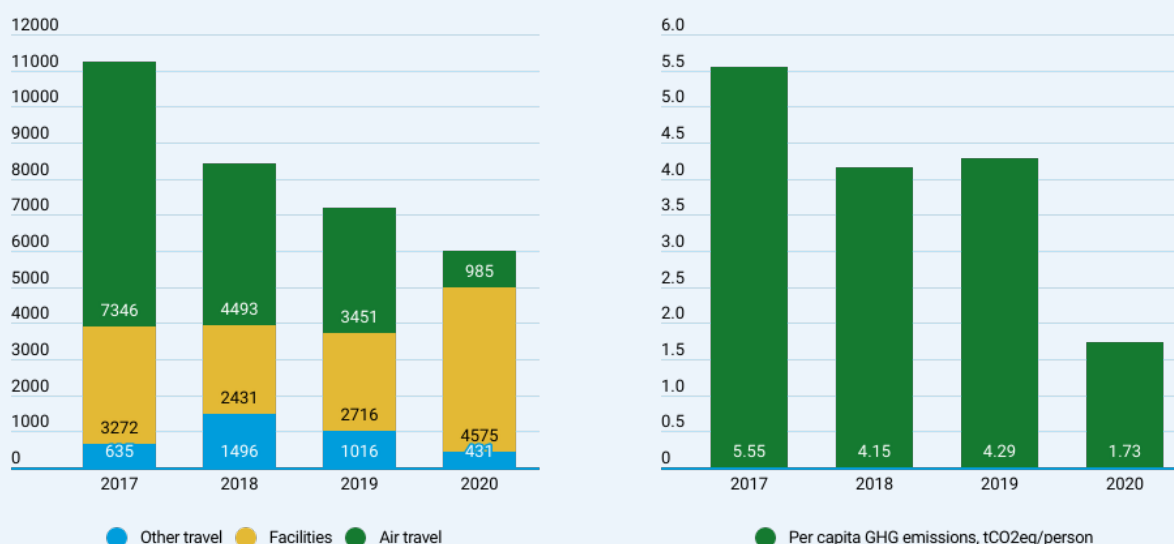
⁶⁸ MOPAN. “UN Women 2017-2018 performance assessment.” Pp24-25. https://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unwomen2017-18/UN_20Women_20Brief-Final.pdf.

UN Women has made some progress towards climate neutrality and environmental sustainability since 2011, mainly through active engagement with the UN-wide **Greening the Blue initiative** (see Finding 3 and Annex 9) with UN Women achieving a “climate neutral” status in recent Greening the Blue reports.⁶⁸ However, it is recognized that this reporting does not capture all carbon emissions resulting from UN Women’s operations and is therefore an incomplete measurement. Highlights of efforts and progress made include:

- UN Women has collected **greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory data since 2010**. Although reporting has not been comprehensive, interviews and a desk review of management data provide indication of a positive trend over the years with an increasing number of field offices reporting. The management data indicates that the organization achieved measurable GHG reductions between 2017–2020 (see Figure 13) and a likely assumption is that additional sharp reductions have been achieved since March 2020 due to the changes in business practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- UN Women has also **offset unavoidable GHG emissions by buying Certified Emission Reductions**,⁶⁹ which represent UN-certified carbon credits from projects that are mitigating GHG emissions of an equivalent amount. However, what is considered “unavoidable” emissions may require review and refinement.

- UN Women’s **Green Team** implemented various climate-neutral initiatives building on the Paper-Smart initiative to introduce additional efforts to reduce energy consumption.⁷⁰ This included the introduction of organization-wide video conferencing services to decrease personnel and meeting participant travel⁷¹ and renovating the fourth floor offices in headquarters in accordance with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) guidelines which require recycling materials, promoting cleaner air and utilizing less energy. UN Women was considered by interviewees as an early adopter of such measures among UN headquarters offices. However, it appears that the Green Team is no longer in place or active.
- At the **regional level**, the Asia and the Pacific Regional Office collaborated with other UN agencies in Bangkok to implement measures related to the use of solar panels and recycling bins, as well as conducting awareness-raising campaigns and annual environment quizzes.⁷² At the country-level, UN Women participated in the UN Passenger Mobility & Carpooling Services with WFP, although this was limited to a few locations.⁷³

Figure 13: UN Women’s total and per capita GHG emission, 2017-2020



Source: Greening the Blue. N.d. UN entities’ environmental data: UN Women. <https://www.greeningtheblue.org/entities/unwomens>

⁶⁸ UNEP (2021). Greening the Blue Report 2021: The UN System’s Environmental Footprint and Efforts to Reduce it. Geneva.

⁶⁹ The offsetting is based on the GHG inventory data collected.

⁷⁰ UN Women. (2014, February 26). UN Women Supports Greening the Blue. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/2/un-women-supports-greening-the-blue>

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² In addition, it was reported that they share information on waste separation, improving waste collection, reducing food waste, saving water and energy, advocating for non-meat diets and distributing information on the nutrient composition of canteen food.

⁷³ The proposed countries to pilot the service were: Iraq, Tanzania, Nigeria, Senegal, Palestine, Nepal, Pakistan and Cambodia.

UN Women also actively **identifies climate risks to its operations** as part of its Enterprise Risk Management System. Between 2020–2022, 65 risk register entries related to climate change and natural hazards, with an average risk rating of 11.8, indicating an overall medium level of organizational risk.⁷⁴

- Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern and Southern Africa identified the highest number of risks and three countries (Guatemala, Mali and Papua New Guinea) included more than one climate-related risk entry.
- Headquarters units' entries reflected how global climate risks intersect with existing thematic areas and potential disruptions to operational implementation at both headquarters and field level. However, they did not reflect climate risks associated with the specific geographic location (New York, U.S.).

The mitigation/adaptation strategies listed for addressing the identified risks included integrating conservation and restoration issues in government–civil society dialogues;

expanding the territorial and ecosystem conservation approach (e.g. jungle, forests, moors, tropical forests, mangroves, ocean); recognizing and supporting the leading role of women in the protection of water and biodiversity; and humanitarian and preparedness planning. Rural women and vulnerable women were also specifically mentioned in some risk registers for support.

Finally, an important advance in organizational monitoring and reporting of climate change and environmental data was introduced within the Strategic Plan (2022–2025) – a system-wide indicator to measure and report on efforts towards climate and environmental mitigation – which was required by the 2020 QCPR. However, what will be monitored and reported on and how within the context of this indicator has not yet been fully fleshed out. For example, currently, UN Women does not have a systematic method of measuring waste, water and wastewater⁷⁵ nor does it undertake Scope 1, 2 and 3 assessments. The publication of guidance that integrates environmental considerations in evaluations is another key step, albeit still requiring uptake.

Table 6: Risks identified by UN Women, grouped by region

REGION	RISK ENTRIES	TYPES OF HAZARDS
LAC	12	Droughts, tropical storms, hurricanes, cyclones, tremors and earthquakes, floods landslide, tsunami
ESARO	12	COVID-19 pandemic, floods, landslides, desert locust, increased temperatures, pest outbreaks, environmental degradation, outbreak of communicable diseases
AP	10	Floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides, hurricanes, droughts
ECA	9	Floods, droughts, wildfire, earthquakes
WCARO	7	Floods, drought, environmental degradation, landslides, increases in temperature, variability in rainfall pattern, rise in sea level, desertification; land degradation, more frequent extreme weather events; and the loss of freshwater resources and biodiversity
Headquarters	7	Social consequences of climate change concerns on women and girls in relation to the thematic areas/divisions, risks to business continuity in the case of disasters and climate change (e.g. ICT)
AS	3	Floods, droughts, air pollution

Source: UN Women risk registers

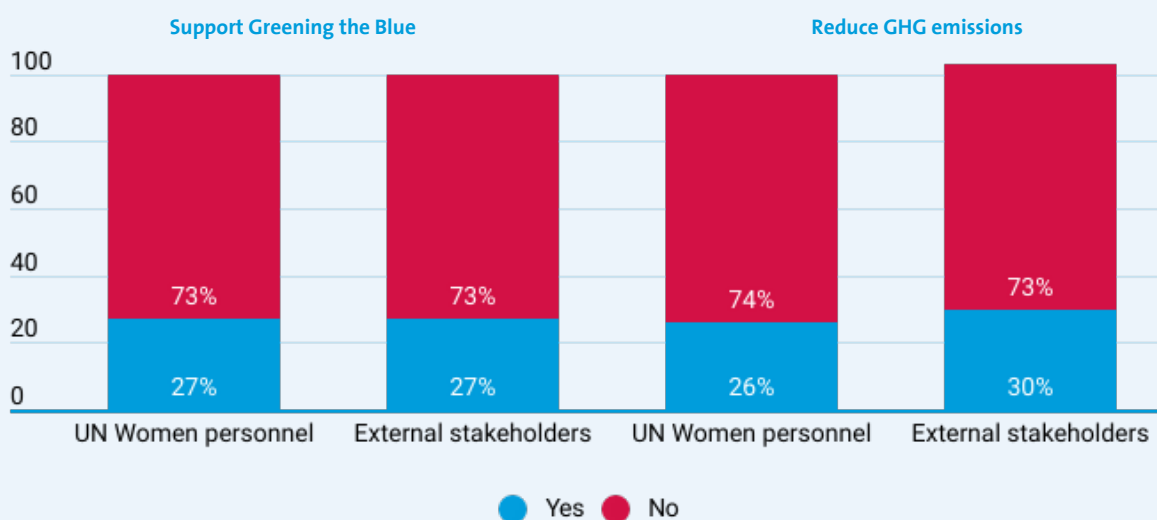
⁷⁴ By multiplying the likelihood (rated 1-5, with 1 being very unlikely and 5 being very likely) with the consequence (1-5, with 1 being negligible and 5 being critical) country, regional and headquarters offices are able to quantitatively estimate and rate perceived climate-related events and disasters. The entries and events rated are predicted through qualitative assessments factoring in weather and climatic conditions, past/existing indicators, external forecasts and, where relevant, expert input. Likelihood and consequence 20–25 (very High), 15–19 (High), 8–12 (Medium), 1–6 (low).

⁷⁵ Greening the Blue. (n.d.) UN entities' environmental data: UN Women. <https://www.greeningtheblue.org/entities/unwomens>

To improve this situation, UN Women could undertake several concrete actions (see also the maturity matrix presented in Annex 12):

- Targeted prioritization of organizational environmental sustainability by senior leadership.** Interviewees recognized the need for decision makers to bring about the culture change required to improve climate neutrality and environmental sustainability within the organization. The UN Strategy on Sustainability Phase I benchmarks and the Joint Inspection Unit Review's 55 "soft recommendations" addressed to the executive heads of UN agencies provides a blueprint for mainstreaming environmental sustainability.⁷⁶ One key action is establishing an environmental sustainability management system, which involves having an environmental sustainability policy and environmental and social standards in place, among other elements. According to the online surveys, when asked what UN Women leadership could do to support the transition to a climate-aware
- Increased investment and attention (especially by senior leadership) to raising awareness of the efforts being made towards climate neutrality and environmental sustainability.** Despite the existence of an intranet page sharing information on the Greening the Blue initiative, awareness of efforts and achievements related to climate neutrality and environmental sustainability has been low. Survey results demonstrated that both internal and external stakeholders (more than two thirds) were not readily familiar with UN Women's efforts and commitments to Greening the Blue initiatives and to reducing the Entity's GHG emissions footprint (Figure 14). Based on interviewee responses, improved internal and external communication, adoption of awareness-raising campaigns and organizational incentives are needed.

Figure 14: Responses to the internal and external survey question: Are you aware of any efforts or commitments of UN Women to support Greening the Blue and to reduce GHG emissions footprint?



Source: Online surveys conducted by the evaluation team, question 29 in the internal survey and question 27 in the external survey (Annex 5).

⁷⁶ The JIU Review (JIU/REP/2020/8) recommends that UN entities embed environmental sustainability considerations into the management of their organizations and requests that they include the results of these efforts in annual reports; devote adequate resources in specific budget plans; integrate environmental sustainability considerations into procurement policies; incorporate and give adequate weight to environmental sustainability understanding and behaviours; strengthen the coordination between the headquarters and field agencies, as well as among field agencies, in pursuing measures to reduce the environmental impact of field presences.

- **Building the capacity and competencies of staff and partners to implement climate neutral and environmental sustainability strategies.** Interview and survey data revealed that a significant proportion of UN Women personnel need to increase their capacity and knowledge of how to mitigate the climate footprint and other negative environmental affects within programming and operations, as well as on a personal level. Of 169 survey responses, only 14 personnel (8 per cent) strongly agreed and 36 (21 per cent) agreed that they knew how to mitigate the climate footprint and negative environmental affects in programming. Interviewees mentioned a lack of clear guidance as a key factor preventing employees from calculating GHG emissions.
- **Rethinking permanent operations modalities based on the temporary shift to pandemic-related modalities.** Most stakeholders interviewed cited important opportunities to both improve environmental sustainability and stakeholder inclusion by maintaining some of the temporary modalities adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes in the amount of air travel was the most often cited. Emissions from air travel made up the largest part of GHG emissions tracked by UN Women prior to 2020 and this declined from 48 per cent in 2019 to 17 per cent in 2020 due to restrictions on mobility reducing travel for non-essential missions and eliminating daily commuting for work.⁷⁷ In some instances, the increase in the number of online meetings and events was reported to have created opportunities for more inclusive participation.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ The 2019 Internal Audit of the Travel Policy was a missed opportunity in that it did not address environmental sustainability and the review process did not always enforce the Policy's consideration of greening goals.

⁷⁸ However, it is also acknowledged that online meetings could also be exclusionary, e.g. to those without digital access.

5. CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSION 1:

Although awareness among UN Women personnel of the totality of UN Women's climate change and environmental work is limited, the organization has engaged in a significant amount of work in this area. While some of this work has tended to be ad hoc, it represents a foundation for more strategic engagement in the longer term on the gender equality and climate change nexus.

Operationally, UN Women can build on lessons from its successful projects and catalytic programmes; showcase existing results; and utilize lessons learned to improve programming. There are opportunities to both mainstream gender equality within the existing climate work led by more traditional environment partners and to develop programming with higher-level outcomes focused on the gender equality and climate nexus. This requires strong knowledge of gender equality-related vulnerabilities to a changing climate and environment. At the programmatic level, theories of change should clearly incorporate the gender-based barriers, vulnerabilities and potential responses. In future initiatives, UN Women could prioritize inclusive approaches and community-based strategies to promote opportunities for, abilities and dignity of various marginalized groups, with a focus on community empowerment in the context of building resilience.

UN Women has demonstrated successes with joint programming, which serve as models for future programme development. For example, EmPower, a joint programme with UNEP, utilized the strengths of both agencies, creating strong complementarity. Such programmes allow UN Women to play to its strengths and work in areas of noted gaps. For example, by integrating gender equality into national frameworks on climate and DRR; generating data (led by Women Count programme) to help address the known gaps in data within the nexus space; and enhancing regional coordination by bringing a strong gender perspective together with environmental partners (see Finding 4 and Annex 6 for a comprehensive description of UN Women's operational work).

Implementation of the climate-related Signature Interventions (now called Gender Equality Accelerators) should build on previous work. For example, the Women's Climate Action & Green/Blue Economies programme could incorporate and build on the lessons from UN Women's climate-resilient agriculture work.

At the normative level, UN Women's contributions prepare the organization for more consistent and strategic involvement with international frameworks, such as UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD, the Sendai Framework and New Urban Agenda. As UN Women and partners enhance global frameworks, it is imperative they be translated into national-level frameworks through the integration of gender in regional and national climate, biodiversity and DRR action plans. Similarly, working to integrate climate change issues into national gender action plans also presents an opportunity. UN Women should look for models to follow within its past work, such as support to national governments and regional DRR successes, particularly in Asia and the Pacific and Africa (see Finding 2).

UN Women's UN system coordination work for gender equality and climate change is not as pronounced as its operational and normative work. However, there are notable contributions, particularly with mechanisms related to DRR (such as the Inter-Agency Team on DRR) and peace and security (UN Climate Security Mechanism) that coincide with priority areas in UN Women's normative and operational work. UN Women's participation in the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics also serves as an important forum for the nascent and critical area of gender statistics within the nexus space. If and as UN Women builds capacity in different spheres within climate change, the Entity will be well placed to identify and engage new coordination mechanisms. In the meantime, the evaluation identified more immediate opportunities such as engagement in UNCT thematic groups; UNSDCF processes; and using its broader coordination/convening capabilities to support the nexus (see Finding 3).

Prioritizing direct participation in key intergovernmental forums and UN system coordination mechanisms will help ensure that gender equality issues are consistently represented in high-level discussions.

CONCLUSION 2:

There is an expectation that UN Women play a more proactive role (and demonstrate leadership) to ensure that gender equality and leave no one behind perspectives are central to its climate change and environmental work.

Issues of socio-economic equity, just transition and women's empowerment are gaining much needed momentum in international discourse and policy discussions, as evidenced by the IPCC February 2022 report and the CSW 66 call for gender equality and climate justice. UN Women is well positioned to play a unique and important role to establish the parameters of just transitions and climate justice on behalf of marginalized populations and those who are systematically excluded from national climate policies and climate-related resources.

UN Women's climate and environmental work at the normative, coordination and operational levels provides key footholds for advancing an equitable climate change agenda at local, national, regional and international levels. The organization carries weight in policy influence; in holding research and praxis to a high standard; and in shifting the narrative of women as climate victims to women as innovators, solution and knowledge holders, climate leaders and contributors to sustainable economies.

There are two key prerequisites for UN Women to play an effective role within this space. First, UN Women needs to define what constitutes climate change work and adopt appropriate terminology to clearly describe this work. Finding 1 discusses the rationale for adopting a broader boundary and definition, such as Gender Equality and Environment, that brings together the inextricably linked elements of climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, DRR and other aspects of the Entity's environmental work. A clear definition would be a foundation to support (a) strategy development by providing the boundary of work a strategy would address; (b) internal architecture and breaking down of silos between separate pieces of climate work; and (c) monitoring and reporting systems that consistently and coherently capture climate-related results.

Second, UN Women needs to articulate its strategic direction, objectives and interventions/strategies for its climate change work. This could be accomplished through a corporate theory of change and/or a clear corporate strategy that builds on existing work while taking advantage of emerging opportunities, such as those identified in Findings 2, 3 and 4. The development of new Signature Interventions as part of operationalization of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 provides a key opportunity to articulate UN Women's climate change objectives and mainstream its climate change work across thematic areas.

CONCLUSION 3:

Partnerships, although often ad hoc, have been central to UN Women's climate change and environmental work to date. Going forward, forming longer-term, strategic partnerships will be critical for UN Women to magnify its impact in the climate change and environment space.

UN Women has engaged with a wide variety of partners within the complex climate change and gender equality nexus. UN Women is well regarded as a partner (particularly for its technical expertise in gender equality; as a convenor; and for augmenting the visibility of women and girls); however, partnerships for climate change were often opportunistic and ad hoc. While this often served the immediate purpose, there are opportunities for UN Women to form partnerships more strategically and leverage these partnerships to magnify its influence and impact.

To maximize the benefit of its partnerships, partners need to be identified and targeted based on a clear strategic direction. This will allow UN Women to focus its partnerships on identified priority areas of work with clear outcomes. It will help ensure there is strong complementarity between partners, promoting longer partnerships and potentially stronger outcomes.

There are opportunities for UN Women to partner with organizations that are well established within the climate sphere to better mainstream and integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into their work. For example, with the New Urban Agenda and the promotion of safe and resilient cities or with other UN agencies and the private sector to ensure women are included in programming which supports the transition to green jobs and green industry.

Partnerships strengthened UN Women's engagement at the normative level. Engagements with organizations such as UNFCCC, UNEP, UNDP, IUCN and ASEAN serve as models for how such partnerships can enhance gender equality integration in international and regional frameworks. Similarly, the evaluation found significant opportunity at national level for UN Women to engage government ministries on national plans, including Nationally Determined Contributions, DRR plans, biodiversity plans etc.

Stakeholders identified climate finance institutions in particular as actors where UN Women could have a strong impact by helping to ensure funding mechanisms include a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The large range of partnership opportunities is more fully discussed in Finding 7.

CONCLUSION 4:

The absence of a corporate coordinating structure for climate change and environmental work has negatively affected the coherence and visibility of UN Women's work in this area among both internal and external stakeholders.

To ensure the uptake and ownership of a mainstreaming approach to its climate change work, the overall architecture must be designed so that it is not associated with just a single impact or mandate area of the organization. The current set-up of focal points within different thematic or mandate areas has served to advance the work in those areas (e.g. intergovernmental, Women's Economic Empowerment, DRR), but it has not been effective at supporting broader mainstreaming in other impact or systemic outcome areas, or effective at developing the internal coordination and knowledge management systems needed.

To support the coordination of relevant personnel, greater understanding and cohesiveness of UN Women's climate change work and the development and implementation of a strategy for gender equality and climate change (if one is to be developed), an overall corporate level coordinator/coordination function is needed. This lead/coordinator role should be connected to a broader inter-divisional task force or network representing climate change work across thematic areas. The coordinator role would be responsible for constituting and coordinating the network or task force; identifying emerging opportunities and resources for UN Women; and developing any strategy (in conjunction with support from the network members) for UN Women's climate change work. The network or task force would serve as a platform for sharing lessons and best practices; supporting internal knowledge management; facilitating programming across teams/thematic areas; supporting strategy development; supporting resource mobilization; and supporting coordination of UN Women's engagement in normative processes, such as COPs. This coordination function and architecture could evolve if and as UN Women's work in this area grows and the resources and capacity available to support it increase over the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 period. While the evaluation noted this would serve as a minimum foundation for advancing UN Women's climate change work, alternative options are discussed in Finding 8.

CONCLUSION 5:

UN Women requires some additional capacity to successfully mainstream its climate change and environment work, but also needs to build organizational competencies by strengthening the knowledge of all personnel.

The evaluation team spoke with UN Women personnel who were experts in their thematic areas with strong experience in operational work and normative processes. Despite this, the existing capacity and competency levels across the organization to effectively address the climate change and gender equality nexus is not sufficient to meet the needs expressed by partners. UN Women needs to have a better understanding of its existing capacity (across all personnel) and clarity on the minimum requirements (competencies) for various office types to be able to engage effectively and deliver substantial and sustainable results in the climate change area. While additional capacity is needed, building the competencies of UN Women personnel to mainstream climate change is also a priority, with particular emphasis on greater technical expertise to identify and mainstream climate change issues into different programming areas and also to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment into climate change programming; building skills for mobilizing resources to address the nexus; and knowledge of environmentally sustainable practices among those areas to develop organizational training and guidance. A staffing and capacity building plan aligned to UN Women's climate change objectives as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, Signature Interventions, or ideally, a gender equality and climate change strategy would greatly support UN Women in expanding its capacity in a realistic and strategic way. The "Resources" row of the organizational maturity matrix (Annex 12) provides further information on how such capacity progression could look.

CONCLUSION 6:

UN Women's reputation and credibility may be affected if it does not demonstrate and amplify its own institutional climate mitigation efforts.

UN Women has a nascent corporate environmental management system in place in terms of facilities management; monitoring and offsetting carbon emissions; and identifying and adapting to climate-related risks. However, it will fall short of meeting the commitments of the System-Wide Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System 2020–2030 if it does not take steps to put in place a more comprehensive environmental sustainability system for management functions and develop a vision for environmental and social sustainability.⁷⁹

The first step in doing so would be the development of the environmental sustainability policy that would address management functions (e.g. ICT, procurement, facilities management, etc.) and environmental and social safeguards for programming. UN Women could engage more strategically within the Environmental Management Group (or its successor) to learn from the work of other agencies, as well as share its experiences and lessons learned.

The COVID-19 pandemic has acted as a natural experiment for changing business practices within UN Women. Travel restrictions and remote working policies during the pandemic have accelerated the adoption and normalization of remote business practices that have reduced the Entity's environmental footprint. UN Women has a significant opportunity to make permanent and/or expand temporary practices that are environmentally sustainable. UN Women should consider which practices to adopt as part of a net zero emissions strategy.

To lead by example, UN Women should institutionalize an organizational culture shift towards becoming a carbon neutral organization, which will help address existing demand and the requirements to operate with environmental sustainability in mind. Establishing UN Women as a carbon-neutral organization and a reliable actor in the climate change area will require systematic investment in implementing a range of activities identified in the evaluation (See Finding 12).

⁷⁹At the time of publication, the Political Analysis and Programme Development Unit, in collaboration with the Division of Management and Administration, is finalizing the development of UN Women's Social and Environmental Sustainability Policy and Procedures. The policy is being designed to fulfil the requirements of the System-Wide Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System 2020–2030 and guidance set out in the UN Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards in UN Programming.



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6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The four evaluation recommendations were consulted on with internal and external reference groups. They logically flow from the findings and conclusions and propose actions to support UN Women's progress within the maturity matrix (see Annex 12).

RECOMMENDATION 1.**UN Women should develop a strategy to guide the mainstreaming of its climate change and environmental work across thematic areas and ensure resources are available to implement it.***Based on Findings:***1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11***Priority***HIGH***Timeframe***BY END Q4 2023****The strategy could consider:**

1. Integration with Strategic Plan processes, particularly the midterm review and preparations for the next Strategic Plan. Through the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 midterm review process, UN Women could develop a gender equality and climate change strategy with a workplan to the end of 2025. Based on the results from this strategy, adapt and incorporate UN Women's gender equality and climate change strategy within the subsequent Strategic Plan.
2. Grounding the strategy in the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation, the agreed conclusions of the CSW 66 (including regional declarations), the intermediate review of the UNFCCC GAP (June 2022), the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (2022), the midterm review of the Sendai Framework, and any other relevant process taking place in 2022/2023.
3. Providing a clear and evidence-based narrative for the importance of prioritizing the gender equality, climate change and environment nexus and clarify UN Women's role and position to support its advancement for both internal and external stakeholders.
4. Bringing internal coherence to the interlinked elements of the broader climate and environment agenda (including environmental sustainability). Clarify and define key terminology used to describe UN Women's climate and environmental work.
5. Prioritizing key sub-thematic areas within each impact and systemic outcome area where UN Women will take a leadership position or targeted action as distinct from where it will focus on mainstreaming and identify vulnerable geographic locations and groups to be supported.
6. Containing a capacity and competency strengthening plan for UN Women personnel that reflects the needs of the strategy, makes use of existing online training courses and addresses additional specialized expertise needed at all levels.
7. Including a resource mobilization plan consistent with available resources to ensure adequate support for implementation of the strategy, a partnership plan and the internal architecture that will govern implementation of the strategy.
8. Reviewing, adapting and validating the Climate Change and Gender Equality Maturity Matrix to aid in implementation of the strategy. Incorporate the Maturity Matrix by charting a path within the strategy to reach the moderate to strong phase in all eight organizational categories.
9. Monitoring and reporting through the existing Integrated Results and Resources Framework of UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022–2025 and corporate RMS structure. Leverage the Strategic Plan midterm review to clarify the reporting framework to allow progress and results achieved in this area to be captured, tagged and visible. Include provisions and budget for a review to be conducted in 2025 to inform development of the next Strategic Plan.

To be led by: Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division with support from Strategy, Planning, Resources and Effectiveness Division.

Impact: The development and approval of a corporate strategy on climate change mainstreaming will clarify UN Women's approach on the issue to internal and external stakeholders which will clear paths for developing partnerships, resource mobilization and meaningful mainstreaming across the organization.

Difficulty: Medium

If not implemented: UN Women will continue to operate in an opportunistic approach that will not position the organization to serve women and girls globally as they face what is widely recognized as an immediate existential threat. In addition, UN Women will not be recognized for its programmatic and policy contributions.

RECOMMENDATION 2.**UN Women should develop an environmental sustainability policy by 2024.⁸⁰***Based on Findings:***3, 6, 7 and 12***Priority***HIGH***Timeframe***BY END Q2 2024****The policy could consider:**

1. Making UN Women an early adopter for the environmental sustainability outputs outlined in the UN Strategy for Sustainable Management in the UN System (2020–2030) Phase I and II, complemented by the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit's Review.
2. Building on and strengthening existing mitigation and adaptation strategies to achieve the goal of climate neutrality and environmental sustainability across all management functions – particularly travel and procurement, facilities, ICT and enterprise risk management.
3. Developing a communications strategy that signals the corporate importance of addressing environmental sustainability management, including regular updates on progress made.
4. Increasing awareness and knowledge of sound environmental stewardship and identifying and deploying individual, office and corporate incentives to generate interest and action to adopt new practices.
5. Adopting the goal of climate neutrality and mitigation and reviewing travel policy in line with comments to the Joint Inspection Unit report by the Chiefs Executive Board for Coordination.
6. Exploring ways to achieve carbon neutrality that go beyond facilities management and better integrating environmental sustainability considerations within programming.
7. Acknowledging and responding to the learning curve by engaging in knowledge sharing and coordination platforms across the UN system.
8. Including a system for tracking and reporting progress (including challenges faced) to communicate progress and challenges internally and externally.

To be led by: Division of Management and Administration in collaboration with the Political Analysis and Programme Development Unit, under the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division.

Impact: UN Women's environmental management system will be strengthened and made visible to both internal and external stakeholders.

Difficulty: High

If not implemented: UN Women contributes to climate change and environmental degradation unchecked, contributing to the very problems it seeks to address through the strategy outlined in Recommendation 1.

⁸⁰At the time of publication, the Political Analysis and Programme Development Unit, in collaboration with the Division of Management and Administration, is finalizing the development of UN Women's Social and Environmental Sustainability Policy and Procedures.

RECOMMENDATION 3.**UN Women should develop and strengthen the organizational architecture for its gender equality, climate change and environmental work.***Based on Findings:***1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12***Priority***HIGH***Timeframe***BY Q4 2023****Suggested steps that could be taken:**

1. Explore the different architecture options presented in the evaluation.
2. Create a corporate level coordination function led by an expert with broad experience in the climate change, environment and gender equality nexus. With an overarching perspective on UN Women's climate change and environmental work, this function would support overall coordination of gender equality, climate change and environmental work; identify emerging opportunities; support resource mobilization; and highlight UN Women's work and results.
3. Form a network or task force to bring together personnel from across the organization working on climate change, biodiversity, desertification, land degradation, climate-related DRR, climate security, mitigation and related issues. The structure could serve as a platform for coordinating climate change work across units and divisions, sharing knowledge and lessons, and supporting the mainstreaming of adaptation and mitigation initiatives across thematic areas.
4. Utilize the coordination function and network or task force to develop UN Women's strategy on climate change and gender equality.
5. Support the evolution of the coordination function and climate change architecture as UN Women's work and needs change.

To be led by: Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division

Impact: A clear focal point within the organization for climate change work where key initiatives, such as strategy development, can be housed. Greater cohesion with a topic that spans organizational units, divisions and thematic areas. Stronger coordination among personnel engaged in climate change work. Demonstrated commitment to undertaking a leadership role and more strategic approach to climate change work.

Difficulty: Medium

If not implemented: The absence of a coordination function will prevent coordination and coherence among the different parts of UN Women engaged in climate change work. Difficulty mainstreaming climate change across thematic areas and difficulty developing and implementing a gender equality and climate change strategy that brings together all relevant personnel. Without a network, personnel engaged in climate work will continue with ad hoc and informal collaboration, potentially missing valuable opportunities to cooperate and exchange ideas.

RECOMMENDATION 4.**UN Women should formalize further partnerships at the corporate level with key stakeholders for a more coordinated and comprehensive approach.***Based on Findings:***6, 7, 11, and 12***Priority***HIGH***Timeframe***BY END OF Q2 2024****Suggested steps that could be taken:**

1. Identify, update and formalize strategic partnerships to address the gender equality, climate and environment nexus that can be operationalized globally to reduce transaction costs and support internal and external coherence. Some examples include:
2. Rio Convention Secretariats, where UN Women could expand support to implementation of gender strategies and action plans at the regional and country level while also creating synergies between the climate change, biodiversity and land degradation frameworks.
3. UN agencies, where UN Women could expand and replicate joint regional programmes, collaborate on global normative frameworks, support research and data initiatives and partner in other areas within the nexus.
4. International organizations, such as IUCN, where UN Women could expand collaboration on normative work, capacity development, and data and statistics in a number of relevant areas.
5. Research Institutes, which can be leveraged to support the data and research needs across the nexus.
6. Prioritize establishing and strengthening strategic partnerships with global and regional climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility, the forthcoming biodiversity fund, other international financial institutions, and non-traditional financing partners, among others, to generate increases in climate/environment financing for gender equality.
7. Identify and establish strategic partnerships with organizations representing women who are most vulnerable and/or most marginalized in the context of the environmental changes under way.
8. Identify and strengthen partnerships in related UN coordination mechanisms, including those on environmental sustainability.
9. Maintain, further develop and make accessible the initial network map and internal database developed as part of this evaluation to support internal knowledge sharing among UN Women personnel. Update the map and database by conducting a periodic scan of relevant actors.

To be led by: Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division in collaboration with the Coordination Division and Strategic Partnerships Division.

Impact: UN Women will have the strategic partnerships in place that it needs to implement Recommendations 1 and 2.

Difficulty: Medium

If not implemented: UN Women will not have the strategic partnerships needed to complement its resources and capacities to generate the impact-level results desired on the gender equality and environment nexus. It may then not have a seat at important decision-making forums in the near future.

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The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service is co-located with the Internal Audit Service under the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making, and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organization's mandate, including its normative, operational, and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments, and civil society organizations.

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GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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