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TOOLKIT

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Social Development Direct

Mainstreaming gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) in the blue economy

Part A: A practical guide for blue economy stakeholders

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Acronyms

CAPSEAH	Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment
CBO	Community-based organisation
DNH	Do no harm
EDI	Equality, diversity, and inclusion
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEDSI	Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex people
LNOB	Leave no-one behind
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
OCPP	Ocean Country Partnership Programme
OPD	Organisation of persons with disabilities
PINA	Principles for inclusive nature action
SEAH	Sexual exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
WIF	Women in Fuvahmulah
WRO	Women’s rights organisation

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Part A: A practical guide for blue economy stakeholders

Introduction

About this toolkit

This gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) toolkit is designed to support all those working in the blue economy, including marine biodiversity, sustainable seafood and marine pollution, to mainstream and monitor GEDSI in their work.[1] It has been developed through the **Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCPP)**. **Part A** of the toolkit provides practical guidance and tips on how to mainstream GEDSI in blue economy programmes and projects. **Part B** contains all the tools and templates to apply the learning in Part A, which can be adapted to suit a range of different contexts and similar environmental sectors.

The toolkit is intended to support inclusive blue economy programming for all people regardless of their gender, disability, age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, migration or displacement status, and other social characteristics. Sadly, not everyone experiences the same level of equality and inclusion within the blue economy, and some people will need additional support to level the playing field. This includes women and girls, people with disabilities, and other social groups who have been historically marginalised and excluded from blue economy work, including Indigenous Peoples, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex people (LGBTQI+), older people, children and youth, and people living in rural communities (this is not an exhaustive list). It seeks to take an intersectional approach, recognising that people experience multiple and overlapping inequalities throughout their lives.[2]

[1] Blue economy is a term that broadly relates to a sustainable ocean economy. It is a widely used term around the world and comprises a number of different economic sectors, activities and policies that determine whether the use of ocean resources is sustainable. It is a major driver of urban and regional development and creates millions of local jobs in sectors such as fisheries, tourism and shipping. For more information see https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/water-governance/blue-economy.html

[2] The toolkit does not provide specific guidance on working with children, in terms of ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place, or activities are adapted appropriately for their age and stage. Additional considerations need to be taken when programming with children.

GEDSI is an approach that ensures all people and groups in society can fully participate in and benefit equally from development.

Mainstreaming GEDSI in the blue economy can:

- Achieve more equitable and sustainable outcomes for people, climate, and nature.
- Build broader and more representative community leadership, ownership, and support.
- Harness traditional ecological knowledge and diverse perspectives.
- Ensure inclusive, equitable and participatory decision-making processes.
- Address root causes of marine degradation, biodiversity loss and gender inequality, disability inequality, and social exclusion.
- Contribute to transforming power dynamics and promoting social justice.

GEDSI mainstreaming is also an essential approach for strengthening inclusive biodiversity action, helping to ensure that women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups can participate meaningfully, influence decisions on issues that affect them, and strengthen their leadership in marine, biodiversity and climate action. This toolkit therefore responds directly to the **principles for inclusive nature action** (PINA) which promote gender-responsive, locally-led and rights-based approaches to biodiversity protection and restoration. Further detail about how GEDSI mainstreaming supports these principles is set out in **Section 2.2 Box 1** of this toolkit, as well as relevant principles highlighted in each case study.

The toolkit aims to be a lasting resource to support stakeholders to include GEDSI considerations in initiatives aimed at advancing inclusive nature action across blue economy sectors. It aims to meet the UK Government's ambition for climate funding to be ambitious on gender and equalities. The toolkit can be used throughout the programme and project cycle (see "How to Use this toolkit").

The objectives of the GEDSI toolkit are:

- **Increase understanding** of GEDSI concepts, principles and techniques and their relevance to the blue economy.
- **Provide practical, accessible, user-friendly GEDSI tools and templates** that can be immediately applied by those working on blue economy programmes and projects.
- **Support effective mainstreaming of GEDSI principles** throughout blue economy interventions through practical guidance on analysis, engagement, monitoring, and capacity building.

Background

As part of the UK's legal obligations and commitments to GEDSI, its Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), through the OCPP, commissioned a series of **national GEDSI analyses in 2025 in Bangladesh, Belize, Ghana, Senegal, Madagascar, Maldives, Mozambique and Sri Lanka.** This toolkit builds on the findings of these analyses, including the high-level risks and opportunities for improvements they identified. While developed through OCPP, this toolkit is intended for broader use by actors working in the blue economy but also wider biodiversity stakeholders globally.

Intended audience

This toolkit is intended for a range of different stakeholders around the world, including government ministries, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders working in the blue economy. It can be used as a resource for training teams within organisations, for self-study by organisations, or as a reference guide during programme and project planning, implementation and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). Whilst the resource was developed to support blue economy sectors, the practical guidance and tools have been designed to be adaptable to different contexts and could also be adapted for use in other similar environmental sectors.

How to use this toolkit

Part A of this toolkit is practical guidance on GEDSI mainstreaming. **Section 1** introduces key GEDSI concepts, including what we mean by social inclusion and social exclusion. **Section 2** looks at what GEDSI mainstreaming is and why it matters to the blue economy. **Section 3** looks at analysing the GEDSI context, with practical advice on how to carry out a GEDSI analysis. **Section 4** looks at mainstreaming GEDSI in your work with step-by-step guidance during planning, implementation and MEL stages of a programme or project. A glossary of terms and comprehensive reference list are included in the **Annexes**. The different sections build upon each other to create a comprehensive understanding of GEDSI mainstreaming across the programme and project cycle, however each section can also be used individually to focus on specific aspects of GEDSI mainstreaming as needed.

Each section also includes:

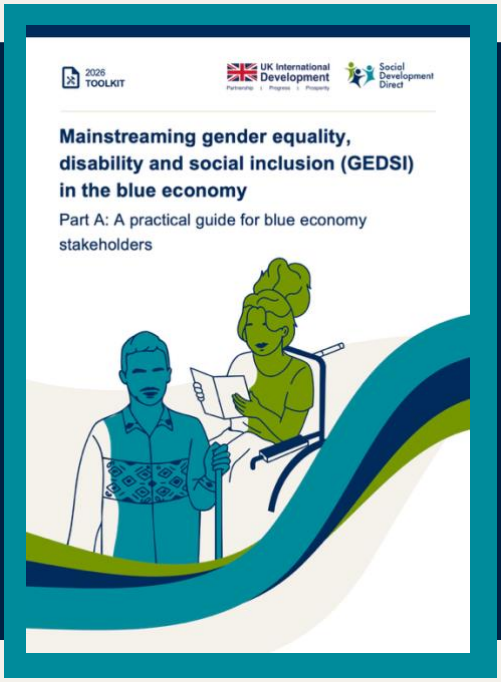
- **Tools and templates** for immediate application in blue economy work (which can be found in Part B).
- **Reflection questions** to deepen understanding and application, which can be used individually or as part of group work in training situations.

- **Real-world case studies** demonstrating successful GEDSI mainstreaming, from OCPP countries. Each case study references the relevant principles of inclusive action (PINA) that were considered.

Figure 1: Overview of the toolkit

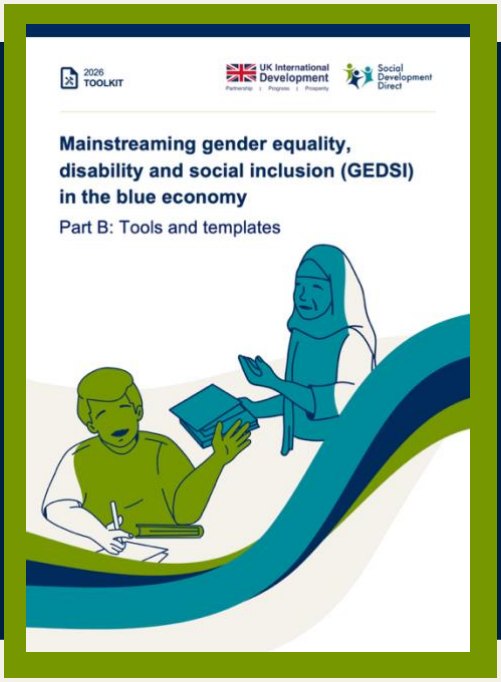
Part A
Practical guidance

- GEDSI concepts and strategy
- What is GEDSI mainstreaming
- Analysing the context
- Mainstreaming GEDSI in your work



Part B
Tools and templates

- Reference guides and working templates
- Practical and applicable
- Adaptable to contexts, programmes and organisations



There are a number of icons throughout this toolkit to help users navigate through the document.

References practical tools that support GEDSI mainstreaming which can be found in Part B of this toolkit.

Signposts users to additional information and further reading.

Practitioner tips

Reflection questions

Case studies

1. Introducing gender equality, disability and social inclusion – key concepts and strategy

To understand GEDSI, first it is important to understand social inclusion and social exclusion.

1.1. What is inclusion?

Social inclusion is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society, improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity or social characteristics. It involves recognising and respecting their human rights and removing barriers to their full and equal participation and inclusion. In short, social inclusion is about evening the playing field by making the 'rules of the game' fairer.

1.2. What is exclusion?

Social exclusion is the process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged (for example, denied resources, rights, opportunities or recognition) because they are discriminated against on the basis of their identity or social characteristics.

1.3. What is GEDSI and why is it important?

GEDSI is an approach that ensures all people and groups in society can fully participate in and benefit equally from development, regardless of their gender, disability, age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, migration or displacement status, or other social characteristics (DFAT, 2023; OECD-DAC, 2023; FCDO, DEFRA and DESNZ, 2025).

However, GEDSI recognises that some people and groups in society, including women and girls, people with disabilities, black and ethnic minority people, Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQI+ people, older people, and youth, often face barriers to inclusion that prevent them from:

- Participating in decisions that affect them.
- Accessing power, information, resources and services.
- Benefiting equally from community programmes.
- Claiming their human rights.

Many people experience multiple and overlapping forms of inequality and discrimination based on their different identities and social characteristics which increase the barriers they face to inclusion. For example, women with disabilities can experience barriers to inclusion because of their gender and their disability, and potentially other factors too. This is known as intersectionality and responding to this is known as taking an intersectional approach.[3]

Figure 2: What are the key GEDSI concepts?

GEDSI consists of three distinct but related concepts:

- **Gender equality** aims to remove the unequal power relations between women, men and different gender identities in the pursuit of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all.
- **Disability inclusion** is the process of ensuring the meaningful participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in all their diversity and ensuring equal access to, and the promotion and mainstreaming of, their rights and opportunities.
- **Social inclusion** is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society, improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity. It involves recognising and respecting their human rights and removing barriers to their full and equal participation and inclusion.

GEDSI is both:

- **An analytical tool** to understand how women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups experience discrimination, inequality, and exclusion differently.
- **A practical approach** to addressing these discriminations, inequalities and exclusions through targeted actions focused on promoting inclusion.

[3] Intersectionality is a term that was first used in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw in relation to her experience of race and sex-based employment discrimination. It describes the way that people's multiple and overlapping experiences of discrimination intersect with each other to create unique experiences of oppression.

1.4. What are the links between safeguarding, do no harm and GEDSI?

When working with people and groups with less power in society, and on issues of inequality and discrimination, it is important to carefully consider the risks of harm they might face by taking part. It is well known that even programmes and interventions with the best of intentions can leave people significantly worse off unless they have been carefully planned, implemented and monitored.

This GEDSI mainstreaming toolkit is focused on the inclusion of women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups, all of whom are vulnerable to a broad spectrum of harms and risks (sexual, physical and emotional). The toolkit therefore takes a wider definition of safeguarding as follows:

> Safeguarding means preventing harm to people in the delivery of development and humanitarian assistance. This toolkit understands safeguarding as taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm from occurring both to the recipients of project services and to people delivering it, and responding appropriately when harm occurs. This includes identifying, mitigating and reducing risk of harm as part of an overall safeguarding approach. This toolkit pays particular attention to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) in line with the **UK Government's strategy on safeguarding against SEAH within the aid sector.**

It is therefore critical that organisations, governments, and individuals:

- Understand the principles of **'do no harm'** and **'leave no-one behind'** and conduct regular risk assessments to ensure concerns are identified and addressed, especially when working on GEDSI.
- Understand SEAH risks, which disproportionately affect those with less power in society, including women, children, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. When used as an umbrella term within the development and humanitarian sector, the term refers to SEAH perpetrated by those working in, or with, development and humanitarian organisations and within Peacekeeping Missions (RSH, 2021).

- Familiarise themselves and start putting in place policies and procedures in relation to the **Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (CAPSEAH)**.
- Understand that safeguarding harms can be wide-ranging and include SEAH, physical violence, discrimination, bullying, harassment and emotional or psychological abuse.
- Consider broader harms that women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups might experience and respond appropriately, recognising that all these harms are driven by power differentials, inequalities and discrimination based on people's identity and social characteristics.
- Understand safety concerns for children, including children with disabilities, and what procedures organisations need to put in place to ensure programmes and initiatives are safe for children that either live in communities where interventions are happening or that actively take part in activities.

Further reading:

- **Bitesize: Understanding SEAH and GBV** (Resource and Safeguarding Hub, 2021): a short guide setting out definitions of SEAH and GBV, looking at the causes, perpetrators, victims-survivors, the overlapping risks, and how organisations address SEAH and GBV.
- **UK Strategy: Safeguarding against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the Aid Sector** (UK Government, 2020).
- **Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (CAPSEAH)** (Resource and Safeguarding Hub, 2024): this resource sets out what CAPSEAH at is it, why is it important and expected minimum actions.
- **International Child Safeguarding Standards** (Keeping Children Safe, 2024): guidance on the global child safeguarding standards including guidance on how to implement them.
- **Safeguarding children with disabilities - Disability-inclusive child safeguarding guidelines** (Watters, L., and Orsander, M. 2021): guidelines provide advice on how to plan for disability-inclusive child safeguarding, with practical solutions for organisations and practitioners working across development and humanitarian sectors on how to include children with disabilities in each step of the process.
- **ADB Environmental and Social Framework** (Asian Development Bank, 2024): a comprehensive safeguards framework governing environmental protection, social inclusion, stakeholder engagement, and grievance mechanisms in development projects. This can be used as a reference standard for large-scale or infrastructure-related projects, and not necessarily as a hands-on toolkit.

2. What is GEDSI mainstreaming?

2.1. What is GEDSI mainstreaming?

Mainstreaming GEDSI is the **systematic process of integrating gender equality, disability inclusion, and social inclusion** through every stage of a programme or project (design, implementation, and MEL) to ensure no-one is left behind. It is a comprehensive approach to any planned action, including legislation, policy development, diplomacy, and includes understanding the specific needs, situations, priorities and potential impacts on different social groups, with a particular focus on those who experience marginalisation, discrimination, inequality and exclusion, including women and girls, people with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, LGBTQI+ people and other groups. It is a strategy for making the concerns of these groups an integral part of the work.

Mainstreaming GEDSI helps those working in and with the sector understand the social context in which blue economy programmes and projects operate, so that:

- All community members can participate in decisions (inclusive decision-making).
- Programme benefits reach everyone fairly.
- Interventions are informed by the knowledge and skills of all community members.

2.2. Why does GEDSI matter?

Mainstreaming GEDSI in the blue economy is important because it can contribute to **more equitable and sustainable outcomes** for people, the climate and nature, and ensures programme benefits are experienced more equitably by all members of the community by focusing on addressing inequalities and do no harm.

GEDSI mainstreaming is also an essential approach for **strengthening inclusive biodiversity action**, helping to ensure that women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups can participate meaningfully, influence decisions on issues that affect them, and strengthen their leadership in marine, biodiversity and climate action. It directly supports the principles for inclusive nature action (see **Box 1**).

Box 1: How GEDSI mainstreaming supports the principles for inclusive nature action

Principles for inclusive nature action	GEDSI mainstreaming supports the integration of the principles by:
1. Recognise and respect rights	Ensuring that the human rights of all people are recognised and respected, with a particular focus on the rights of people who have been historically marginalised.
2. Devolve decision-making and strengthen local leadership	Enabling full and equal participation of women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups and making sure they are not excluded from decision-making by creating accessible engagement mechanisms.
3. Recognise and address structural and intersectional inequalities	Helping identify structural barriers that limit opportunities for women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups; recognising power imbalances that affect their access to resources and decision-making; transforming discriminatory norms that perpetuate gender inequality, disability inequality and other inequalities and exclusions; ensuring equitable benefit-sharing across different social groups.
4. Encourage flexible, adaptive biodiversity programming	Keeping a focus on inclusion and exclusion throughout all stages of the programme and project cycle; understanding the changing external environment and how that impacts on women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups differently; supporting meaningful participation and leadership of different social groups and sharing power with them.
5. Provide direct, patient, flexible, predictable and accessible funding	Helping identify different social groups who are marginalised and excluded and supporting their inclusion, including through appropriate funding mechanisms.
6. Recognise the mutual value of scientific, and local and traditional knowledge	Valuing diverse knowledge and perspectives from all social groups and members of society, with a particular focus on those who have been historically marginalised.

7. Promote collaborative and coherent action and investment	Identifying different stakeholders who support inclusion, as well as those who are blocking progress, and understanding who has power and who does not; helping identify stakeholders and allies to partner with that can support the leadership of women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups.
8. Safeguard local actors, beyond do no harm	Helping to avoid reinforcing inequalities and do no harm, particularly for those who experience marginalisation and exclusion, including women and girls, people with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, LGBTQI+ people, children and youth.

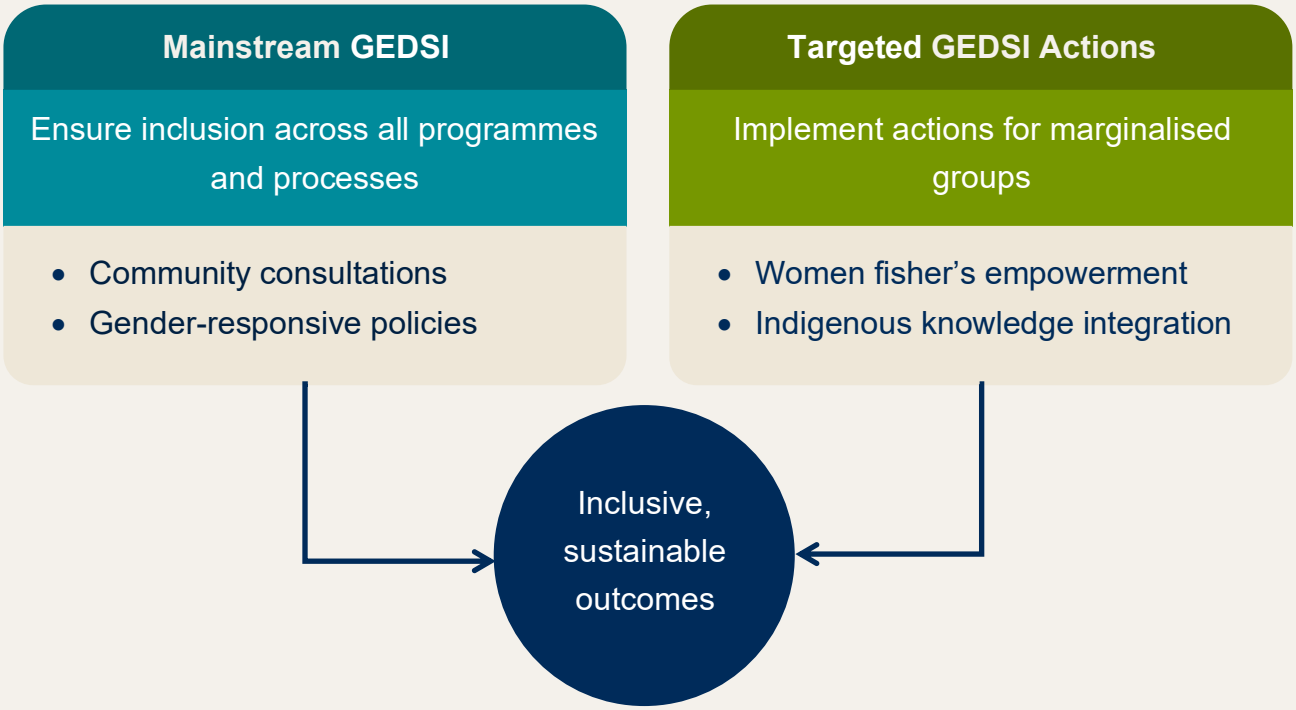
Further reading:

- **GEDSI mainstreaming in practice: safety, integrity and social justice** (Social Development Direct, 2026): provides practical guidance on GEDSI mainstreaming showing how to move from strong analysis to lasting change in policies, systems and programmes.
- **Principles for inclusive nature action:** Eight principles have been developed to drive gender-responsive, locally-led, rights-based approaches to sustainably using, protecting and restoring global biodiversity.
- **UK International Climate Finance Guidance Note for Delivery Partners: Integration of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion** (FCDO, DESNZ and DEFRA, 2025): provides guidance for the integration of GEDSI into all ICF programming.
- **UNDP Social and Environmental Standards Toolkit** (UNDP, 2021): a toolkit for staff, partners and stakeholders which contains information on social and environmental standards, including guidance, resources and tools.

2.3. How does mainstreaming work with standalone approaches?

This toolkit focuses on GEDSI mainstreaming in blue economy programmes and projects, ensuring that GEDSI considerations are meaningfully integrated throughout the programme and project cycle. However, a twin track approach is also essential in addressing inequalities for women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups, with the need for programmes and projects dedicated to achieving impacts for particular social groups working alongside GEDSI mainstreaming (see **Figure 3** below).

Figure 3: Twin-track GEDSI approach in the blue economy



CASE STUDY 1

Using a twin track approach in the Maldives

Women in Fuvahmulah (WIF) is a local NGO based on the island of Fuvahmulah in the Maldives that integrates GEDSI into community climate action as part of their work. They recognise that on their island, people with visual impairments, limited mobility, or less access to information such as young people and people with disabilities, are disproportionately affected by climate change. WIF therefore ensures that these groups

are meaningfully involved in climate awareness, research, and adaptation planning exercises they conduct.

All of WIF's climate awareness, research, and adaptation activities are designed to be inclusive from the outset. Sessions use accessible communication methods, encourage broad participation, and promote shared learning, behaviour change, and civic engagement, ensuring that climate action activities are open and relevant to the wider community.

At the same time, WIF takes deliberate steps to engage groups who are often excluded from community decision-making. Through targeted outreach, youth participate in tailored climate literacy sessions, while disability-inclusive measures include barrier-free venues, adapted learning tools, caregiver support where needed, and safe spaces for dialogue.

These efforts have enabled people with disabilities to share lived experiences of climate risks, including challenges related to evacuation, access to water, communication during emergencies, and personal safety during disasters. Their input has helped shape more responsive and practical local climate actions.

By combining inclusive programme design with focused support for marginalised groups, WIF ensures that those most affected by climate change are active contributors to community climate action rather than passive participants.

Source: Direct information from WIF.

Relevant principles for inclusive nature action considered in this case study:

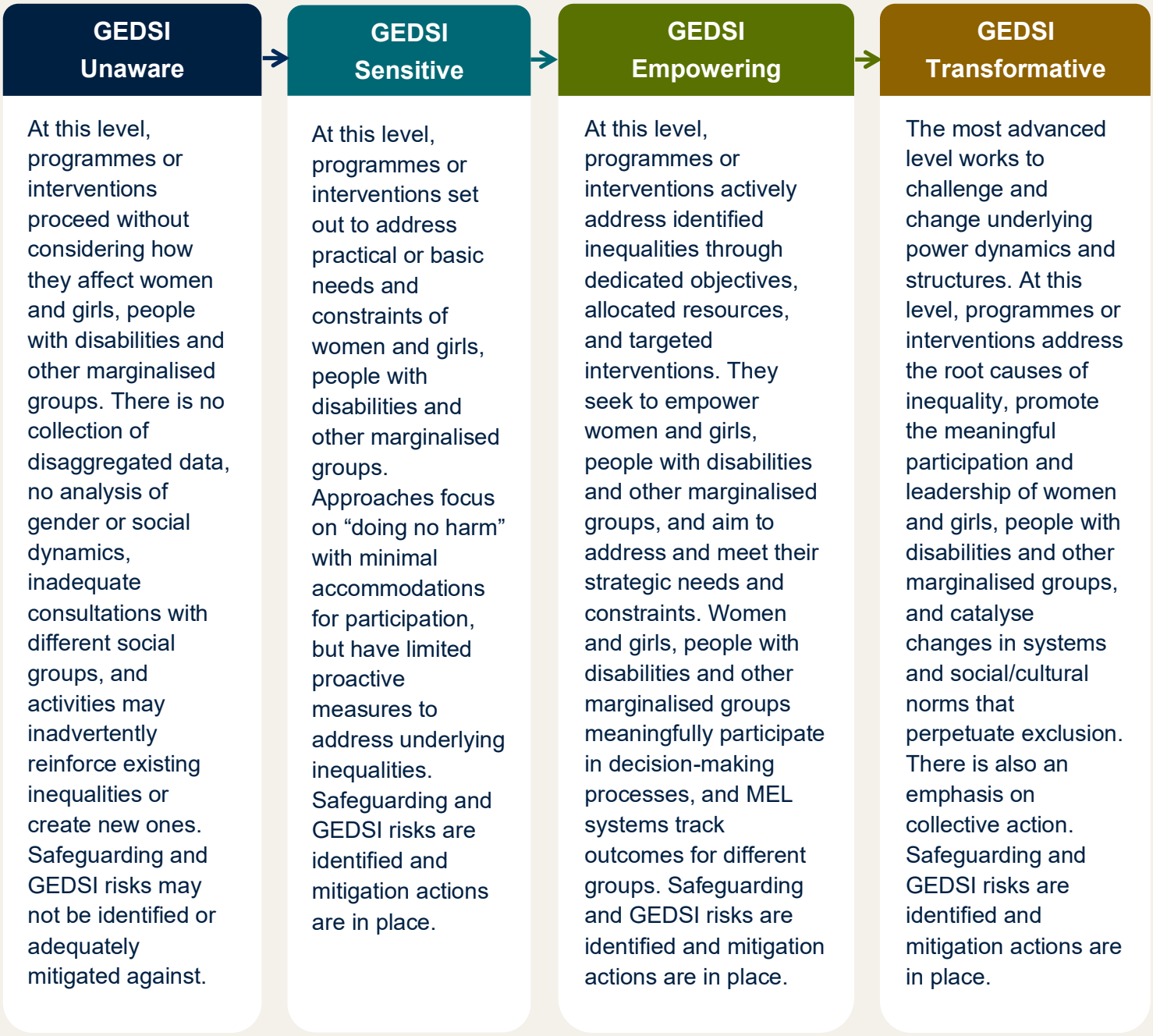
- Recognise and respect rights.
- Devolve decision-making and strengthen local leadership.
- Recognise and address structural and intersectional inequalities.
- Encourage flexible, adaptive biodiversity programming.

2.4. How do we track GEDSI mainstreaming?

The GEDSI responsiveness continuum provides a structured approach to understanding and measuring how GEDSI can be incorporated into blue economy sector work at different levels. This continuum draws on international best practice, including **standards set out by the UK Government for all ICF programmes**, and has been adapted for this toolkit.

Figure 4: The GEDSI responsiveness continuum

The GEDSI integration framework has four levels that show how you can move from being unaware of GEDSI issues to making real change:



Adapted from: FCDO, DESNZ and DEFRA (2025) **UK International Climate Finance (ICF) gender equality, disability and social inclusion guidance**; SDDirect (2023) GEDSI Analysis How to Guide; JEA Consultancy (2025) GEDSI mainstreaming handbook for the Maldives.

Organisations, programmes, or projects can move from one end of the continuum to the other. Not every project, programme or organisation needs to move immediately to the transformative end, as that may not be safe or appropriate. See **Section 3** for more detail about assessing where your organisation is on the continuum, and **Tools 3** and **4** to help you progress).

2.5. Risks of not mainstreaming GEDSI

Without a GEDSI approach, blue economy programmes, and projects risk:

- Reinforcing existing inequalities by maintaining the status quo and deferring to established power structures.
- Overlooking, or not recognising the specific needs and rights of women, people with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, LGBTQI+ people and other marginalised groups.
- Missing valuable insights from diverse perspectives and knowledge systems.
- Identifying solutions that may work for some groups but exclude others.
- Limiting sustainability by failing to build broad community ownership.

As well as risks of not mainstreaming GEDSI, there are also risks associated with mainstreaming GEDSI (for example, in relation to safeguarding and backlash and resistance in communities where the status quo is being challenged). These risks should be properly considered when you are carrying out a GEDSI analysis and planning your intervention and mitigations put in place, as well as regularly monitored and reviewed (see **Sections 3 and 4** for more detail).

3. Analysing GEDSI context

Before designing any blue economy programme or project, it is important to understand and analyse the social context in which you are operating. You can do this by carrying out a GEDSI analysis. This section helps you assess programme's or project's readiness, community dynamics, identify which social groups may be experiencing structural marginalisation, or would be most impacted by the programme or project, as well as your organisation's capacity to work in an inclusive way. It will help you build the evidence base for more inclusive interventions.

3.1. What is a GEDSI analysis?

A GEDSI analysis is a piece of research that helps you understand how power relations, social norms, attitudes and beliefs shape and impact the opportunities, rights, services, and resources available to different social groups, as well as their experiences of discrimination and poverty (Social Development Direct, 2023). This is critical in being able to assess inequalities and social exclusion, tackle rather than perpetuate inequalities, remove barriers and leave no-one behind (FCDO, DESNZ and DEFRA, 2025).

There are different ways in which to carry out a GEDSI analysis and at different levels, requiring different resources and timeframes. For example, a GEDSI analysis can be in-depth and involve dialogue and consultations with stakeholders and community groups (primary research through interviews and focus groups discussions) or it can be more light touch (for example, only carrying out secondary research through a literature review). The more in-depth and participatory the analysis is the more you will understand the social context in which you are operating. A participatory approach with primary research is particularly useful in low resource settings, where there is often less publicly available data, for example on people with disabilities and LGBTQI+ people (CMB Global, 2025). In addition, a GEDSI analysis can be carried out at a national, regional or programme-wide level, as well as at an individual project level.

A GEDSI analysis explicitly aims to explore gender inequality and disability inequality as two of the core components, however it should also look at other inequalities relevant to the context. It should also include some analysis of stakeholders and power dynamics. It is important to use findings to ensure that, as a minimum, the programme or project does no harm and does not reinforce gender, disability, and other inequalities. Whilst GEDSI analysis is best conducted at the start of a programme to inform design, it can also be done on an ongoing basis to inform strategy testing and adaptation. Carrying out a GEDSI analysis will ensure blue economy programmes and projects are inclusive and responsive

to the needs and priorities of women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups.

Sample research questions to consider for a GEDSI analysis are included in **Tool 1** in Part B of this toolkit, alon gside different ways in which you can collect this information.

Tool 1:
GEDSI analysis sample research questions

3.2. Key research principles

There are a number of key research principles to guide you as you carry out a GEDSI analysis (Social Development Direct, 2023). These are:

- **Meaningful engagement of civil society**. Emphasise the importance and benefits of meaningful, non-extractive engagement of local experts. Civil society – including women's rights organisations (WROs) and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) – are best placed to advise on what lines of enquiry to follow and how best to gather information.
- **Taking an intersectional approach**. Avoid presenting and treating different groups as the same and understand that people have multiple and overlapping experiences of discrimination and inequality.
- **Collaboration and ownership**. It is important that intended users of the GEDSI analysis are engaged in the research from the beginning to gain their buy-in and ensure the analysis meets their needs.
- **Inclusion and accessibility**. Take an inclusive approach to research and stakeholder engagement, deploying participatory methods and tools, and a commitment to understanding the diverse needs of people in any given context.
- **Survivor-centred approach.** Be sensitive of survivors needs and wishes, and apply this approach in all work on gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls, other forms of violence and SEAH.
- **Ethics and safeguarding**. Adhere to ethical research principles, have in place safeguarding policies in line with CAPSEAH, and code of conduct to ensure the dignity, health and well-being of all individuals and groups that participate in the research.

CASE STUDY 2

Using GEDSI analysis to understand the impact of environmental degradation and discrimination on the Indigenous Garifuna Peoples in Belize

In the southern coastal communities in Belize live the Garifuna Indigenous Peoples' group. They have strong ties to the local marine environment, but face high levels of exclusion, including racial stereotyping stemming from colonisation and institutional racism, and are currently navigating survival amidst climate change and environmental degradation.

Research has found that they are currently facing a number of interrelated challenges including:

- Instances whereby their coastal lands have been taken away and developed without just and proper processes, highlighting the importance of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
- Consistently being excluded from access to natural resources and are forced to assimilate to mainstream culture.
- Wider environmental impacts such as high water temperatures, lack of mangroves, and lack of prey sources causing increased crocodile attacks to pets and humans, and leading to increased fear of wildlife among Garifuna communities. While the Garifuna used to respect crocodiles, assimilation, lack of education, and lack of opportunity to preserve traditional environmental management processes has led to a loss of this cultural heritage.

This highlights the importance of addressing structural inequalities and urgently improve the voice and leadership by Indigenous People in marine conservation initiatives.

Source: Rosenfeld, A., Grant, E., and Broaster, K. (2025) **OCPP GEDSI Analysis: Belize**

Relevant principles for inclusive nature action considered in this case study:

- Recognise and respect rights.
- Devolve decision-making and strengthen local leadership.
- Recognise and address structural and intersectional inequalities.

Further reading:

- **Disability in GEDSI analysis: Quick reference guide** (CBM Global, 2025): a guide to help practitioners ensure that disability equity and rights are adequately addressed in GEDSI analysis.
- **Gender, Inclusion, Power, and Politics Analysis Toolkit** (Social Development Direct and Christian Aid, 2021): this toolkit integrates traditional Political Economy Analysis (PEA) with GEDSI analysis and involves several lines of enquiry including problem identification, contextual analysis, systemic analysis, systems mapping, stakeholder dialogue, power, and exclusion analysis. It provides a complete toolkit with participatory approaches and tools to be used at appropriate points during programme design and implementation.
- **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Manual** (United Nations, 2016): a tool for practitioners which provides information about the right to FPIC and how it can be implemented in six steps.

3.3. Organisational-level GEDSI analysis

As well as carrying out a GEDSI analysis for programmes and projects, understanding your organisation's readiness to work inclusively is essential for successful GEDSI mainstreaming. To do this, it is important to know what your organisation can do well and where it needs to improve (OECD-DAC, 2023; UNDP, 2022; DFAT, 2023). Identifying these strengths and areas for development will help your organisation plan how to further improve its ability to effectively mainstream GEDSI considerations across your programmes and projects and within your organisation. The following steps can help you do this:

- **Step 1**: Assess your organisation's level of readiness by looking at key areas of policies and leadership, staff and resources and current practices (**Tool 2**).
- **Step 2**: Assess where you are on the GEDSI responsiveness continuum (**Tools 3** and **4**).
- **Step 3**: Once that is complete, identify what steps you could take to help your organisation progress to the next level (**Tool 5**).

Practitioner tip!

When conducting your assessment:

- Involve staff from different teams and levels for multiple perspectives
- Be honest about current practices rather than aspirational goal
- Look for concrete evidence to support your ratings

Tool 2: Organisational-level readiness questions

Tool 3: GEDSI responsiveness continuum assessment

Tool 4: Self-assessment matrix

Tool 5: Moving across the GEDSI responsiveness continuum

Here is an example of how an organisation in Mozambique decided to take action to improve inclusion and diversity within their own workforce.

CASE STUDY 3

Improving equality, diversity, and inclusion within organisations to support GEDSI mainstreaming in Madagascar

The Turtle Survival Alliance in Madagascar has employed mostly male staff since it began operating. In order to address this imbalance and reach more women and other excluded groups, the organisation developed an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy (EDI policy) two years ago. Since then, the organisation has made significant progress, including recruitment of women into key leadership positions such as Head of Vet Support. All project managers are now also women. However, at the community level efforts to improve diversity have been a bit slower. While both men and women volunteer, the jobs they do are very different. Men still dominate in activities working with national authorities and to prevent and arrest traffickers. For these jobs, the organisation uses criteria to identify individuals which are applied by local authorities. Women volunteers are more likely to be found in confiscation, care, and the reintroduction of turtles. This is in line with the local community norms that still dictate that leadership

positions, and those with perceived higher status should be held by men, with women playing supporting roles.

Source: Direct information from the Turtle Survival Alliance, Madagascar.

Relevant principles for inclusive nature action considered in this case study:

- Recognise and respect rights.
- Devolve decision-making and strengthen local leadership.

Reflection questions:

- Have you carried out a GEDSI analysis for your programme or project? If not, how would you go about doing one (noting there are different approaches you can take)?
- At which level is your organisation currently operating on the GEDSI responsiveness continuum?
- What would be the first step toward moving to the next level?
- What resources would you need to achieve this? (e.g. funding, people, skills, information, time etc).

4. Mainstreaming GEDSI in your work

Now you understand GEDSI concepts and principles and understand the context in which the programme or project will operate, this section shows you how to put GEDSI into practice in your blue economy programmes and projects, including responding to the findings from your GEDSI analysis. It looks at what you need to do to effectively plan, implement and monitor, evaluate and learn from GEDSI in your work.

4.1. Planning

Effective planning is the foundation for successfully integrating GEDSI principles into blue economy interventions. This section provides a systematic approach on how to integrate GEDSI into your programme or project (World Bank, 2024; UNEP, 2022). Tool 6 sets out all the different steps to consider to effectively plan GEDSI mainstreaming; it is important to view this at the start of the planning process.

Box 2: Using the findings from your GEDSI analysis to plan your intervention

Make a commitment and develop a GEDSI action plan (Tool 7)

- Develop a clear vision or ambition statement for how GEDSI will improve your blue economy work.
- Develop a GEDSI action plan which:
    - Sets out specific, measurable commitments that address GEDSI gaps identified in your analysis.
    - Assigns responsibilities and agree timelines for GEDSI actions.
    - Creates accountability mechanisms to monitor progress.

Plan inclusive engagement (Tools 8 and 9)

- Map all stakeholders with emphasis on women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups (updating information you collected about stakeholders during your GEDSI analysis).
- Design engagement approaches that address barriers to participation.
- Create multiple pathways for people to get involved.

- Ensure engagement is meaningful, not just tokenistic or one-off consultation.

Design for inclusion

- Integrate the findings into your programme or project's Theory of Change, or project logic model.
- Be clear what GEDSI problem/s your intervention is trying to address and how different social groups will be impacted.
- Develop strategies for enabling participation (**Tool 10**).
- Identify ethical and safeguarding risks and ensure you plan to do no harm (**Tool 11**).
- Identify potential partnerships with those who can influence or will be affected by your programme or project.
- Set objectives that explicitly address GEDSI dimensions.
- Plan activities that promote inclusion for women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups and ensure these are accessible to all (**Tool 12**).
- Allocate adequate resources for GEDSI mainstreaming, including in relation to accessibility (Tool **15**).
- Develop monitoring systems that track GEDSI outcomes (see **Section 4.3** for further guidance; and **Tool 16, Tool 17, Tool 18, Tool 19**).

Addressing barriers to participation

Women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups face unique barriers to participating in blue economy interventions. The table below outlines some of the common barriers to inclusion that can arise in programmes and projects, and practical strategies to address them. Use **Tool 8** to further map out barriers for specific stakeholders following your GEDSI analysis.

Barrier	Examples	Enabling Strategies
Gender norms barriers	Restrictions on women's mobility; male-dominated public forums	Work with local leaders to address concerns; create separate spaces when

		appropriate; highlight benefits of women's participation; identify male allies
Communication barriers	Barriers to obtaining informed consent; inaccessible activities; limited and inaccessible communication formats; technical terminology; language and literacy barriers	Understand informed consent risks and design processes inclusively; carry out an accessibility audit; design and budget for inclusion (for example, develop accessible materials, share information in multiple formats, not only visual or auditory); use person-centred communication methods; employ local facilitators and sign language interpreters; translate materials; avoid jargon
Physical accessibility barriers	Inaccessible buildings; challenging coastal terrain; limited accessible transportation	Choose accessible venues; provide transportation support; create virtual participation options; modify physical environments
Economic barriers	Opportunity costs of participation; transportation expenses	Schedule around economic activities; provide stipends when appropriate; cover transportation costs; keep meetings efficient
Intersectional barriers	Multiple disadvantages experienced simultaneously (e.g., older women from rural areas, youth with disabilities)	Conduct targeted outreach to identify specific needs; create tailored participation pathways; provide comprehensive support packages; ensure representation of diverse perspectives in planning groups

Use **Tool 9** to identify ways in which you can engage with specific stakeholders and **Tool 10** to identify strategies for responding to the barriers you have identified for each group. Use **Tool 12** to assess the accessibility of your planned activities and at the end of your planning phase revisit **Tool 6** to check you have completed all the planning steps.

Tool 6: GEDSI mainstreaming planning checklist

Tool 7: GEDSI action planning template

Tool 8: Stakeholder mapping matrix template

Tool 9: Practical engagement methods

Tool 10: Strategies for enabling participation template

Tool 11: Risk assessment to review ethical risks including do no harm and safeguarding

Tool 12: Accessibility audit template

Here is an example of how the Government of Sri Lanka took action to address gender-based violence (GBV) in the fisheries sector following research and analysis on the issue in the country.

CASE STUDY 4

Using contextual understanding to address GBV in the fisheries sector in Sri Lanka

Research has found high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) across Sri Lanka including in communities, workplaces, transportation and in coastal communities and the fisheries sector. For example, high levels of domestic violence in coastal areas, sexual harassment and other safety issues for women working in seafood processing plants or shrimp farms as well as 'sex for fish,' where economic hardship push women to engage in sexual relationships with commercial fishers, particularly those who own boats or provide loans with interest.

To address some of these issues, the Government of Sri Lanka developed a Multi-Sectoral National Action Plan to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) covering the period 2024-2028. Addressing GBV within the fisheries sector is a significant part of the plan and is mentioned multiple times in the document's theory of

change and across each of the four goals including in relation to indicators and budget allocations.

Source: Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (2024). **Multi-Sectoral National Action Plan to Address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Sri Lanka – II, 2024-2028;** Kangas, A., Ksiazek, I. and Deshapriya, U. (2025) **OCPP GEDSI Analysis: Sri Lanka**.

Relevant principles for inclusive nature action considered in this case study:

- Recognise and respect rights.
- Promote collaborative and coherent action and investment.
- Safeguard local actors, beyond 'do no harm.'

Here are some examples of how you can plan for inclusive engagement and support local leadership for inclusive nature action. The next two case studies show how the GEDSI analysis led to slightly different approaches to working with women in across Senegal and Ghana.

CASE STUDY 5

How inclusive engagement supported illiterate women in the post-harvest value chain in Senegal

In Senegal there is strong gender segregation within the fisheries sector, with men predominantly operating in the capture sector and handling the physical aspects of fishing at sea, while women largely dominate the post-harvest value chain, including processing, preservation, and marketing of fish products. Many of the women who do this work are illiterate and have limited voice and decision-making power. The **Collaborative Management for a Sustainable Fisheries Future project** was designed to empower women and strengthen their role across fishery value chains, focusing particularly on the fish processing roles most associated with women. 19 women-led fish processor organisations across 12 Local Artisanal Fisheries Councils participated in the project and developed a code of ethics to govern trade. Recognising that this would not be accessible to most women due to high levels of illiteracy, the code was translated into songs, lyrics, dances, and folklore to ensure accessibility. The project also supported women's functional literacy, improved knowledge of processing techniques and facilitated access to trade fairs. In addition, a women's declaration for the fisheries sector was developed which called for decision makers to acknowledge the roles that women play and a strategy and action plan was developed to ensure the goals were achieved.

Source: Watkins, A., Soldà, L., Ouedraogo, S. (2025) **OCPP GEDSI Analysis: Senegal;** Siegel, P., Diop, M., Tall, A., Fox, A., Jolley, J. (2015) **Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Collaborative Management of a Sustainable Fisheries Future in Senegal Project,**

Relevant principles for inclusive nature action considered in this case study:

- Recognise and respect rights.
- Devolve decision-making and strengthen local leadership.

CASE STUDY 6

Strengthening women's voices and collective action in Ghana's fisheries sector

Between 2014 and 2019 the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project in Ghana worked to improve women's participation and leadership in the fisheries sector. This was done through a two-pronged approach. First supporting the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development to develop Ghana's first National Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2016) for the fisheries sector and secondly supporting women's collective action.

The strategy aimed to institutionalise women's participation by requiring their inclusion in co-management committees, mandating gender-disaggregated data collection, and training fisheries officers in gender-sensitive outreach and monitoring. At the local level action included supporting local "Fisher-to-Fisher" dialogues, community sensitisation campaigns and working with specifically excluded groups such as those working in post-harvest processing to improve their collective action. Despite being central to the fisheries value chain, this group has historically been excluded from decision-making. The project helped establish and strengthen associations such as the Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association, the Development Action Association, and the National Fish Processors and Traders Association, through which women were able to speak out against illegal fishing practices and promote sustainable fisheries management alongside. By the project's third year 62% of participants in the programme were women and they were supported to take part in national consultations and share their perspectives. Despite this, while the initiative led to improved representation of women in local livelihood meetings, women continued to be underrepresented in policy and science discussions, limiting their ability to influence technical fisheries governance. Unfortunately, following programme closure some

women's associations lacked the capacity to sustain advocacy roles after project closeout, demonstrating the importance of consistent funding.

Source: Torell, E., Bilecki, D., Owusu, A., Crawford, B., Beran, K., & Kent, K. (2019). **Assessing the Impacts of Gender Integration in Ghana's Fisheries Sector**. Coastal Management, 47(6), 507-526, cited in Hudson, A. (2025) GESI Best Practices Case Study Report.

Relevant principles for inclusive nature action considered in this case study:

- Recognise and respect rights.
- Devolve decision-making and strengthen local leadership.
- Recognise the mutual value of scientific, and local and traditional knowledge.

4.2. Implementation

Implementation is the means by which GEDSI commitments can be transformed into tangible actions that aim to advance both equality and blue economy goals. This section covers how to make GEDSI work in practice (UNEP, 2022; World Bank, 2024; DFAT, 2023).

Box 3: Implementing GEDSI - what you need to do

Build institutional support (**Tool 13**)

- Secure visible commitment from senior leadership.
- Establish accountability mechanisms at all levels.
- Create GEDSI champions across different departments.
- Embed GEDSI in formal policies and procedures.

Develop staff capacity (Tool 14)

- Provide GEDSI awareness training for all staff.
- Offer specialised technical training for key roles.
- Create ongoing support systems and mentoring.
- Build practical skills through practical implementation and shadowing.

Create enabling environments

- Ensure meeting venues are accessible to all.
- Schedule activities at times when diverse groups can participate.
- Provide necessary support (childcare, transportation, interpretation).
- Establish respectful communication that value diverse perspectives.

Build partnerships

- Connect with national and local civil society organisations, including WROs and OPDs.
- Partner with community-based organisations (CBOs) for better reach.
- Collaborate with other agencies working on similar issues.
- Create networks for sharing knowledge and resources.

Manage resources effectively (Tool 15)

- Allocate adequate budget for GEDSI activities.
- Include GEDSI costs in all programme budgets.
- Track spending to ensure resources reach intended groups.
- Adjust resource allocation based on learning.

Tool 13: Change management matrix

Tool 14: Capacity development matrix

Tool 15: GEDSI-responsive budget template

The following case study shows the experience of an aquaculture company on building widespread capacity on gender equality across staff including at both leadership level and different teams.

CASE STUDY 7

Aquapesca's experience of improving gender in corporate processes and staff capacity in Mozambique

Aquapesca, a company working on organic aquaculture in Mozambique, has been supported by the NGO Muva to go on a transformative journey to improve women's participation within corporate structures and improve their work with local communities. The work began by conducting a rapid assessment to understand the challenges for greater gender inclusion in the company. From this a change maker group was established and trained to become champions of inclusion and gender equality, working in conjunction with colleagues and leadership to take forward processes within the company to advance gender inclusion. Following on from training for the change maker group and leadership, participatory action plans were developed. These were then translated into changes in institutional practices and policies covering personal and professional development, health and well-being, maternity and paternity and inclusive leadership and approved by leadership. Working groups were established, comprising diverse members from the company, and responsible for developing the specific details of their assigned actions.

Some of the key results from the initiative include:

- Changes in the communication of vacancies and recruitment process to encourage the inclusion of women in different work positions.
- Dissemination of maternity and paternity policies for staff awareness.
- Improvement of staff equipment for health and safety.
- New multi-sector working groups for more inclusivity in decision making.
- Creation of a physical mural for inclusive communication about companies key information and opportunities.
- Implementation of new activities in the community for better relationships, support and communication.

Source: Cardoni, J. (2025) **Navigating a Transformative Journey for Diversity and Gender Inclusion in an Aquaculture Enterprise**,

Relevant principles for inclusive nature action considered in this case study:

- Recognise and respect rights.
- Devolve decision-making and strengthen local leadership.
- Recognise and address structural and intersectional inequalities.

Further reading:

- **Beyond Consultations: A tool to promote more meaningful engagement of women in fragile and conflict-affected states** (Gender Action for Peace and Security, 2019): this tool is designed to support actors to move towards more meaningful engagement with women in fragile and conflict-affected states, in response to feedback that many consultation exercises tend to be extractive, tokenistic and disempowering.
- **Disability in GEDSI analysis: Quick reference guide** (CBM Global, 2025): a guide to help practitioners ensure that disability equity and rights are adequately addressed in GEDSI analysis.
- **Environmental Justice Toolbox** (Southern California Association of Governments, 2021): a policy-orientated environmental justice toolbox which provides methods, recommended practices, and assessment approaches to support equity-focused environmental planning and decision-making. It contains a range of indicators and assessment approaches, provides a clear example of a “toolbox” style resource and can be used to inform GEDSI-aligned assessment and monitoring tools.

4.3. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning ensures that GEDSI principles are meaningfully integrated throughout blue economy programmes and projects and that you can track progress and improve your approach over time (OECD-DAC, 2019; DFAT, 2023; World Bank, 2024).

Box 4: Monitoring GEDSI - what you need to do

Develop GEDSI-responsive indicators, that are appropriately disaggregated (see menu at Tool 16)

- Ensure all existing programme indicators are appropriately disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and geography at a minimum.
- Create indicators that measure both participation numbers and quality of engagement. A list of example indicators is provided in **Tool 16** which projects / programmes could select from, or develop your own.
- Track changes at multiple levels (individual, community, institutional).
- Include indicators that capture experiences of women and girls, people with disabilities and other social groups (qualitative data).
- Monitor both intended benefits and potential negative impacts.

Use participatory monitoring approaches (Tools 17, 18, 19 and 20)

- Involve community members, especially women, people with disabilities and other social groups, in tracking progress.
- Build local capacity to contribute to and lead monitoring activities.
- Value different types of knowledge and expertise.
- Consider narrative or story telling tools, like Most Significant Change (**tool 19**), to explore different perspectives and perceptions.
- Create feedback mechanisms accessible to diverse stakeholders.

Collect data effectively over the course of programme implementation (see **Section 4.1** for further guidance on planning for data collection and **Section 4.2** for guidance on implementation)

- Use multiple methods: surveys for numbers, focus groups for deeper insights.
- Ensure data collection tools are accessible for different literacy levels and abilities.
- Collect and analyse data by gender, age, disability status, and location (see 'further reading' below for information on the **Washington Group Short Set on Functioning** for data collection and analysis on people with disabilities).
- Maintain ethical standards including informed consent and privacy protection.

Learn and adapt (Tool 19 and 20)

- Hold regular reflection sessions with diverse stakeholders.
- Document what works and what doesn't for GEDSI mainstreaming.
- Translate lessons into concrete changes to project activities.
- Share learning within and beyond your organisation.

Manage knowledge

- Capture both formal findings and informal insights.
- Store information in accessible formats for different users.
- Share learning through appropriate channels for different audiences.
- Ensure credit is given to knowledge contributions from women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups.

Tool 16: GEDSI sample indicators for inclusion in monitoring frameworks

Tool 17: Data collection and methodologies

Tool 18: Community-led data collection sample

Tool 19: Most significant change sample

Tool 20: GEDSI impact assessment questionnaire sample

Reflection questions:

- How are you using the findings from your GEDSI analysis to inform the design, implementation and MEL of your programme or project?
- What is working and what are you finding challenging?
- Whose voices are you listening to? Whose voices are missing?
- How might you address some of these challenges to ensure your programme or project is inclusive?
- How will you take a do no harm approach?

The below case study shows the importance of data in understanding how marginalised groups experience marine programmes and projects and the need to ensure critical data gaps are filled.

CASE STUDY 8

Insufficient data disaggregation contributing to the invisibility of people with disabilities in coastal communities

OCPP conducted national GEDSI analysis exploring biodiversity, sustainable seafood, and pollution in coastal areas across seven countries in 2025. Despite an estimated 16% of the global population living with a disability, none of the studies identified any significant data and information about people with disabilities in coastal areas. This lack

of data is effectively leaving a large population invisible and highly likely to be excluded from interventions and support to coastal communities.

There is thus an urgent need to improve data collection, accessibility, inclusion, and support to both organisations of people with disabilities and people with disabilities directly.

Source: Social Development Direct (2025), **OCPP GEDSI Analyses** in Bangladesh, Belize, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal and Sri Lanka.

Relevant principles for inclusive nature action considered in this case study:

- Recognise and respect rights.
- Devolve decision-making and strengthen local leadership.
- Recognise and address structural and intersectional inequalities.

This case study shows the importance of qualitative MEL to understand the impact on projects and programmes.

CASE STUDY 9

Using MEL to capture behavioural and gender outcomes in aquaculture training in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the Gender-Transformative Aquaculture Training project provided training to women on pond preparation, liming, fish stocking, feed management, and vegetable gardening. In addition, about a third of the time was also spent on structured gender reflection sessions. These included roleplay, community theatre, and household planning activities and addressed gender-based barriers such as control over income, limited mobility, intra-household decision-making, assertiveness, and equitable work distribution.

The project also worked with men and in-laws, highlighted by participants in focus group discussions as particularly helpful in challenging household resistance, reducing household conflict and enabling women to implement what they learned more easily as they understood the importance. Participants also reported improved communication with family members, greater confidence, and increased involvement in aquaculture decisions. One man also observed “After the training, the social status of the whole family, and my wife’s, increased. Villagers ask us about fish culture. That never happened before.”

Source: Torell, E., Bilecki, D., Owusu, A., Crawford, B., Beran, K., & Kent, K. (2019). Assessing the Impacts of Gender Integration in Ghana's Fisheries Sector. Coastal Management, 47(6), 507-526. **https://doi.org/10.1080/08920753.2019.1669098** page 173, cited in Hudson, A. (2025) GESI Best Practices Case Study Report, Cefas GESI Placement 2025.

Relevant principles for inclusive nature action considered in this case study:

- Recognise and respect rights.
- Devolve decision-making and strengthen local leadership.
- Recognise and address structural and intersectional inequalities.

Further reading:

- **Most significant change** (INTRAC, 2017): a resource for civil society explaining what the technique is, how it works, strengths and limitations, and how to use and adapt it.
- **Strategy Development: Most Significant Change** (ODI, 2009): a tool explaining how to use the technique for participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- **Washington Group Short Set on Functioning** (Washington Group on Disability Statistics, 2022): these are six questions that can be used to help identify and measure disability across different functional domains. They are practical questions which can be used during data collection and analysis, and help avoid the use of a binary 'Do you have a disability – Yes/No' question which can perpetuate stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities. It is important to use these questions safely and ethically to avoid doing harm and reinforcing inequalities.

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Annexes

Glossary of Terms

The table below presents a glossary of key terms used in this toolkit.

Accessibility	The design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with disabilities, ensuring equal access and participation.
Accessibility audit	A systematic review of physical spaces, materials, and processes to identify and address barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully.
Adaptation	Adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts.
Common approach to protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (CAPSEAH)	CAPSEAH is a guide to help all people and organisations working in humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) settings take action and align efforts to protect people from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH). It was developed by a multi-stakeholder group and with a global consultation with an aim to: • Prevent SEAH and improve accountability and support to victim-survivors when it occurs. • Amplify existing standards as the basis for a stronger, more aligned approach. • Set expectations about behaviours and minimum actions to protect from SEAH.
Community-based monitoring	A process where local community members are involved in collecting, analysing, and using data to track environmental or social changes in their area.
Community-driven adaptation (CDA)	An approach to climate resilience that emphasises the leadership and participation of local communities in designing and implementing solutions.

Disability	'…disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society, on an equal basis with others' UN CRPD
Disability inclusion	The process of ensuring the meaningful participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in all their diversity and ensuring equal access to, and the promotion and mainstreaming of, their rights and opportunities.
Disaggregated data	Data that is broken down by gender, age, disability status, location, and other relevant social characteristics to understand how different groups are affected differently.
Discrimination	The denial of rights or access to services based on an individual or group's identity (e.g. racial, gender, economic, social, tribal, religious, etc.).
Do no harm (DNH)	The concept of do no harm is a core ethical principle that should inform all programming. At a basic level it means being aware of how programme activities might interact with existing political, social, cultural and economic dynamics, with a view to ensuring activities do not cause or exacerbate negative systems or trends. Where activities do have a negative impact, DNH can enable development actors to identify options for mitigating the negative impact of their actions.
Empowerment	The process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.
Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)	FPIC is a principle protected by international human rights standards that state, 'all peoples have the right to self-determination' and – linked to the right to self-determination – 'all peoples have the right to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development'. It recognises the rights of Indigenous Peoples to give or withhold consent to projects and activities affecting their lands, territories, and resources.

Gender analysis	A systematic methodology for examining the differences in roles, activities, needs, opportunities, and rights/entitlements of women, men, girls, and boys in a given context.
Gender equality	Aims to remove the unequal power relations between women, men and different gender identities in the pursuit of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all.
Gender-responsive	Policies, programmes, or approaches that acknowledge and address the different needs, priorities, and experiences of women and men.
Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB)	A financial management practice that integrates gender perspectives into budgetary processes, ensuring that resource allocation considers and addresses the different needs of women and men.
GEDSI responsive continuum	A structured approach with four levels (Unaware, Sensitive, Empowering, Transformative) showing how organisations can progressively strengthen gender equality, disability and social inclusion in their work.
GEDSI mainstreaming	Mainstreaming GEDSI is a systematic process of integrating gender equality, disability inclusion and social inclusion through every stage of a programme or project (design, implementation and MEL).
Human rights-based approach (HRBA)	A policy and programmatic framework that integrates human rights principles—such as accountability, non-discrimination, participation, and empowerment—into all stages of planning and implementation.
Inclusion	The practice of ensuring that all people, regardless of their background or circumstances, have equal access to opportunities and can participate fully in society.

Inclusive development	Development processes that actively include and benefit all segments of society, particularly those who have been historically marginalised or excluded.
Indigenous Peoples	Distinct social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties to the lands and natural resources they live, occupy or from which they have been displaced.
Intersectionality	A framework that analyses how overlapping social identities—such as gender, disability, age, geographic location, and economic status—create compounded experiences of discrimination or privilege.
Leave no-one behind (LNOB)	Leave no-one behind is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination, and exclusion, and reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine their potential as well as the potential of humanity as a whole.
Marginalised groups	Social groups that are excluded from mainstream social, economic, and political activities due to systemic barriers. This includes women and girls, people with disabilities, Indigenous People, LGBTQI+ people and others based on different and intersecting characteristics.
Meaningful participation	Participation that goes beyond token representation to ensure genuine influence in decision-making processes and outcomes.
Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL)	The systematic collection and analysis of information to track progress, measure results, and inform decision-making in programmes and projects.
Participatory approach	Methods that actively involve stakeholders, particularly those most affected by an issue, in all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E)	A collaborative process involving stakeholders, including marginalised groups, in the evaluation of projects to ensure inclusivity, accountability, and transparency.
Power dynamics	The ways in which power is distributed and exercised within relationships, groups, and institutions, affecting who has influence and who is excluded.
Project logic model	A visual map that shows the theory of change for a project (see theory of change below)
Reasonable accommodations	Ensuring equal access for people with disabilities to the physical environment, transportation, information, and comms, and to other facilities and services.
Safeguarding	Taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm from occurring both to the recipients of project services and to people delivering it, and responding appropriately when harm occurs. This includes identifying, mitigating and reducing risk of harm as part of an overall safeguarding approach. This also includes preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH).
Sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH)	SEAH stands for 'sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.' All three are unacceptable abuses of power. SEAH is rooted in power imbalances and often linked to inequality, notably gender inequality. Victim-survivors of SEAH usually have less power or are more marginalised than the perpetrators for various reasons. Women and girls are most often affected.
Sex-disaggregated data	Data that is collected and presented separately for males and females to reveal gender-based differences and inequalities.
Social exclusion	Social exclusion is the process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged (for example, denied resources,

	rights, opportunities or recognition) because they are discriminated against on the basis of social characteristics.
Social inclusion	The process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society, improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity or social characteristics. It involves recognising and respecting their human rights and removing barriers to their full and equal participation and inclusion. In short, social inclusion is about evening the playing field by making the 'rules of the game' fairer.
Social vulnerability	The degree to which individuals or communities are susceptible to harm due to external stressors, such as climate change or economic instability, is based on factors like poverty, lack of education, limited healthcare access, and geographic isolation.
Stakeholder	Any individual, group, or organisation that can affect or is affected by a project, programme, or policy.
Stakeholder mapping	A systematic process of identifying and analysing the individuals, groups, and organisations that have an interest in or influence over a particular issue or project.
Targeted interventions	Specific activities or programmes designed to address the particular needs or barriers faced by specific groups, such as women or persons with disabilities.
Theory of change	A comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in any given context.
Transformative change	Fundamental shifts in systems, structures, and power relations that address root causes of inequality and create lasting change.
Vulnerability	The degree to which a system, population, or individual is likely to experience harm due to exposure to hazards, sensitivity to those hazards, and lack of adaptive capacity.