

WORKSHOP REPORT

Capacity-Strengthening Workshop and Leadership Briefing on the Roll-out of the
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Mainstreaming Guideline
in the Ministry of Planning and Development



Noora Resort, Bishoftu · 8–10 July 2026

Ministry of Planning and Development
with technical and financial support from SouthSouthNorth (SSN)
through the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN)

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
CC / CC-GAP	Climate Change / Climate Change Gender Action Plan
CDKN	Climate and Development Knowledge Network
CEDAW / CRPD	Conventions on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women / Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CEO	Chief Executive Office (MoPD organisational unit)
CoP	Community of Practice
EFY	Ethiopian Fiscal Year
ESS	Ethiopian Statistical Service
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GESI-CC	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Climate Change
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
IDRC	International Development Research Centre (Canada)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoPD / MoF	Ministry of Planning and Development / Ministry of Finance
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SSN	SouthSouthNorth
ToR / ToT	Terms of Reference / Training of Trainers
TWG	(GESI) Technical Working Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations 2

Contents 3

1. Introduction and Background..... 4

2. Purpose, Objectives and Expected Outcomes 5

3. Participants 5

4. Approach and Methodology..... 6

5. Summary of The days..... 7

6. Key Outcomes of the Workshop..... 15

7. Key Discussion Points and Insights..... 15

8. Way Forward and Next Steps 16

1. Introduction and Background

The Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) plays a central role in Ethiopia's development agenda by leading and coordinating national development planning, monitoring the implementation of development policies and strategies, coordinating climate change interventions, and supporting the country's commitments to national, regional, and international development frameworks. As the ministry responsible for developing national planning frameworks, guidelines, templates, monitoring systems, and performance indicators that guide the work of sector ministries and government institutions, MoPD is uniquely positioned to institutionalise Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) across government policies, programmes, systems, and institutional processes.

Recognising this strategic role, MoPD and SouthSouthNorth (SSN), through the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) programme, have partnered since 2023 to strengthen the Ministry's capacity to mainstream GESI, particularly within climate change and development planning. This partnership has progressively supported a series of institutional capacity-strengthening initiatives, beginning with an introductory GESI capacity-development workshop in November 2023, followed by an eight-month Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Gender Equality, Social Inclusion and Climate Change that established a cadre of trained GESI champions within the Ministry. Building on these efforts, the partnership culminated in the joint development of the MoPD GESI Mainstreaming Guideline, a practical institutional tool that provides each Chief Executive Office (CEO) and support unit with tailored GESI priorities, recommended actions, implementation checklists, and measurable performance indicators. The Guideline is intended to systematically integrate GESI considerations into policy and strategy development, planning, budgeting, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation, communication, human resource management, climate change programming, and institutional governance.

Following the finalisation of the Guideline, the Ministry established a multi-sectoral Technical Working Group (TWG), comprising representatives from both core and support offices, to oversee its institutionalisation and implementation. The TWG developed its own Terms of Reference and commenced regular coordination meetings to guide the rollout of the Guideline across the Ministry. This workshop represents an important milestone in this institutionalisation process by strengthening the capacity of technical staff to operationalise the Guideline within their respective mandates and by initiating the development of office-specific implementation roadmaps.

The workshop is also strategically important in light of MoPD's leadership as Chair of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Climate Change (GESI-CC) Community of Practice. Through this role, the Ministry promotes cross-sectoral learning, collaboration, and the systematic integration of GESI into climate policies, programmes, and investments across Ethiopia. Reflecting this broader national mandate, the workshop engaged Rehima Mohammed, Senior Expert for Environment and Climate Change Agreements and Partnerships at MoPD and UNFCCC Gender and Climate Change Focal Point as a co-facilitator,

recognizing her responsibility for coordinating GESI mainstreaming across climate change initiatives implemented by sector ministries and for supporting the Community of Practice in advancing a coherent national approach to gender-responsive climate action.

2. Purpose, Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The workshop pursued two connected objectives across its expert and leadership tracks:

- **Capacity development (Days 1–2):** equip senior experts to define and apply core GESI concepts, use practical analysis tools, connect GESI with climate action, and appraise plans, budgets and projects through a GESI lens.
- **Leadership endorsement (Day 3):** enable Chief Executives to understand, validate and endorse the GESI Mainstreaming Guideline, commit resources and champion, and agree on coordination, accountability and priority actions for roll-out.

By the end of the two expert days, participants were expected to be able to: define and apply GESI concepts (equality vs. equity, social inclusion, intersectionality) with precision; argue for GESI as programme quality and not only fairness; apply the Access and Control Framework and GESI-sensitive stakeholder analysis; locate any project on the GESI integration continuum and find budget entry points; connect GESI to differentiated climate risk and Ethiopia's policy commitments; and draft a time-bound GESI action plan for their office.

3. Participants

The workshop was delivered through two complementary tracks: a technical track (Days 1–2) and a leadership track (Day 3). The first two days brought together a total of [28 participants](#) - 26 senior technical experts and 2 CEOs (12 female (F) and 16 male (M)) representing the Ministry's Chief Executive Offices and support units. These sessions focused on strengthening participants' understanding of the GESI Mainstreaming Guideline, enhancing their capacity to apply its provisions within their respective mandates, and initiating the development of office-specific implementation roadmaps. On the third day, 6 more Chief Executive Officers (1 F) and a state minister (F) joined the workshop to review the Guideline office by office, validate the proposed roles and responsibilities, and agree on implementation priorities, coordination mechanisms, resource requirements, and next steps for institutional rollout.

The workshop was facilitated by Haregewien Admassu, GESI Consultant, with overall coordination provided by Arsema Andargatchew, Ethiopia Programme Manager at SouthSouthNorth (SSN). Rehima Mohammed, Senior Expert for Environment and Climate Change Agreements and Partnerships at MoPD and UNFCCC Gender and Climate Change Focal Point, served as co-facilitator, bringing institutional and technical perspectives to the discussions. The workshop was officially opened by Hanna Abebe, Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to the Minister at the Ministry of Planning and Development, while the executive session on Day 3 was inaugurated by H.E. W/ro Tirumar Abate, State Minister of Planning and Development.

4. Approach and Methodology

The workshop used participatory, adult-learning methods such as interactive presentations, facilitated discussion, group exercises, departmental reflection, action planning, leadership dialogue and question-and-answer, with an approximate 60:40 balance between participant work and facilitators input. A defining feature was joint facilitation by SSN technical expert and MoPD staff, an approach intended to build institutional ownership, enable peer-to-peer learning, and establish a sustainable internal capacity-development mechanism.

Experiential methods were used throughout: peer teaching in which standing groups 'owned' a concept; the 'CDKN's all hands on deck' card game to surface the most pressing challenges to advocating for GESI; a sector evidence scan on the situation of women in health, education, agriculture and employment; local case story on socially non-neutral eligibility criteria; the blindfold self-portrait exercise on the cost of planning without feedback and engagement; and a climate 'decision lab' stress-testing four hypothetical project designs for who benefits, who is burdened and what should change.

5. Summary of the days

5.1 Day One — Foundations of GESI Mainstreaming

Opening Session

[The workshop](#) commenced with opening remarks from Arsema Andargatchew, Ethiopia Programme Manager at SouthSouthNorth (SSN), who welcomed participants and provided an overview of the workshop objectives, agenda, and expected outputs. She emphasised that the workshop marked another important milestone in the long-standing collaboration between MoPD and SSN under the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) programme to strengthen institutional capacity for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) mainstreaming.

The workshop was officially opened by Hanna Abebe, Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to the Minister of Planning and Development. In her opening remarks, she acknowledged SSN's sustained technical and financial support to the Ministry since 2023. She highlighted key achievements of the partnership, including the introductory GESI capacity-strengthening workshop, the eight-month Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on GESI and Climate Change, and the collaborative development of the MoPD GESI Mainstreaming Guideline. On behalf of the Ministry, she expressed sincere appreciation to SSN for its continued partnership in strengthening the Ministry's institutional capacity to integrate GESI into national development planning and climate change interventions.

Hanna further emphasised that the workshop was not intended to be a stand-alone training event, but a critical step toward institutionalising the newly developed Guideline. She encouraged participants to engage actively, share experiences openly, challenge assumptions, and contribute practical ideas drawn from their respective offices. She further stressed that the recommendations, implementation priorities, and office-specific actions developed during the two-day technical sessions would directly inform the executive deliberations with Chief Executive Officers and senior management on Day Three.

Following the opening session, the facilitator guided participants through introductions and jointly established ground rules to foster an interactive, respectful, and collaborative learning environment. Participants were then organized into four mixed working groups, composed to ensure representation from different Chief Executive Offices, and genders. These groups remained together throughout the workshop, serving as learning teams for discussions, case analyses, practical exercises, and the development of office-specific implementation proposals.

Module 1 · Core GESI concepts and the effectiveness case

The first technical session established a common understanding of the core concepts underpinning GESI. Rather than relying solely on presentations, participants explored concepts such as gender equality, equity, social inclusion, intersectionality, and development effectiveness through facilitated peer-learning exercises. Working in groups, participants defined each concept in their own words before comparing their interpretations with internationally accepted definitions. This approach not only

reinforced learning but also enabled the facilitator to clarify common misconceptions and establish a shared conceptual foundation for the remainder of the workshop.



Participants discussing during ‘all hands on deck’ reflection session, Credit: Kaleb Worku

To stimulate critical reflection, participants took part in CDKN’s interactive card game (All hands on deck) exercise that explored the practical challenges of advocating GESI within government institutions. The exercise generated rich discussion on institutional resistance, competing priorities, misconceptions about GESI, and practical strategies for influencing decision-makers and colleagues.

The session then shifted from concepts to evidence. Participants examined current national data on the status of women and socially excluded groups across key development sectors, including education, health, agriculture, employment, and decision-making, and reflected on the implications for policy and planning. Beyond the sector-specific findings, participants identified several systemic challenges affecting evidence-based planning. These included the limited availability of sex, age, disability, and location disaggregated data; inconsistencies between data sources; and significant information gaps in sectors such as agriculture. Participants recognised that these limitations make it difficult to identify who is left behind and to design appropriately targeted interventions.

The discussion highlighted the Ministry's strategic role in addressing these challenges. As the institution responsible for national planning and overseeing Ethiopia's statistical system through the Ethiopian Statistical Service, MoPD is well positioned to strengthen the production and use of disaggregated data across government, thereby improving the evidence base for inclusive planning, monitoring, and decision-making.

The session concluded with a practical case study based on Ethiopia's condominium housing programme, illustrating how policies that appear neutral can unintentionally exclude certain population groups. Participants examined eligibility requirements such as large upfront financial contributions and foreign-



Group work to identify available gender data for different sectors, Credit: Kaleb Worku

currency payment arrangements, identifying how these disproportionately disadvantage women, low-income households, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. The exercise reinforced a central message of the workshop: effective development is measured not only by what is delivered, but also by who is able to access and benefit from it. Inclusive planning therefore requires anticipating and removing barriers before implementation.

Module 2 · Mainstreaming, analysis and gender-responsive budgeting

The afternoon session focused on practical tools and approaches for integrating GESI into policies, programmes, and institutional processes. Participants were introduced to the twin-track approach to GESI mainstreaming, which combines the integration of GESI considerations into all development

interventions with targeted actions designed to address the specific needs and disadvantages experienced by marginalized groups.

The facilitator also introduced the four institutional pillars required for effective GESI mainstreaming: leadership and accountability, institutional capacity, evidence and data, and adequate resources, emphasizing that meaningful mainstreaming depends on strengthening systems and institutional practices rather than relying solely on individual commitment.

Participants then explored practical analytical tools, including the Access and Control Framework, which distinguishes between who has access to resources and opportunities and who has the power to make decisions over them.

The first day concluded with an interactive experiential exercise in which participants attempted to draw self-portraits while holding paper above their heads without being able to see what they were drawing. The exercise generated laughter and reflection before being linked to a deeper planning lesson. The facilitator explained that good intentions alone do not produce good development outcomes. Just as participants could not accurately draw without seeing the paper, planners cannot design effective policies or programmes without engaging those who will be affected by them. Stakeholder engagement therefore serves as the "eyes" of planning, enabling institutions to understand the real problems, identify unintended consequences, and develop solutions that respond to the diverse realities of different population groups. Participants concluded that meaningful engagement throughout the policy, programme, and strategy cycle is essential for achieving inclusive, equitable, and effective development outcomes.

5.2 Day Two — Applying the mainstreaming Guideline: Climate, Budgeting and Mandate

The second day of the workshop focused on translating GESI concepts into practical planning and decision-making tools, with particular emphasis on climate change programming and the Ministry's institutional responsibilities for mainstreaming GESI.

Module 3 · Integrating GESI into Climate Change Programming

The morning session was facilitated by Rehima Mohammed, Senior Expert for Environment and Climate Change Agreements and Partnerships at MoPD and UNFCCC Gender and Climate Change Focal Point. She introduced participants to the relationship between gender equality, social inclusion, and climate change, beginning with key climate concepts and an overview of Ethiopia's climate risks and vulnerabilities. The session examined the country's climate policy framework, institutional arrangements, and national commitments, while situating Ethiopia's efforts within the broader international climate agenda.

Box I: Climate 'Decision Lab' Project Briefs

Four hypothetical briefs used in the exercise, each designed to embed detectable exclusion features:

- **Watershed Rehabilitation & Food-for-Work (ETB 620m, 5 yrs):** heavy-labour entry requirement, household-head entitlement collection, area-closure burdens, landholder-captured downstream benefits, and 'model-farmer' committees.
- **Clean Cookstove Distribution (ETB 180m, 2 yrs):** upfront cash price, cooperative-only distribution, indirect marketing to 'decision-makers', market-town-only after-sales, and units-sold metrics that ignore adoption.
- **Rural Solar Mini-Grid (ETB 900m, 4 yrs):** connection fees and cost-recovery tariffs, productive-use support for registered businesses only, market-street prioritisation, male-dominated liaison, and mobile-money/ID requirements.
- **Climate Early-Warning System Upgrade (ETB 140m, 3 yrs):** SMS/radio-only dissemination in one language, appointed (not elected) committees, market-day sessions, coverage-not-receipt metrics, and asset-focused response planning.

Participants reviewed key global and national frameworks that guide gender-responsive climate action, including Ethiopia's Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CC-GAP), the Belém Gender Action Plan adopted at COP30, and preparations toward COP32, which Ethiopia is expected to host. The discussion emphasised the growing international expectation that climate policies, programmes, and investments should explicitly address gender inequalities and ensure that vulnerable and marginalised groups are not left behind.

A central message of the session was that climate risk is determined by the interaction of hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. While hazards such as droughts or floods may not be

within the control of planners, both exposure and vulnerability are strongly influenced by development decisions. Consequently, integrating GESI into planning is not simply a social objective but a practical strategy for reducing climate risk and strengthening resilience.

Building on this foundation, participants worked in their groups to analyse hypothetical climate investment scenarios, developed by the facilitator, through a GESI lens (see Box I). The scenarios included watershed rehabilitation through food-for-work, clean cookstove distribution, development of a solar mini-grid, and upgrading an early warning system. Each group examined who would benefit from the intervention, who might bear unintended costs, which population groups risked exclusion, and what design modifications would be required to ensure equitable access and outcomes.

The plenary discussion revealed a consistent pattern across all four cases. Participants observed that development interventions frequently benefit those who already possess greater economic resources, information, mobility, or decision-making power. At community, institutional, and household levels, men often exercise greater influence over resource allocation and participation in decision-making, increasing the likelihood that women, persons with disabilities, female-headed households, labour-constrained households, older persons, and other marginalized groups may be unintentionally excluded from project benefits. The exercise reinforced the importance of systematically applying GESI analysis during project design rather than attempting to address inequities after implementation has begun.



Group discussion on hypothetical climate investment scenarios. Credit: Kaleb Worku

Module 4: Mainstreaming GESI within the Ministry of Planning and Development

The final technical session shifted the focus inward, examining MoPD's own institutional mandate and responsibilities for GESI mainstreaming. The facilitator presented the constitutional, legal, human rights, governance, and economic rationale for integrating GESI into the Ministry's core functions, emphasising that inclusive planning contributes not only to equity but also to improved development effectiveness, stronger institutional performance, and better public outcomes. Participants also reflected on the social and economic costs of exclusion and discussed how MoPD can influence inclusive development through its planning, budgeting, monitoring, policy guidance, and coordination functions.

Building on this discussion, participants reconvened in office-based groups to review the draft MoPD GESI Mainstreaming Guideline from the perspective of their respective Chief Executive Offices and support units. Each group examined the GESI issues, recommended actions, implementation checklists, and indicators proposed for their office. Participants validated the relevance of the identified issues, suggested additions and refinements where necessary, and selected three priority actions to be incorporated into their EFY 2019 annual work plans. These office specific action plans were developed as the principal technical input for the executive validation session on Day Three.

5.3 Day Three — CEO Leadership Briefing and Institutional Commitment

The third day brought together the Ministry's Chief Executive Officers and senior leadership to review and validate the draft MoPD GESI Mainstreaming Guideline and agree on the institutional arrangements required for its implementation.

The executive session was officially opened by H.E. W/ro Tirumar Abate, State Minister of Planning and Development. In her opening remarks, she expressed the Ministry's appreciation to SouthSouthNorth for its sustained partnership in strengthening institutional capacity for GESI mainstreaming and acknowledged the significant progress achieved through the collaboration. She emphasised that the workshop was particularly timely, coming shortly after Parliament's endorsement of Ethiopia's revised National Gender Policy, and encouraged participants to ensure that the Guideline translates the Government's policy commitments into practical institutional actions.

The facilitator then presented the purpose, structure, and strategic significance of the Guideline. Participants were guided through its three main components: (i) the conceptual and policy foundations for GESI mainstreaming; (ii) office-specific guidance, including key GESI issues, recommended actions, implementation checklists, and measurable indicators; and (iii) the institutional arrangements required to support implementation, monitoring, coordination, and accountability.

Chief Executive Officers subsequently reviewed the sections relevant to their respective offices. Using a structured validation process, they assessed whether the proposed responsibilities reflected their mandates, identified gaps or overlaps, recommended additions and revisions, considered implementation feasibility, confirmed priority actions, and highlighted the resources and institutional support required for successful implementation.



CEO representatives giving back feedback and priority actions to implement the GESI mainstreaming guideline. Credit: Kaleb Worku

During the plenary session, chaired by Hanna Abebe, Chief of Staff and Senior advisor to the minister, each Chief Executive Officer presented the key observations and recommendations emerging from the office-level review. The discussions demonstrated broad institutional ownership of the Guideline while also identifying areas of revisions (mainly expanding mandate of CEOs) required before finalisation. One of the most significant issues concerned changes in the Ministry's organisational structure since the Guideline had been drafted. In particular, the climate change function, previously organised under a single office, has since been restructured into two separate Chief Executive Offices. Participants agreed that the Guideline should be updated to reflect this institutional change and to ensure that responsibilities, actions, and indicators accurately align with the current organisational structure. Additional technical comments and office-specific recommendations were also documented for incorporation into the final version.

The workshop concluded with agreement on the institutional coordination arrangements for implementing the Guideline, endorsement of the priority actions identified by each office, and consensus on the immediate next steps required to mainstream GESI across the Ministry's planning, policy, budgeting, monitoring, and institutional systems.

6. Key Outcomes of the Workshop

6.1 Coordination Architecture Confirmed

The Guideline is anchored in a two-tier mechanism, each with its own Terms of Reference:

Tier	Composition, rhythm and mandate
High-Level GESI Steering Committee	Chaired by the Minister (or permanent delegate) and composed of all CEOs; meets ~3 times a year aligned to planning, mid-year review and annual reporting. Approves CEO GESI action plans, ensures integration in planning, budgeting and policy, holds CEOs accountable, champions inter-ministerial and donor coordination, and tracks progress against indicators.
GESI Technical Working Group	7–10 members from core and support offices (permanent core: Planning & Investment; Environment & Climate Change; Development Plan M&E; Women & Social Affairs), chaired on rotation and co-chaired by Women & Social Affairs; meets monthly. Drives the annual GESI Action Plan, reviews plans and reports for GESI integration, builds tools and trainings, mobilises partner support, and reports quarterly to the Steering Committee.

6.2 Pilot-Led Roll-Out

Rather than a uniform launch, the Guideline is being operationalised through an intensive pilot in a small number of high-leverage offices, with other offices beginning a lighter roll-out. The pilot centres on three Chief Executive Offices selected for their leverage over national planning, investment prioritisation, demographic analysis and climate-resilient development — **Environment & Climate Change Policy, Demography & Development Affairs, and Development Plan Monitoring & Evaluation** (with Planning & Government Investment also closely engaged). Following a ‘foundation first / minimum viable mainstreaming’ logic (high leverage, low added resources, scalable lessons) it runs in three phases: Setup and Readiness (Months 0–3); Systems and Tools (to mid-November 2026); and Demonstrate and Learn (December 2026 –April 2027). CDKN/SSN support runs to end of November 2026.

6.3 Pilot-Led Roll-Out

The GESI mainstreaming guideline is endorsed by the leadership, resourcing, and championing, linked to the newly endorsed national Gender Policy. Ministry of Women and Social Affairs representative provide few high-level feedback on the guideline and promised to share their written detailed input on the guideline.

7. Key Discussion Points and Insights

- **Reach is not inclusion.** A programme can ‘reach’ large numbers yet deliver little to women, persons with disabilities or the poorest and so on. Development quality is reach plus inclusion.
- **Exclusion hides in administrative detail.** Eligibility rules, meeting times, collateral and ‘household-head’ conventions, all controlled by planners, quietly decide who is in and who is out.

- **Data is the binding constraint.** Missing disaggregation and inconsistent sources make excluded groups statistically invisible; MoPD's stewardship of the national statistics and M&E is a decisive lever.
- **Climate action needs to be intentional.** Every adaptation or mitigation investment creates winners and, without a GESI lens, losers; the transformative test is whether a design shifts who decides, not only who receives.
- **MoPD holds the pen.** Because the ministry writes the templates, guidance and indicators, it sets up the country's inclusion standard, making GESI core business, not an add-on.

8. Way Forward and Next Steps

- Finalise the GESI Mainstreaming Guideline, incorporating CEO feedback.
- Formally endorse the Guideline as MoPD's standard for planning and operations and adopt each office's validated priority actions.
- Confirm each office's focal point to the GESI Technical Working Group and convene with the Steering Committee, setting up the date of its next meeting.
- Advance the pilot in the lead CEO offices through its phased roadmap (SSN/CDKN support to November 2026).
- Address resourcing and any restructuring requirements raised by CEOs, ensuring budget and staff time follow the guidance, so mandates are not left unfunded.
- Act on the data agenda, strengthen disaggregation by sex, age, disability and location across planning and M&E, working through the Ethiopian Statistical Service.
- Sustain the internal facilitator pool and leverage MoPD's chairing of the GESI-CC Community of Practice for peer learning and cross-sector uptake.