

MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

WORKSHOP REPORT

Capacity Strengthening Workshop on the Integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Climate Action



Noora Resort, Bishoftu

Dates: 4–5 August 2026

Organised by the GESI Mainstreaming and the Planning Chief Executive Offices, MoWSA, supported by the Climate and Development Knowledge Network programme of SouthSouthNorth (SSN)

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1. Background and Purpose

Climate change in Ethiopia does not affect the population evenly. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall and more frequent extreme events place sustained pressure on agriculture, water, health, energy, infrastructure and disaster risk management, and this burden falls unevenly along existing lines of inequality. Women, and particularly rural and pastoralist women, and other vulnerable groups, absorb a disproportionate share of that stress. Inequalities are seen through weaker control over land and productive assets, the time burden of water and fuelwood collection, exposure to negative coping strategies such as child marriage and gender-based violence, unequal access to services and information, and under-representation in decision-making.

Ethiopia's climate policy architecture has become more gender-responsive over time, most recently through the [Climate Change Gender Action Plan](#) (CC-GAP) launched at the second African Climate Week, held in Addis Ababa in 2025. However, a [2025 national stocktake](#) of climate change adaptation interventions, conducted by the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) with support from the NAP Global Network, found that only one gender-disaggregated indicator existed among the updated [2021 NDC's](#) agriculture sector indicators, and that no line ministry had yet developed its own climate change gender mainstreaming guideline. The gap is not one of commitment but of practice, and this workshop was designed to move the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) from awareness of that gap to institutional action on it.

This report documents the discussions, findings and recommendations of the two-day capacity strengthening workshop held on 4–5 August 2026 at Noora Resort, Bishoftu, bringing together senior MoWSA's technical experts to examine the Ministry's role in gender-responsive climate planning and to strengthen the instruments through which it holds sector institutions accountable for it.

2. Workshop Objectives

The overall objective of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of MoWSA technical experts **to promote and support gender-responsive climate change planning and implementation across government institutions, and to strengthen the instruments through which the Ministry holds sector institutions accountable** for it. By the close of the workshop, participants were expected to have:

- Strengthened understanding of the relationship between gender equality, social inclusion and climate change, and why climate outcomes are not gender neutral.
- Examined the differentiated impacts of climate change across Ethiopian sectors and population groups.
- Clarified MoWSA's institutional mandate, role and comparative advantage in supporting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) integration into climate change initiatives, distinguishing this from the roles of the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) and of sector ministries.
- Reviewed current institutional engagement in mainstreaming GESI into climate-related initiatives, both within MoWSA and across the sector ministries it oversees.
- Reviewed the application of the GESI mainstreaming performance levelling tool (see Box 1) against a real climate-related plan, identified what the current instrument does not detect, and drafted criteria, indicators and means of verification to close that gap.

- Developed a practical action plan for strengthening the Ministry's mainstreaming support and coordination, with priority actions, responsible units, named focal persons and first steps deliverable within ninety days.

The workshop was designed jointly with MoWSA on the premise that participants from MoWSA already understood the concept of gender mainstreaming and rather needed to work through its institutional application.

MoWSA's Inclusive Leveling Tool

The Inclusive Leveling Tool was introduced to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of government institutions by expanding the focus beyond gender issues to include broader social inclusion considerations.

Purpose: The tool aims to institutionalise gender equality and social inclusion across government institutions, ensuring that everyone's rights, welfare, meaningful participation, and equitable access to benefits are promoted and protected.

Ownership and use: The tool is owned and administered by MoWSA's GESI Mainstreaming Chief Executive Office, which uses it to assess how far sector ministries and other government institutions have integrated GESI, to score them against a defined standard, and to report the results. It is not an online platform but an internal scoring system approved for MoWSA's use.

Scoring: Scores place each assessed institution on a mainstreaming scale, ranging from unaware or gender-blind to responsive, and score reports are shared with institutional leadership. At present, a score carries no formal consequence (see Section 5.3).

How it differs from other GESI instruments: The levelling tool is a national MoWSA instrument; CDKN did not support its development. It is distinct from the GESI mainstreaming guideline developed by MoPD with CDKN support, which guides mainstreaming within MoPD itself to support its national plan development, sector plan approval and climate coordination mandates. The MoPD guideline supports mainstreaming inside and through one ministry, while the levelling tool assesses GESI integration across sectors.

Key evaluation areas of the levelling tool include:

- Enabling environment, including policy documents, institutional structures, implementation capacity, information management, accountability mechanisms, and relevant research.
- Mainstreaming processes, including institutional planning, GESI budgeting, implementation, and inclusive monitoring and evaluation.
- Collaboration and integration, including inclusive programs, capacity building, special support measures, inclusive decision-making, and conducive working and service environments.

3. Participants and Methodology

The workshop convened [23 senior technical experts \(9 F and 14 M\)](#) from different MoWSA Chief Executive Offices (CEOs) and departments, including planning, GESI mainstreaming, climate change coordination, and monitoring and evaluation / institutional strengthening units. The composition was deliberately narrow: participants were expected to speak authoritatively about how sector plans are reviewed and how the levelling tool is administered, and to be in a position to commit their own unit to follow-up action.

Sessions were facilitated on adult learning principles, such as building on participants' own professional experience, organising sessions around real problems from their work, and favouring participatory exercises over lectures, with most sessions led by a MoWSA officer. The design emphasised institutional application, such as mandates, instruments, coordination and systems, over general conceptual training.

The workshop was facilitated by Haregewien Admassu, CDKN's GESI-CC Consultant, with overall coordination provided by Arsema Andargatchew, CDKN Ethiopia Programme Manager. MoWSA senior experts Yehenew Abebe, Yetenayet Ambachew and Nebiyu Dejenie, served as co-facilitators, bringing institutional and technical perspectives to the discussions. Ketema Legesse, Chief Executive for GESI mainstreaming CEO at MoWSA, officially opened the workshop and led discussions on the first day.

4. Day One: Understanding GESI–Climate Change Linkages and MoWSA's Current Role

4.1. Opening and Introductions: A Cross-Sector Awareness Gap and Core GESI concepts

Opening Session

The workshop commenced with opening remarks from Arsema Andargatchew, CDKN Ethiopia Programme Manager, who welcomed participants and provided an overview of the workshop objectives, agenda, and expected outputs. She emphasised that the workshop marked an important milestone in strengthening institutional capacity for GESI mainstreaming in the climate action related responsibilities of the ministry. She further highlighted MoWSA's role as co-chair of the national GESI in Climate Change Community of Practice and its important role in preparations for the upcoming COP32, which Ethiopia will host.

The workshop was officially opened by Ketema Legesse, Chief Executive of GESI mainstreaming CEO at MoWSA. In his opening remarks, he acknowledged CDKN's technical and financial support in making the timely and relevant workshop possible. He encouraged participants to engage attentively and actively throughout the sessions and emphasised the importance of maximising the benefits of the workshop, both for the Ministry as an institution and for participants in their individual professional roles.

The day began with a pairing exercise in which participants were randomly matched and asked to introduce their partner to the room, stating the partner's name, the Chief Executive Office (CEO)¹ they work in, and their role. Although all participants work within the same Ministry, a significant number were unable to correctly introduce their assigned partner, and many participants did not know one another even by name across sectors and CEOs.

This finding was treated as a substantive concern rather than an icebreaker outcome only. The gap applied to participants across the Ministry, but it matters most for the GESI Mainstreaming CEO. The GESI Mainstreaming CEO is intended to work across all sectors and CEOs within the Ministry to mainstream gender considerations, and a working relationship across offices is a precondition for that

¹ Ethiopian ministries are organised into Chief Executive Offices. A Chief Executive Office is an organisational unit, not a person - a directorate-level office with its own mandate, staff and budget line. The person who leads it is its Chief Executive.

coordination role. Unlike other offices, it is therefore expected both to know, and to be known by, the representatives of every other CEO and department. The limited cross-sector familiarity observed at the start of the workshop suggests that internal coordination on GESI mainstreaming is weaker in practice than the Ministry's mandate assumes, and it foreshadowed a pattern that recurred throughout the two days: information generated in one part of the Ministry, a concept, a plan, a tool, which was often not known to colleagues in another part of the same institution.

Following the introductions, participants were asked to prepare and deliver short presentations on key GESI concepts, which were followed by a presentation on the same concepts from the CDKN technical team. This sequencing - participants presenting first, followed by technical input, was intended to establish a shared conceptual baseline before the sessions moved into institutional application.

4.2. Climate Change, GESI and Sectoral Implications

The morning session was facilitated by Yetenayet Ambachew, senior expert and focal point representing MoWSA in the GESI in CC community of practice. 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.



Yetenayet Ambachew, leading the GESI-CC concept session.
Credit: Arsema Andargatchew, CDKN

The afternoon session, co-facilitated by Illham Mohammed, a youth trainer who completed CDKN's GESI in Climate Change training of trainers (ToT), and Haregewien Admassu, explored how climate change affects different population groups differently across five priority sectors: agriculture, water, disaster risk management, social protection, and energy. The session focused on identifying where gender and social inclusion considerations intersect climate-related exposure, vulnerability, access to resources, participation, and benefits.

The session began with a structured prediction exercise that invited participants to test their assumptions against available evidence on the differentiated impacts of climate change in Ethiopia. Among the findings discussed were from the [2021 gender analysis for the updated NDC](#) which showed that women and girls aged seven and above are twice more likely than men to collect water and fuelwood on a daily basis; only 6 percent of rural households, compared with 58 percent of urban households, have water available on their own premises; and women's participation in community watershed management was only 12.9 percent in 2017/18, despite watershed management being a flagship climate adaptation intervention. These figures helped demonstrate that climate vulnerability is not experienced uniformly and that gender, location, access to services, and participation can

significantly shape people's exposure to climate risks and their ability to benefit from climate interventions.

Participants then worked in sector-based groups to examine their assigned sector, identifying key climate risks and exposure, the groups most affected, and the extent to which existing climate responses and interventions recognise and address differentiated impacts. The exercise encouraged participants to move beyond viewing climate change as a gender-neutral issue and to consider how climate interventions can be designed, implemented, and monitored to ensure that women and other socially excluded groups participate in and benefit equitably from climate action.



Group Discussion on key climate risks and exposure. Credit: Arsema Andargatchew, CDKN

Day Two: Strengthening Accountability Through the GESI Levelling Tool

4.3. Ethiopia's Climate Policy Architecture and the Commitment Audit

Day two opened with participants reconstructing the sequence and relative binding force of Ethiopia's climate instruments. The first session examined the evolution of Ethiopia's climate change policy framework and the institutional arrangements and national commitments that guide climate action. Rather than presenting the frameworks sequentially, participants were encouraged to explore and reconstruct the evolution of Ethiopia's climate policy architecture and consider the different purposes and functions of each instrument.

The session covered the major national climate change frameworks and instruments, including the [National Adaptation Programme of Action \(NAPA, 2007\)](#), [Climate-Resilient Green Economy \(CRGE\) Strategy \(2011\)](#), [sectoral resilience strategies \(2015\)](#), [National Adaptation Plan of Ethiopia \(NAP-ET, 2019\)](#), [Updated Nationally Determined Contribution \(Updated NDC, 2021\)](#), [Long-Term Low-Emission](#)

[Development Strategy \(LT-LEDS, 2023\)](#), [NDC Implementation Plan \(2024\)](#), and [NDC 3.0 \(2025\)](#). The [Climate Change–Gender Action Plan \(CC-GAP\)](#) was also introduced as a complementary instrument that places gender at the centre of climate action.

The plenary discussion revealed that many participants had limited or no prior familiarity with almost all of these frameworks and national climate instruments.

Participants were divided into four groups, with each group assigned two national climate change frameworks or instruments to review. They were asked to identify what the instrument is, why it was developed, when and by whom it was developed, what it seeks to achieve, and the extent to which it integrates GESI considerations. Each group subsequently presented its findings in plenary. This provided an important entry point for the session, as participants were able to learn about the frameworks through direct exploration rather than simply receiving information from the facilitators.

The exercise enabled participants to trace the development of Ethiopia’s climate policy architecture from the NAPA, which provided an early national response to adaptation needs, through the CRGE Strategy and subsequent sectoral resilience strategies, to the NAP-ET, which identified national adaptation priorities. Participants then examined the updated NDC (2021), which translated Ethiopia’s climate ambition into international commitments and included adaptation interventions and indicators, followed by the LT-LEDS, which set a longer-term development pathway toward low-emission development, the NDC Implementation Plan, which provided a more operational and costed framework for implementing the NDC, and NDC 3.0, which represents Ethiopia’s latest climate commitment.



Group discussion on climate policy architecture. Credit: Arsema Andargatchew, CDKN

The discussion emphasised that these instruments serve different functions. Some establish strategic direction and long-term ambition, while others identify adaptation priorities, define sectoral pathways, translate international commitments into national targets, identify implementation and financing requirements, or establish reporting expectations.

The session also examined the extent to which GESI has been incorporated into the evolving climate policy architecture. Participants recognised that gender considerations have become increasingly visible in Ethiopia's climate policy and planning framework, particularly through the inclusion of gender analysis in the 3.0 NDC and the development of the CC-GAP. At the same time, the discussion highlighted that recognition of GESI in policy documents does not automatically translate into implementation, monitoring, evidence generation, or accountability.

4.4. Session on Ethiopia's Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CC-GAP): MoWSA's Role in Implementation, Monitoring and Accountability

This session, co-facilitated by Yhenew Abebe, a senior GESI mainstreaming expert and the second focal person representing MoWSA in the GESI in CC community of practice and Haregewien, introduced the fundamentals of the national Climate Change–Gender Action Plan (CC-GAP), covering what the CC-GAP is, why and how it was developed, when and by whom, and the role of MoWSA in both its development and implementation. The session also examined the CC-GAP's institutional arrangements and accountability framework, with particular attention to the role assigned to MoWSA.

The discussion highlighted that the CC-GAP is distinctive within Ethiopia's climate policy architecture because it explicitly identifies MoWSA, alongside MoPD and the priority sectors, as one of the three responsible bodies for sustaining and advancing implementation of the CC-GAP. The session therefore examined not only the content of the CC-GAP, but also what this formal responsibility means in practice for MoWSA's coordination, oversight, and follow-up roles.

The discussion revealed significant gaps in institutional awareness, ownership, and follow-through on the CC-GAP, including limited understanding of its institutional responsibilities and mechanisms for implementation and accountability. These findings underscored the need to clarify MoWSA's role and strengthen the institutional mechanisms required to translate the CC-GAP from a policy commitment into sustained action.

The key gaps identified were:

Limited awareness of the CC-GAP's existence and mandate: Prior to the session, very few from the participants present, were aware of the CC-GAP's existence or of MoWSA's specific role and mandate within it, despite MoWSA appearing on the plan's own institutional author list alongside MoPD. This mirrors a wider pattern documented in a February 2026 Community of Practice meeting, where climate staff from ministries that had helped write the plan were themselves unaware that it existed, which is evidence of weak information flow even within institutions that co-authored the document.

No MoWSA-specific action plan: The CC-GAP does not include a specific action plan for MoWSA; it is not clear to the Ministry, from the document itself, what its role concretely consists of. As a result, beyond the design and launch of the CC-GAP, no further action had been taken by the Ministry to operationalise it.

The instrument is advisory rather than binding: it faces downward toward regional and local governments rather than across to federal line ministries; it states objectives and actions without indicators, baselines, named responsible offices or budget lines; it is anchored to the 2021 NDC and has not been updated against NDC 3.0 (submitted September 2025); and it is currently held under limited access in an international research repository rather than published in Amharic or other local languages for the governments it is meant to guide.

The discussions and exercises that followed aimed to distinguish three functions that are often treated as though they belong to the Ministry alone: implementation, monitoring, and accountability.



Reflection session following CC-GAP presentation. Credit: Arsema Andargatchew, CDKN

It was agreed that implementation of the CC-GAP commitments rests primarily with the responsible sectors and regions, not with MoWSA. Monitoring, meanwhile, is a shared responsibility of MoWSA, the sectors and MoPD, requiring these institutions to track progress, identify gaps and use evidence to inform action. Accountability is different. It is the function through which MoWSA holds sectors

responsible for delivering their agreed gender commitments. This is the area where MoWSA has the clearest and most distinctive mandate. This is particularly significant because MoWSA already owns the GESI mainstreaming levelling tool, which could provide a practical mechanism for assessing sector performance, identifying gaps and following up on corrective action. Therefore, the action needed is to move from owning the tool to using it systematically as an accountability mechanism for the CC-GAP.

4.5. The GESI Levelling Tool: Awareness and Coverage Gaps

Nebiyou Dejenie, desk head of GESI department at MoWSA led a session on the GESI Mainstreaming Levelling Tool, introducing participants to what the tool is, how it has evolved, the experience gained from its administration to date, and how its scoring system can influence institutional performance and leadership accountability. The session provided an opportunity to reflect not only on the technical features of the tool, but also on its practical value as an instrument for driving institutional change.

Only a small number of participants had detailed familiarity with the GESI Mainstreaming Levelling Tool prior to the session, despite it being MoWSA's own institutional instrument. The discussion highlighted the distinctive role of the tool within the broader GESI mainstreaming system - it combines a defined GESI mainstreaming standard with an assessment mechanism through which sector institutions are scored and the results are reported. The scoring process creates an incentive for institutions and leadership to pay attention to GESI mainstreaming and, therefore, gives the tool a potentially stronger influence on institutional behaviour than instruments that provide guidance or strengthen capacity alone.

The session also examined an important limitation of the current tool from a climate-change perspective. Participants confirmed that the levelling tool was developed as a general GESI mainstreaming instrument, and that its criteria were not specifically designed to assess the integration of GESI into climate-related planning and programming. The underlying assumption appears to be that climate-change mandates, responsibilities, budgets, structures, programmes, and indicators are already sufficiently embedded within the broader mandates, responsibilities, budgets, structures, and programmes of the sector institutions being assessed. Where this assumption holds, a generic GESI assessment may capture aspects of climate-related integration. However, where climate responsibilities are not clearly embedded across an institution, assessors may overlook them, because the tool has no distinct step for identifying climate-related initiatives.

This creates a practical risk, a sector institution could achieve a satisfactory GESI levelling score while important elements of its climate plans, budgets, programmes, or indicators remain substantially gender-blind. In other words, the tool may not detect gaps in GESI–climate integration simply because it does not explicitly ask about them. The issue is therefore not necessarily a weakness in the tool’s broader GESI mainstreaming function, but a potential blind spot when the tool is used to assess GESI integration in climate-related mandates. How well this blind spot is managed also depends on the assessor: someone familiar with climate change and with a sector’s climate mandate is better placed to probe for climate-related initiatives. Applying the tool well therefore requires assessors who are both GESI- and climate-literate.



Reflection session on levelling tool presentation. Credit: Arsema Andargatchew, CDKN

The issue was carried forward as a concrete action for the workshop’s final action-planning session. It was proposed that the matter be discussed further with the wider GESI Mainstreaming CEO team

and that a specific improvement to the levelling tool be considered. One possible improvement would be to add a footnote, prompt, or explicit instruction within the assessment instrument directing assessors to intentionally identify and probe climate-change-related mandates, responsibilities, programmes, budgets, and indicators, especially in institutions where climate change is not a prominent or widely understood institutional mandate. Such an adjustment, will ensure assessors are both GESI and climate aware, and this could help ensure that the levelling process does not systematically under-assess GESI–climate integration in sectors where climate responsibilities are concentrated among only a few staff or are not yet fully embedded in the institution’s core business.

A second structural gap identified in the levelling tool concerns its enforceability. As currently constituted, the tool is not binding. Even though score reports might incentivise leadership attention, there is no repercussion for a sector assessed as unaware or gender-blind, and no incentive beyond score reports for a sector that performs well or is responsive. In its present form, the tool can identify where sectors sit on the gender-mainstreaming scale, but it does not yet function as a transformative instrument, because a score currently carries no consequence in either direction.

To address this, MoWSA has drafted an accountability guideline and submitted it to the Ministry of Justice for legal review and feedback before its approval. The guideline would attach real consequences to levelling tool results by proposing incentives for sectors that perform well and are responsive to GESI integration, and appropriate measures for sectors that are found to be unaware or non-responsive. This was framed as the mechanism that converts the levelling tool from a diagnostic instrument into an accountability instrument, closing the gap between scoring a sector and that score actually changing sector behaviour.

5. Key Findings

- Cross-office coordination within MoWSA itself is weaker than the Ministry's GESI mainstreaming mandate assumes.
- Awareness of the CC-GAP, including its existence, its content and MoWSA's named role within it, was very low among participants prior to the workshop, consistent with a documented, wider pattern of weak information flow on the CC-GAP even among sector ministries that helped author it.
- The CC-GAP does not contain a MoWSA-specific action plan, leaving the Ministry's operational role under the plan unclear; as a result, no substantive follow-up action had taken place beyond the plan's design and launch.
- Awareness of the GESI mainstreaming levelling tool, and of its detailed indicators and methodology, was limited to a small number of participants, despite the tool being MoWSA's own signature accountability instrument.
- The levelling tool's current indicators are open to uneven application across sectors in relation to climate actions: they are more likely to detect GESI-climate gaps in sectors where the climate mandate is bold and broadly distributed (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture), and more likely to miss climate-related mandate in sectors where it is not bold and is concentrated among a few individuals (e.g. Ministry of Innovation and Technology).
- The levelling tool is not binding. It carries no repercussion for sectors assessed as unaware or gender-blind, and no incentive for sectors that are responsive, which limits sectors' motivation to move beyond awareness toward transformative practice.

6. Recommendations and Proposed Follow-up Actions

The following actions were identified during the workshop's action planning sessions.

Action	Detail	Proposed Owner
Initiate the review of the CC-GAP against NDC 3.0 and other recent developments and identified gaps	The CC-GAP is a living document still anchored to the 2021 NDC; NDC 3.0 (Sept 2025) contains materially more on gender, health, education and inclusion.	GESI Mainstreaming CEO, with MoPD
Publish the updated CC-GAP in Amharic and English	The plan is written to guide regional and local governments but is currently held under limited access on an international repository.	GESI Mainstreaming CEO, with MoPD
Add a footnote/remark to the levelling tool to intentionally probe for climate mandate in less climate-bold sectors	This action will prevent the tool from under-detecting GESI-climate integration in sectors where the climate mandate is not bold and sits with only a few staff.	GESI Mainstreaming CEO team, following further internal discussion
Follow up on feedback and approval from Ministry of Justice on the accountability guideline with incentives and sanctions	This addresses the levelling tool's non-binding status by proposing incentives for well-performing/responsive sectors and measures for sectors assessed as unaware or non-responsive.	MoWSA leadership in coordination with the Ministry of Justice (with GESI mainstreaming CEO as facilitator)

In addition to these instrument-level actions, the workshop recommends that MoWSA strengthen internal cross-CEO coordination and information-sharing, such as periodic joint briefings across CEOs, to address the low level of familiarity observed at the start of the workshop, and to ensure that documents such as the CC-GAP and instruments such as the levelling tool are consistently known and used across the Ministry rather than concentrated in the offices that produced them.