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Preliminary Gender Assessment for the Adaptation Fund (AF) Concept Note:

Locally-Led Resilience: Enhancing Community-Based Disaster Preparedness and Climate Adaptation in Manicaland and Masvingo Provinces

Executive summary

This rapid gender assessment comprises information from a limited number of sources at the district level. To inform the selection of activities and provide a thorough snapshot of the gender situation on the ground, the 4 districts of Bikita, Chipinge, Chimanimani and Masvingo rural to reveal how climate impacts, project benefits, and decision-making power are experienced differently based on gender, gender-differentiated vulnerabilities, access to resources; the disparities in who controls and accesses critical resources like land, water, credit, and technology. power dynamics; the balance of decision-making power within households and local communities, and ultimately to ensure interventions promote equity rather than unintentionally reinforcing discrimination.

Methodology

DAPP and EMA used structured in-depth interviews with duty bearers mainly from line Ministries such as the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED), Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, The Department of Social Development under the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. The Rural District Council, the CEO of Rural District Councils, and the District Chief Economists under the District Development Coordinators' Offices, and community consultations, where focus group discussions were held targeting farmers, in which at least 70% of the participants were women.

Key findings from the districts

1. Chipinge District

DAPP coordinated a rapid Preliminary Gender assessment in Chipinge district in collaboration with EMA staff in the target districts. We identified key Government departments at district level and spoke to 12 individual farmers, 80% of them being women. From the questions outlined in the Questionnaire that was read to them, their answers gave a picture that there is prevalent male domination in household assets and mainly agro-based incomes. In Chipinge District, women-headed households make up roughly 35% to 40% of all households. This aligns closely with the provincial average for Manicaland, where recent data indicates that about 35% of rural households are headed by women. On climate shocks it was clear that (droughts and cyclones) disproportionately affect women due to heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture, as a result, women are hit hardest.

Key Climate-Gender Vulnerabilities

No.	Assessment topic	Source of information /key informant	Key Findings
1.	Gender-Differentiated Activities and Division of Labour in Agriculture	The District Agricultural Extension Officer (DAEO) for Chipinge District Mr. Chitesa. Agricultural Business Advisory Officer (ABAO), Mr. F. Matsiya, <i>Department of Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX), Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development's</i>	We learnt that Agriculture in Chipinge District is characterized by distinct gender roles. Women provide the majority of the labour—handling planting, weeding, and harvesting. Men dominate land preparation, livestock management, and the control of income from cash crops. Women provide the bulk of agricultural labour force, supplying roughly 60-70% of total farm labour while putting in 16 to 18-hour workdays across both productive and reproductive tasks.
2.	Gender-Differentiated Impacts and Risks of Climate Hazards	Mrs. Lydia Masengu, Meteorological Services Department (MSD) District Focal Person	The Manager of Met department said it is recorded that women in Chipinge constitute a large share of the agricultural workforce a pattern that is consistent with the rest of Manicaland province. During climate-induced droughts, women

			<p>smallholder farmers experience greater crop failure and income losses and put them at risk of indulging in other alternative means to earn an income.</p> <p>She further said depleted water tables during droughts and damage to infrastructure following events like Cyclone Idai drastically increased distances women must travel to secure water. Women shoulder over 90% of household water collection duties, which can consume 4 to 6 hours daily</p>
3	Social and Cultural Norms gender roles, participation in community Leadership roles	3 Officials from the Districts Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development	From the discussions with the Ministry of Women affairs there were no ready statistics of the % of women in leadership roles but there was general sentiment that the district just like the rest of the country leadership roles and decision making are predominantly assumes by men. Women face persistent structural, cultural, and personal barriers when attempting to advance to decision-making positions in rural agriculture production.
4	Time Use and Workload (Time Poverty)	Ivy Chitambo, Department of Social Development, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare	The stress of resource scarcity often incites household and community-level tensions. When natural disasters happen, women and girls face severely elevated risks of sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence (IPV), and harassment, particularly in displacement camps around the district when queuing for food relief and scarce water resources. Household are also significantly reduced and some families prefer to pull adolescent girls out of school to help with extended domestic tasks or to cope with economic hardship, amplifying the feminization of poverty in the district.
5	Access to Productive Resources	Mr. Gumbo, The District Social Development Officer for Chipinge District, operating under the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare	Women in Chipinge District face significant challenges and disparities in accessing agricultural productive resources. At the same time the local trend is that they (women) provide the bulk of the agricultural labour force, patriarchal norms and customary land tenure severely limit their independent access to land ownership and water infrastructure and assets that they could use as, collateral for loans. However, localized cooperatives initiatives are helping to bridge these gaps. Mr. Gumbo, referred us and connected to the below success case story.

		<p>Mrs. Alocket Sibanda, Chairlady of Charurwa Agricultural Hub in Chipinge Ward 10.</p>	<p>From a telephone interview with Group Chairlady Mrs. Sibanda she said they started Charurwa Agricultural Hub which to date, has empowered 57 smallholder farmers, comprising 47 adult females, 8 young females, and 2 adult males. These farmers secured five hectares of land for cooperative farming and received critical enabling technologies, including milk tanks, a greenhouse, and oil pressing machines.</p> <p>The site features 5-hectare cooperative farmland equipped with a 1,000 square meter greenhouse, solar-powered boreholes, infield drip irrigation, oil pressing machines, and a 500-litre solar-powered bulk milk tank. This testimony provides an example of the catalytic effect that the provision of access to productive resources can have on women's lives.</p>
6.	<p>Barriers to Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change</p>	<p>The District Agricultural Extension Officer (DAEO) for Chipinge District Mr. Chitesa. Agricultural Business Advisory Officer (ABAO), and Mr. F. Matsiya, <i>Department of Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX), Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development's</i></p>	<p>To promote adaptive capacity the women in Chipinge have benefitted from trainings from Climate Adaptation Water and Energy Programme (CAWEP): A UNDP-backed initiative in Hakwata village featuring a 200kWp solar mini-grid, water infrastructure for community gardens, and early-warning automated weather systems to protect locals from extreme weather events. Additionally we found out that there are Women's groups and networks in the district that were formed in response to reduced yields from the fields and these groups form the core of promoting climate-smart agriculture (growing small grains and drought-resistant crops) and participate in local conflict resolution in access to natural resources like water from rivers.</p>

2. Masvingo Rural District

Gender context of the district

We did a rapid Climate Gender assessment in Masvingo Rural District. Mainly EMA staff spoke to district government departments and few groups of women farmers. The responses revealed deeply gendered vulnerabilities, driven by decreasing annual rainfall and rising temperatures due to climate change that is causing seasonal shifts and erratic rainfall patterns that are very difficult to predict. According to the respondents, over **70%** of households rely on rain-fed agriculture, which is increasingly failing. Women perform most of the agricultural labour but hold less land ownership, meaning they bear the brunt of feeding and trying to earn extra income for their families when crops fail because of high prevalence of young adult male migration to neighbouring South Africa in search of better informal job opportunities.

Key Climate-Gender Vulnerabilities

No.	Assessment topic	Source of information /key informant	Findings
1.	Gender-Differentiated Activities and Division of Labour in Agriculture	<i>Mr. Eliphas Mugari., The District Agricultural Extension Officer for the Masvingo Rural District Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services, operating under ARDAS)</i>	In Masvingo Rural District, women constitute approximately 56% to 60% of communal smallholder farmers. Furthermore, 40% to 42% of agricultural households in the wider Masvingo Province are classified as female-headed, meaning women serve as the primary farm managers and decision-makers for their families.
2.	Gender-Differentiated Impacts and Risks of Climate Hazards	Ms Rumbidzai Masvingise. Department of ,Masvingo Meteorological Services Department (MSD)	In Masvingo Rural District, climate hazards—primarily severe droughts, erratic rainfall, and rising temperatures—disproportionately impact women. Discriminatory land tenure systems, high rates of male out-migration, and entrenched cultural roles leave women burdened with securing scarce water and food, while lacking decision-making power and control over productive resources
3	Social and Cultural Norms gender roles, participation and Leadership:	4 Representatives from Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development	We had a group discussion with 4 Officers from the District Ministry of Women Affairs in Masvingo District. Based on the responses they provided and backed by other reliable data from their records There is long standing cultural practice that is deeply entrenched on patriarchal norms that leave women facing systemic time poverty. Household chores like fetching water, cooking and more labour intense attending to the fields occupy up to 70% of an average woman in a rural setting of Masvingo rural district. With frequent climate-induced shocks like

			<p>droughts, which are exacerbated by high rates of male out-migration in Masvingo Rural because of its geographical proximity to South Africa</p> <p>In one of the key responses and official from the Ministry said “The burden of caring for the Children, in any average rural homestead falls on the woman, and under the decreasing rainfall and drying boreholes, traditional gender roles dictate that women and girls are solely responsible for securing household water”. Therefore, women in Masvingo rural often travel long distances or wait up to several hours at communal boreholes, significantly increasing their time poverty and limiting their ability to engage in other economic activities”.</p>
4	Time Poverty & Labour Burden	Ms Rumbidzai Masvingise. Department of ,Masvingo Meteorological Services Department (MSD)	<p>Climate shocks have increased the time women spend securing water and fuel wood. Women frequently work up to 20-hour days during peak agricultural seasons, which severely limit their ability to adopt new agricultural technologies or participate in community climate decision-making.</p> <p>Masvingo Province experiences a high rate of male out-migration (<i>often to South Africa</i>). This has led to an exceptionally high number of female-headed households (over (40%)), forcing women to take on traditional "male" duties like building repair and cattle management without receiving legal land titles.</p>
5	Access to Productive Resources & barriers to Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change	Mrs Dambudzo Marecha, Chief Economic Executive Masvingo Rural District Council (RDC)	<p>Financial constraints is one of the leading barriers for female farmer headed households are generally poorer and face systemic barriers in accessing credit, agricultural inputs, and climate risk insurance. Agricultural extension services, systems and climate committees remain male-dominated. Trainings are frequently scheduled at times and locations that conflict with women's household and caretaking responsibilities.</p>

Ongoing Interventions within Masvingo Rural district

To build resilience, organizations like the World Food Programme (WFP) have been implementing initiatives like the GCF-funded *R4 Rural Resilience Initiative* and *SAP007 (Integrated Climate Risk Management for Food Security and Livelihoods)*. These initiatives target the following gender-responsive adaptations:

- **Climate Services:** Tailoring weather and climate forecasts specifically to women’s traditional chores and livelihood needs.
- **Childcare Provisions:** Holding trainings in small, localized clusters and providing child-friendly corners to accommodate mothers' caretaking needs.
- **Asset Creation:** Developing small-scale water retention and sanitation structures specifically to reduce the distance women must walk for water.

Strategic Resources & Links

- [Gender assessment for SAPO07: Integrated climate risk management for food security and livelihoods in Zimbabwe focusing on Masvingo and Rushinga Districts](#)
- Review resilience and adaptation metrics via the [WFP R4 Rural Resilience Initiative in Zimbabwe](#).
- Consult national strategies through the official [Zimbabwe Climate Change Gender Action Plan](#).

3. Bikita district

Gender context of the district

In Bikita district, climate change disproportionately impacts women and girls due to entrenched patriarchal norms and heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture. Recurrent droughts exacerbate gender inequalities, increasing women's unpaid care work, limiting their access to productive resources (like land and finance), and heightening their risk of poverty.

A self-administered structured questionnaire was used to solicit quantitative data from Ministry of Women Affairs, Bikita rural district council (department of environment) and from Ministry of Agriculture Extension department (AGRITEX) and 3 groups of smallholder communal farmers in Bikita district.

No	Assessment topic	Source	Finding
1.	Agriculture and Food Security	Elias Mapare: Bikita District AGRITEX Officer: serves as the Agricultural Technical Extension (AGRITEX) Officer	As the district warms and rainfall becomes erratic, women farmers face significant barriers in adopting climate-smart agriculture (CSA) due to a lack of resource availability and limited land ownership rights. Women are traditionally responsible for food production, yet lack control over decision-making regarding which crops to grow or how to invest in farm inputs.
2.	Water Scarcity		Prolonged dry spells lead to dried-up boreholes and wells. Women and young girls bear the brunt of this, often

	and Health		walking long distances to fetch safe water. This burden not only consumes time that could be used for education or economic activities, but also exposes them to health risk such as being vulnerable to gender related violence at water points and prone to be lured into “water for sex” by males who often monitor these communal boreholes and water points.
3.	Intersecting Gender Vulnerabilities:	Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development.	There is a strong correlation between climate change-induced disasters and an increase in gender-based violence (GBV) against women and young girls in rural Zimbabwean communities. Furthermore, these intersecting vulnerabilities extreme weather and economic instability damage health infrastructure, force displacement, and divert resources away from essential services like maternal care, contraception, and STI treatment; all these factors combined hinder women's access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services.
4.	Increased Feminization of Poverty		As climate shocks reduce agricultural yields, traditional livelihood options fail. Many rural women are forced to become the primary breadwinners, taking on highly labour intense yet low-paying informal trading or engaging into transactional relationships to fend for their children and this exposes them to sexual exploitation and STIs.
5.	Participation of Women in Formal and Informal Economy	Never Mavhuna: Executive Officer for Finance/Finance Director, Bikita rural district council (department of environment)	Resource Extraction: The rapid expansion of lithium mining in areas around Bikita adds further pressure on land. Women in local communities (such as around Hanyanya mountain) often bear the brunt of environmental degradation and displacement, while struggling to have their voices heard in compensation and community decision-making
6.	Gender-Differentiated Impacts and Risks of Climate Hazards	Elias Mapare: Bikita District AGRITEX Officer: serves as the Agricultural Technical Extension (AGRITEX) Officer	How do droughts affect women’s daily workload: In Bikita district, droughts severely intensify women’s daily workloads by prolonging traditional domestic duties like fetching water and firewood. As local resources dwindle, women must endure extended, physically taxing work hours, while also taking on new breadwinning and agricultural responsibilities to compensate for household crop failures

Policy and Support Resources

To address these issues, NGOs and government bodies are implementing locally-led adaptation projects. For instance, frameworks like the [Zimbabwe National Climate Change Policy](#) guide gender mainstreaming across the region to empower women and minority genders. Localized advocacy and developmental tools provided by organizations like the [Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association \(ZELA\)](#) are actively working to establish women's voices in climate discourse and resource management

Chimanimani context

Due to administrative limitations, we were unable to obtain data from Chimanimani District. However, consultations with local authorities in the neighboring Chipinge District indicated that the socioeconomic characteristics of the two districts are broadly comparable, and that women in both areas face similar challenges and vulnerabilities. Additional data will be collected during the full proposal development stage, at which point the project proponent will undertake a comprehensive gender analysis to validate these assumptions and inform project design.

Annex 1. Questionnaire used for data collection

❖ Section 1: Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development.

Gender-Differentiated Activities and Division of Labour in Agriculture

Household and farm tasks

1. What agricultural tasks are mainly done by women, men, girls, and boys in this community?
2. Who is responsible for land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, storage, and marketing?
3. How are tasks divided during drought years or flood periods—does this change?
4. Which activities are considered “women’s work” and which “men’s work”? Why?
5. Time Use and Workload (Time Poverty)
6. How many hours per day do women spend on unpaid care work (fetching water, firewood, childcare, cooking)?
7. How does this compare to men’s workload?
8. How far do women travel to collect water, fuelwood, or other resources?
9. How does climate change (e.g. drought) affect women’s workload?

Sub-group differences

10. Do roles differ for young women/men compared to older women/men?
11. Are there differences based on marital status, disability, ethnicity, or economic status?
12. How do female-headed households manage agricultural labour?

Paid vs unpaid work

13. Which agricultural activities are paid and which are unpaid?
14. Who controls income from crop sales or livestock sales?
15. How much time do women and men spend on domestic and care tasks per day?

Access to Productive Resources

Irrigation and water

16. Do women have access to irrigation schemes?
17. Can women make decisions on water use and schedules?
18. Which water management solutions are available (boreholes, drip kits, dams, sand abstraction)?

Land and inputs

19. Who owns or controls land in households?
20. Can women independently access seeds, fertilizer, tools, and extension services?
21. Who decides what crops to plant?

❖ **Section 2: The Meteorological Services Department (MSD) in Zimbabwe operates under the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife**

Gender-Differentiated Impacts and Risks of Climate Hazards

Impacts of droughts/floods

22. How do droughts affect women's daily workload?
23. How do floods affect men's income activities?
24. What happens to girls' education during climate shocks?
25. Do boys and men migrate during drought? What are the consequences for women?

Risks

26. What specific safety or protection risks do women and girls face during floods or displacement?
27. Are there health or nutrition impacts that affect women differently from men?
2. Which groups suffer the greatest losses of assets after disasters?

(Prepare participatory list with respondents: impacts on time, income, food security, health, safety, education, mobility.)

Early Warning Systems and Disaster Preparedness

25. Do you receive early warning information on droughts/floods? From where?
26. Who in the household receives the messages (men/women/youth)?
27. Through which channels—radio, phone, meetings?
28. Are messages understandable and timely for women?

Emergency shelters

29. Are there emergency shelters in this area? Where?
30. Do shelters consider women's needs (privacy, lighting, WASH, safety)?
31. What improvements are required?

❖ **Section 3: Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development.**

Social and Cultural Norms, participation and Leadership

40. What percentage of members in farmers' organisations are women?

41. How many women hold leadership positions?
42. What prevents women from taking leadership roles?

Livestock

43. Do women own livestock? What type (poultry, goats, cattle)?
44. Can women sell livestock without permission?
45. What cultural norms influence who farms which crops?
46. Are women allowed to speak in community meetings?
47. How are decisions made within households?
48. Are there practices that restrict women's mobility or asset ownership?

Adaptive Capacity and Climate Change

51. How might climate change affect livelihoods of women vs men differently?
52. Which groups have the least capacity to adapt? Why?
53. What coping strategies are used by women, men, youth?

Opportunities and Risks

56. What opportunities exist to increase women's participation and benefits?
57. Which project activities would most help women and girls?
58. Do you foresee gender inequalities worsening due to climate change? How

Participation in Formal and Informal Economy

11. What income-generating activities are women involved in? What about men?
12. Do women have access to formal employment or mainly informal work?
13. Who engages in seasonal or casual labour on other farms?
14. Are there barriers for women or youth to enter profitable value chains?