



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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GREEN CLIMATE FUND case study

Evaluation of support to gender equality
in Danish development cooperation
(2014-2021)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
METHODOLOGY	5
Danish GCF partnership findings	6
Key trends of gender budgetary allocations	6
Key drivers of Danish support priorities	7
Outcome of global dialogue	8
CASE PROJECT FINDINGS	10
Programme on Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa	11
Towards Ending Drought Emergencies	11
CONCLUSIONS	12
RECOMMENDATIONS	13
ANNEX A: PEOPLE CONSULTED	13
ANNEX B: LITERATURE LIST	15

List of abbreviations

AFAWA	Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa
CAHW	Community Animal Health Worker
CIF	Climate Investment Fund
COP	Conference of the Parties
COP15	15th session of the Conference of the Parties
COP17	17th session of the Conference of the Parties
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GReACT	Gender Responsiveness Action Tool
IEU	Independent Evaluations Unit
IRM	Initial Resource Mobilisation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KII	Key Informant Interview
LDC	Least Developed Country
MCEU	Ministry for Climate, Energy & Utilities
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OS	Organisational Strategy
SIDS	Small Island Development States
TWENDE	Towards Ending Drought Emergencies
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Introduction

The purpose of this case study is to explore the strategic relevance and added value of Denmark's partnership with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) within the Danish policy priority on the fight for the climate at the core of its mission.

The GCF is the largest fund dedicated to climate^{1 2} but is also a young organisation, receiving funding from Denmark to its core budget, with Danish representation on its governing board.

In the context of the Evaluation of support to gender equality in Danish development cooperation (2014-2021), the GCF is a smaller recipient organisation in comparison to other organisational case studies and is being considered as a *minor* case study. Also, unlike the other case study organisations, the GCF is an example of an organisational case study that has climate and not gender as its principal focus.

The minor-sized case evaluation case study of the GCF summarised in this report begins with an outline of the methodology applied. Findings follow in relation to the overall Danish partnership with the Fund and two project deep dives identified for closer scrutiny based on the diversity of scope and purpose, as shown in the overview in Table 1. These two deep dives represent relatively recent grants, starting only in 2019 (the evaluation frame is 2014-2021).

¹ The others are the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs).

² Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) (2021) Pulling Together - The Multilateral Response to Climate Change, Lessons in Multilateral Effectiveness, Paris.

Table 1. Overview of GCF project deep dives

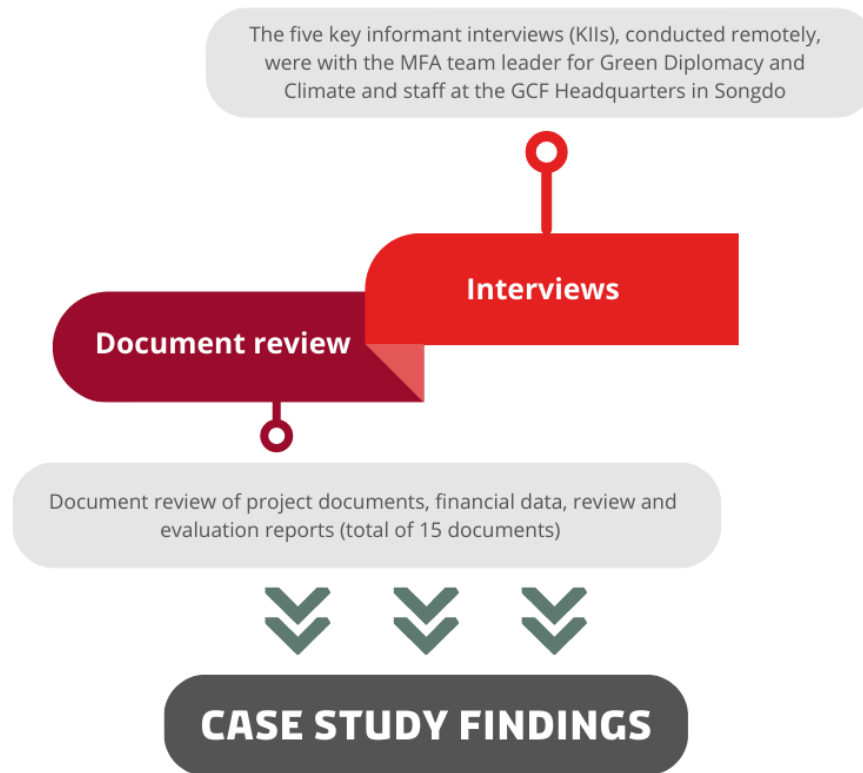
#	Activity	Theme	Modality – Budget	Status
1	Programme on Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA): Financing Climate Resilient Agricultural Practices in Ghana	<i>Climate</i>	<i>Contribution by providing annual core funding</i>	2019-2024
2	Towards Ending Drought Emergencies (TWENDE): Ecosystem Based Adaptation in Kenya’s Arid and Semi-Arid Rangelands	<i>Climate</i>	<i>Contribution by providing annual core funding</i>	2019-2024

Methodology

Desk study and scoping interviews in May–June 2022 informed the approach to the assessment of the overall partnership and the two project deep dives. The case study essentially identifies findings from interviews and desk review of documentation. Desk review scope includes Danish organisation strategies for the GCF (Organisational strategy 2016-2021 and 2021-2023), financial data, progress and review reports. Project deep dives comprised evidence from GCF-commissioned reviews and MFA review findings.

The five key informant interviews (KIIs), conducted remotely, were with the MFA team leader for Green Diplomacy and Climate and staff at the GCF Headquarters in Songdo in South Korea. At the only in-person meeting, the evaluation team was able to meet with the GCF’s project organisation – the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – and the implementing agency TWENDE in Kenya during a country case study visit in October 2022.

Figure 1. Case study methodology



Danish GCF partnership findings

The GCF is a key partner for Denmark within the Green Diplomacy and Climate branch, with increasing engagement over recent years. Findings of this evaluation point to high levels of appreciation of the partnership by both sides, which is a result of Denmark's early advocacy for the founding of the GCF in 2009, which was announced at the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in Copenhagen; its Governing Instrument was formally approved at the 17th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17) in December 2011 in Durban, South Africa. As a part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Financial Mechanism, the GCF contributes to structuring the multilateral system regarding climate change and serves the Paris Agreement.

Key trends of gender budgetary allocations

EQ 1: What have been the development and key trends of gender budgetary allocations in bilateral and multilateral programmes over the period 2014-2021?

Danish budgetary allocations to the GCF are substantial in absolute terms, and Denmark has ranked 12th among the 13 contributors of core funding to the agency throughout the evaluation period.

Denmark has supported the GCF since its establishment, and its engagement has been increasing. Firstly, there was initial start-up grant of DKK 7.3 million in support of the start-up of the Fund, and this was followed by a contribution of DKK 400 million to the Initial Resource Mobilisation (IRM 2014-2018) and, lastly, DKK 800 million covering the period 2020-2022 from the Climate Envelope³ as a joint initiative with the Ministry for Climate, Energy & Utilities (MCEU).

Key drivers of Danish support priorities

EQ 2: What have been the main drivers behind these priorities? What are the main factors behind the shifts in funding to these organisations?

The main driver behind these budgetary allocations is the Danish strategic priority to climate. Denmark was an active voice within the UNFCCC for the creation of the GCF, which was established in 2009 by 194 sovereign governments party to the UNFCCC as part of the Convention's financial mechanism. The Fund provides support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the impacts of climate change, considering the needs of those developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

Governed by an independent board that is guided by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention, the GCF aims to embody a new and equitable form of global governance to respond to the global challenge of climate change with a balanced governance structure that aims to ensure consensus-based decisions between developed and developing countries. The GCF Board, which is charged with the governance and oversight of the Fund's management, comprises 24 members (12 from contributor and 12 from recipient countries), where each member represents a constituency. Denmark shares a constituency with the Netherlands and Luxembourg, with rotations for this sharing approximately the level of funding from each of the co-members. Denmark's contribution represents 1.2% of the Fund's total.

As a key contribution to the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the aims of Denmark's support to the GCF are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build resilience, increase the ability to adapt to climate change impacts in developing countries, and contribute to making global financial flows consistent with low-emission and climate resilient development. The GCF serves as a vital element of Denmark's ambition to increase mobilisation of climate finance and take the lead

³ The Climate Envelope is a budget line in the Danish official development assistance (ODA) budget, reflected in the Finance Act and playing a central role in Danish climate funding. Established in 2008 by the Danish government, it aims to assist developing countries in meeting the challenge of climate change.

on climate action internationally. It is the largest multilateral climate fund, and as such it is subject to important political expectations, for example regarding country ownership and access, balance between adaptation and mitigation, and support for the most vulnerable countries, such as least developed countries (LDCs), small island development states (SIDS) and African countries.

However, a recent Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) study on the multilateral response to climate change⁴ found that the GCF's rapid operationalisation left gaps in essential policies and frameworks that still need to be filled for the GCF to achieve its full potential and added value. Priorities include: sharpened articulation of the GCF's general investment guidelines, with detailed terms and conditions for the GCF's financial instruments; finalising a revised GCF accreditation and partnership strategy; guidelines for a programmatic funding approach; developing the GCF's own environmental and social safeguards; and finalising an integrated results management framework which adjusts and integrates existing results management and performance measurement frameworks with indicators, results tracking tools and methodologies to account for paradigm-shifting adaptation and mitigation results. In preparation for these improvements, the GCF's Independent Evaluations Unit (IEU) has also conducted evaluations on the GCF accreditation approach, the Simplified Approval programme and GCF support to SIDS.

Outcome of global dialogue

EQ 4: What has been the outcome and effectiveness of Danish engagement in global dialogue on support to gender equality?

- ***On what issues does Denmark regularly engage in global dialogue on gender equality with case study partners?***
- ***How (through what mechanisms/fora) does Denmark engage in this dialogue?***

Throughout the evaluation period (2014-2021), there have been two MFA Organisational Strategies (OSs) for the GCF, defining priorities and relationship to the broader development cooperation strategy. The first OS (2016-2021) listed gender mainstreaming as a distinct priority area alongside four others: maximisation of the GCF's mitigation and adaptation impact; enhancement of enabling environment; the private sector facility, and use of innovative instruments; and transparent and cost-effective administrative policies. The second OS (2021-2023) lists gender mainstreaming with safeguards as one of four priority areas, the others being: maximising impacts of GCF investments; efficiency in the Board; and country ownership.

⁴ Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) (2021) Pulling Together - The Multilateral Response to Climate Change, Lessons in Multilateral Effectiveness, Paris.

Although Denmark is a governed board member, there were no records of active policy dialogue on gender with the GCF at Board level or of other high-level consultations. And although both OSs list gender mainstreaming as a priority, multiple studies and evaluations over the last years found that the GCF is lagging with its work on gender.

A study from the Heinrich Böll Stiftung and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in 2020⁵ found that although the GCF updated its gender policy in 2019 and adopted a gender action plan 2020-2023, and that although gender considerations are mainstreamed into key operational policies and guidelines – such as results management and investment decisions, as well as in accreditation procedures and stakeholder engagement processes – additional improvements are needed. Although the GCF is the first dedicated climate fund to have a gender mainstreaming approach in place at the beginning of its funding operations, it could lose this best practice leadership position without further efforts around gender integration. For example, the GCF annual portfolio reports for 2018 and 2019 for projects under implementation note failures of accredited entities⁶ to report against their submitted gender action plans – in some cases these are missing entirely. They also suggest that projects several years into implementation are insufficiently treating the gender assessments and mandatory action plans as ‘living documents’ that need updating and review by refining targets and indicators and tracking sex-disaggregated data consistently. Many projects under implementation also still lack a sufficient focus on transformative actions that address gender-biased power relations, equal access to resources, and joint decision making.

The same study suggested that the Board will have to address other gender provisions in the Governing Instrument, particularly the need for gender balance among the Secretariat staff – women are still underrepresented among its international staff and overrepresented in administrative function, although the Secretariat filled four senior management positions with women in 2020 and further increased its staff diversity. The same applies to the 24-person GCF Board, which in November 2020 included six female Board members and ten female alternate Board members, the same number as in the previous year.

The above-mentioned MOPAN study on the multilateral response to climate change in 2021⁷ found that through its positioning, the GCF has a potential to impact gender sensitive development areas, but that filling internal policy gaps seems to be a work in progress.

An evaluation of the GCF’s environmental and social safeguards and environmental and social management system, published in 2020 by the GCF’s

⁵ Climate Finance Fundamentals 11 (2020) The Green Climate Fund, Washington, DC.

⁶ As of April 2021, GCF had 103 entities approved for accreditation, of which 86 have signed a legal agreement and 74 have fully completed their accreditation process.

⁷ Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) (2021) Pulling Together - The Multilateral Response to Climate Change, Lessons in Multilateral Effectiveness, Paris.

IEU,⁸ assessed the investment criterion of “sustainable development”, which “gender sensitive development” is seen to be part of, as being subject to interpretation internally, and recommended clear guidance on it.

The same evaluation stated: “the GCF’s current environmental and social management system and safeguards are not customized or relevant to the GCF’s overall mandate. The GCF needs to urgently develop and adopt a new set of policies that reflect positive environmental, social and climate value in its actions and investments. Specifically, it needs to address gaps found in the interim standards related to climate value, human rights, gender equity and consent, among others.”

Also in this evaluation, the evaluation team identified that the GCF’s interim standards were the International Finance Corporation Performance Standards, and consequently that they are not tailored to the GCF mandate. These standards have important gaps regarding human rights, gender and equity concerns. The GCF has not adopted any guidance on how to screen and assess potential adverse effects on human rights, either for itself or for accredited entities; its gender policy does not adhere to international standards, and there is no guidance on what constitutes “consent” among others.

Further, a midterm review of OSs for Denmark’s engagement with the GCF (2021-2023)⁹ mentions that gender assessments and gender action plans are compulsory documentation required for grant approval, that these were carried out by 90 projects in 2020, and that 11 out of these 90 projects had revised them as requested. The midterm review also states that some projects and programmes still lack specific gender capacities, and that this should be improved through the engagement by accredited entities’ gender specialists to assist in the implementation and monitoring of the GCF’s Gender Action Plan at the field level.

Case project findings

Assessment of the two selected deep dive GCF projects proved to be challenging as no results information is available yet for either of the projects. Both project implementations started in 2019, and so far no reviews, such as midterm reviews, are available. Therefore, the evaluation focused on the inclusion of gender assessments and the gender action plan, aiming to respond to shortcomings that are evidenced by other reviews and evaluations.

⁸ Annandale, Darko, David Annandale, Daniela Rey Christen, María García Espinosa, John Horberry, Joseph Mavindu Mutunga, Peter Mwandri, Jyotsna (Jo) Puri, Giang Pham, and Andreas Reumann (2020) Independent evaluation of the Green Climate Fund’s Environmental and Social Safeguards and the Environmental and Social Management System. Evaluation Report No. 5, February 2020. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund. Songdo, South Korea.

⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Danida (2022) Midterm Review of Organisation Strategy for Denmark’s engagement with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) 2021-2023, Copenhagen.

EQ 4: What has been the outcome and effectiveness of Danish engagement in global dialogue on support to gender equality?

EQ 5: What kind of interventions, approaches or strategies in multilateral programmes have been well suited to supporting transformational gender changes and what lessons can be drawn?

EQ 6B: What is the added value of partnerships with multilateral and international organisations with regard to advancing gender equality?

Programme on Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa

With the objective of empowering vulnerable women groups in Ghana's most vulnerable agricultural zone by improving their participation in low-emission climate resilient agricultural practices, the AFAWA project is an on-lending programme providing credit lines to local commercial banks. These loans exclusively target micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and farmer-based associations led by women to support low-emission and climate resilient agricultural practices and seek to empower women entrepreneurs through enhanced access to finance. The project started in 2019, with an estimated lifespan of five years.

A GCF document with the title 'Gender Assessment' and with the respective project name as a subtitle,¹⁰ published on the GCF's project website, claims to seek to present issues, gaps and problems that should be addressed by gender responsive project interventions. The document itself, however, is simply a country report of the status of gender and social inclusion in Ghana and does not include any reference to the project itself.

Also published on the GCF's project website, a proposed gender action plan¹¹ appears to be quite generic, with activities being listed but with no timeline or outputs.

As already identified by previous evaluations mentioned above, guidance on how to screen and assess potential adverse effects on gender has not been included in project documents for accredited entities.

Towards Ending Drought Emergencies

With the objective of increasing the resilience of the livestock and other land-use sectors through restored and effectively governed rangeland ecosystems in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands, the project TWENDE targets 11 counties in two major climate zones which have devolved powers under Kenya's new

¹⁰ GCF Documentation, (2019), Gender Assessment, FP114: Program on Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA): Financing Climate Resilient Agricultural Practices in Ghana, AfDB | B.23/10, Ghana.

¹¹ GCF Documentation (2019), Gender Action Plan, Program on Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA): Financing Climate Resilient Agricultural Practices in Ghana, AfDB | B.23/10, Ghana.

constitution. Project interventions focus on increasing the adaptive capacities of communities and local institutions to develop evidence-based landscape planning, which is planned to be achieved by increasing accessibility to climate data and information; and enhancing the ability of community-based cottage industries to access markets and financial services. The project started in 2019 and is scheduled to end in 2024.

Also published on the GCF's respective project website, but unlike the previous project, this gender assessment¹² lists 15 "specific recommendations" such as "In coordination with counties, enforce existing laws governing disease control and improve the coverage of vaccination programmes and training of community animal health workers (CAHWs) targeting both men and women." However, no further guidance is provided in that document, nor is it reflected in the project proposal.

The gender action plan for this project¹³ provides more details and entry points for gender responsive actions to be taken under each activity area, including a Gender Responsiveness Action Tool (GReACT), aiming to help TWENDE implement the gender action plan and monitor interventions in a gender responsive manner. This action plan proved to be supportive to the project implementation in terms of collecting and monitoring data, as indicated by the TWENDE project team in Kenya.¹⁴ No linkages between the project team and the Danish embassy in Kenya could be identified.

Conclusions

The GCF is one of the three largest climate funds and is part of the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism, contributing to structuring the multilateral system on climate change, operating under the guidance of the COP and channelling resources through other multilateral organisations; it is therefore crucial for Denmark – being a global leader on climate – to have a seat at the table through its representation at the GCF's governing board.

Although Danish embassies have been involved in the development of the OS, and GCF board meeting minutes and GCF funding proposals have been circulated, the evaluation finds little evidence of awareness of the Denmark and GCF partnership.

Gender does not appear to be a priority to advocate for within the GCF, as its standards show gaps regarding human rights and gender and equity concerns, and

¹² GCF Documentation, (2019), Gender Assessment, FP113: Towards ending drought emergencies: Ecosystem based Adaptation in Kenya's arid and semi-arid rangelands (TWENDE), IUCN| B.23/10, Kenya.

¹³ GCF Documentation, (2019), Gender Action Plan, FP113: Towards ending drought emergencies: Ecosystem based Adaptation in Kenya's arid and semi-arid rangelands (TWENDE), IUCN| B.23/10, Kenya.

¹⁴ KII Partner Staff Kenya, October 2022.

its gender policy does not adhere to international standards. However, this provides great potential for Denmark, as a long-standing and significant partner of the GCF and along with its other like-minded partners, to push gender integration in an organisation with significant financial clout.

Recommendations

EQ 12: What strategic and practical considerations might Denmark engage in, in association with UNFPA/UNICEF, to gain a leading role in supporting gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights?

What institutional barriers might Denmark address in association with UNFPA/UNICEF to gain a leading role in supporting gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights?

Two potential recommendations emerge from the case study of GCF:

#1 Advocate for making gender a priority within the GCF – in its policies and other guiding documents, project implementations and the GCF Secretariat and its board – by pushing for a study on gender integration for the GCF.

#2 Be more inclusive by increasing interaction with the country level and the Danish embassies, and benefit from their participation in multi-donor platforms and other thematic networks, to learn from and engage in a broader global discussion supporting gender and climate interventions.

Annex A: People consulted

	Name	Sex	Designation	Organisation	Location
1	Oyun Sanjaasuren	F	Director of External Affairs	GCF HQ	South Korea

2	Tiffany Hodgson	F	Lead on safeguards including on gender policies	GCF HQ	South Korea
3	Collins Cheruiyot	M	Chief of Party TWENDE project	IUCN regional office, Nairobi	Kenya
4	Francis Musau	M	Regional M & E Officer	IUCN regional office, Nairobi	Kenya
5	Robert Bett	M	Senior Project officer and GFP	IUCN regional office, Nairobi	Kenya
6	Carla Majata	F	Gender regional officer, tech support for programmes	IUCN Maputo	Mozambique
7	Tobias von Platen-Hallermund	M	Team Leader, Green Diplomacy and Climate	MFA HQ	Denmark

Annex B: Literature list

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