Gender-Responsive Water Governance

A Reference Guide to Existing Tools and Frameworks

This reference guide is a companion resource to the two checklists on gender-responsive facilitation and design. It presents a curated selection of tools, frameworks, and learning resources developed by peer institutions, organised by project stage. These resources are not exhaustive but have been selected for their practical relevance to transboundary water resource management and to the governance contexts in which BRIDGE and SUSTAIN grantees operate.

Where tools are available in languages other than English, this is noted under each entry. The guide is organised into three sections corresponding to the main stages of the project cycle: Design, Implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation.

1. Project Design

The following resources support teams in integrating gender considerations from the outset — including gender analysis, stakeholder mapping, and the framing of gender-responsive objectives.

IUCN Gender Analysis Guide: A Technical Tool to Inform Gender-Responsive Environmental Programming

IUCN (2021)

A practical guide for project developers and implementation staff providing step-by-step guidance on how to conduct gender analyses and apply findings to programme and project design. It includes tools, tips, and templates that help identify gender gaps and biases at the outset of a project, making it a strong first step in designing gender-responsive interventions in water and natural resource management.

Access: https://genderandenvironment.org/iucn-gender-analysis-guide/

IUCN–SERVIR Gender Analysis Tool

IUCN / SERVIR (2025)

A newer IUCN tool developed in partnership with SERVIR, designed to support gender analysis in environmental and geospatial programming contexts. It builds on IUCN's established gender analysis guidance and offers practical frameworks for integrating gender considerations into the design of technically-oriented interventions.

Access: https://servirhkh.yipl.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/IUCN-SERVIR-gender-analysis-tool.pdf

Resource Guide: Mainstreaming Gender in Water Management

UNDP / Cap-Net | Available in: English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic

An older (2006), but still valuable reference document designed to improve the sustainability and effectiveness of water-related activities by facilitating access to gender and IWRM resources. It provides concepts, cases, and practical tools to support project planners in integrating gender equality from the design stage of water management initiatives.

Access: https://www.undp.org/publications/resource-guide-mainstreaming-gender-water-management

GWP Gender Equality and Inclusion in Water Resources Management — Action Piece

Global Water Partnership (GWP) | Available in: English, French, Spanish on the GWP website

An evidence-based call to action outlining the key ingredients needed to support gender equality and inclusion in water resources management, grounded in literature review and expert consultations. It identifies four action areas — institutional leadership, gender analysis, inclusive participation, and equal access to resources — making it a practical framework for project teams at the design stage.

Access:

- https://gwpo-gwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/gender-action-piece.pdf
- https://gwpo-gwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/gender-action-piece-french.pdf
- https://gwpo-gwp.org/assets/legacy/globalassets/global/about-gwp/publications/gender/gender-action-piece-spanish.pdf

Herramienta de planificación con enfoque de género en políticas públicas de agua y cambio climático

GWP Centroamérica (2022) | Spanish

A planning tool developed by GWP Central America to support the integration of a gender perspective into public water and climate change policy design. It provides step-by-step guidance on key concepts and planning processes, with particular relevance for Spanish-speaking practitioners working in Latin American and Caribbean contexts.

Access: https://gwpo-gwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/herramienta-de-planificacion-con-enfoque-de-genero.pdf

Addressing Gender Inclusion — IWRM Tools Hub

GWP / Water Knowledge Hub

A curated set of tools supporting gender equality in the water sector, going beyond women-targeted programmes to address structural inequalities and institutional change. The hub is especially valuable during project design as it offers multiple entry points for teams with varying levels of gender expertise.

Access: https://waterknowledgehub.org/learn/iwrm-tools/adressing-gender-inclusion

Gender-Responsive Nature-based Solutions Toolkit

DCED / Arup / Social Development Direct (2025)

A practical toolkit developed to help practitioners integrate gender responsiveness into the design and implementation of nature-based solutions, including water-related interventions. It draws on field-tested approaches and is particularly relevant for programmes like BRIDGE and SUSTAIN that combine conservation and community development objectives.

Access: https://www.enterprise-development.org/wp-content/uploads/DCED_NBS_Toolkit_Final_March_25-1.pdf

CIWA Social Inclusion Toolkit: Cooperation in International Waters in Africa

World Bank / CIWA (2023)

A toolkit developed specifically for transboundary water management in Africa, addressing social inclusion across all project phases from design through monitoring and evaluation. It is one of the few resources explicitly tailored to the multi-country, multi-stakeholder governance contexts in which BRIDGE and SUSTAIN operate, with practical guidance on identifying vulnerable and excluded groups at community and basin levels.

Access: https://www.ciwaprogram.org/rcv1/ciwa-social-inclusion-tool-kit/

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in the WEFE Nexus: Frameworks and Tools

CGIAR / Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT — Jalonen et al. (2022)

A framework and set of tools for integrating gender equity and social inclusion into water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus approaches, shifting from resource-centric to people-centred perspectives. Developed by CGIAR researchers, it is directly applicable to programmes like BRIDGE and SUSTAIN that work across these interconnected resource domains.

Access: https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/127383

2. Implementation

These resources offer practical guidance, training materials, and field-tested tools for integrating gender responsiveness into project activities — including stakeholder engagement, capacity-building, and technical interventions.

FAO e-Learning Course: Gender-Responsive, Disability- and Socially-Inclusive Water Resource Management

FAO elearning Academy

A self-paced online course covering key concepts, terminology, and tools for incorporating gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) into water resource management projects across their full cycle. Its practical orientation — including sessions dedicated to design, implementation, and monitoring — makes it a strong capacity-building resource for project staff and facilitators.

Access: https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=1113

Gender and IWRM — Online Course (2026 Edition)

Cap-Net UNDP / GWP / UNEP-DHI / Gender Water Alliance

A free, self-paced online course addressing the intersection of gender equality and Integrated Water Resources Management, suitable for water sector professionals at all levels. The 2026 edition has been updated and is a strong resource for building the gender literacy of project teams and partners during implementation.

Access: https://cap-net.org/genderiwrm/

CGIAR Gender Tools, Methods and Manuals

CGIAR Gender Research Programme

A comprehensive library of validated gender research tools and methods developed through CGIAR's international agricultural and natural resource research programmes, many directly applicable to water and land governance contexts. The collection covers tools for participatory assessment, stakeholder engagement, and gender-sensitive data collection — useful for implementation teams seeking evidence-based approaches.

Access: https://gender.cgiar.org/tools-methods-manuals

Gendlbox: Participatory Research in Climate Change and Agriculture

CGIAR / CARE International / ICRAF — Jost et al. (2014)

A field-tested toolbox providing concrete methods and tools for gender-sensitive and socially inclusive participatory research in rural development and NRM contexts. All tools are presented with clear step-by-step guidance, making this an accessible resource for project teams without dedicated gender specialists who need practical implementation support.

Access: https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/45955/CCAFS_Gender_Toolbox.pdf?sequence=7

Getting it Right: A Guide to Improve Inclusion in Multi-Stakeholder Forums

CIFOR — Evans et al. (2021) Available in: English, Spanish, French, Indonesian

A practical guide for ensuring that women, indigenous peoples, and other under-represented groups participate meaningfully in multi-stakeholder forums, rather than token inclusion. It is directly applicable to the governance settings in which BRIDGE and SUSTAIN operate, offering tips on forum design, facilitation, and accountability to reduce the risks of nominal participation.

Access: https://www.cifor.org/knowledge/publication/7973/

Enhancing Social Inclusion through Local Dialogues on Natural Resource Management

Bioversity International / CGIAR — Elias et al. (2020)

A resource addressing how to design and facilitate participatory local dialogues that genuinely include marginalised groups in NRM decision-making processes. It offers practical guidance on creating safe spaces, managing power dynamics, and ensuring that local knowledge and diverse voices inform natural resource governance — particularly relevant for community-level implementation in BRIDGE and SUSTAIN contexts.

Access: https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/108737/Enhancing_Elias_2020.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Caja de Herramientas para la Incorporación del Enfoque de Género e Interculturalidad en la Gestión Hídrico Ambiental

Bolivia Ministry of Environment and Water / GIZ PROCUENCA | Spanish

A toolkit developed by Bolivia's Ministry of Environment and Water with GIZ support, providing practical tools for incorporating gender and interculturality perspectives into water and environmental management. It is particularly valuable for Spanish-speaking practitioners working in contexts where indigenous and intercultural dimensions of water governance are central to meaningful inclusion.

Access: https://everydrop-counts.org/assets/publications/pdf/17_Caja_de_herramientas_para_la_incorporacion_del_enfoque_de_genero_e_interculturalidad_en_la_gestion_hidrico_ambiental.pdf

Metodología para el Fortalecimiento de Capacidades en Género y Agua en Latinoamérica

CONAGUA / UNESCO-IHP (2016) | Spanish

A methodology developed under Mexico's National Water Commission and the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme for strengthening gender and water capacities across Latin America. It provides structured guidance for capacity-building processes and is useful for facilitators designing or delivering gender-responsive training in Spanish-speaking water governance contexts.

Access:
https://paot.org.mx/micrositios/Genero_medio_ambiente/pdf/SECCION_GENEROYMA/2_Metodologia_fortalecimiento.pdf

SADC Handbook on Mainstreaming Gender in the Water Sector

SADC (2015) | English, French

A manual developed by the Southern African Development Community to guide gender integration across water sector programmes and institutions, funded by Australia, the UK, and Germany through GIZ. It is directly relevant to the Southern African contexts in which SUSTAIN operates and provides a regional institutional perspective on gender-responsive water governance.

Access:

- https://caselaw.ihrda.org/api/files/1512993562430y5xdzbn8v64v8opdw1giudi.pdf
- https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2021-08/Manuel_de_la_SADC_sur_LIntegration_du_Genre_dans_le_Secteur_de_lEau.pdf

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

These resources support the design of gender-responsive results frameworks, sex-disaggregated data collection, and reporting against gender equality commitments including SDG targets.

Gender-Responsive Indicators for Water Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting

UNESCO WWAP / NDC Partnership (2019) Available in: English, French, Spanish

A UNESCO designed toolkit providing a baseline framework for collecting sex-disaggregated water data, updated to align with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. It is designed to help decision-makers adopt data-driven, gender-transformative water policies and is particularly valuable for monitoring teams seeking to go beyond participation counting toward meaningful outcome measurement.

Access:

- https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000367971
- https://www.unesco.org/en/wwap/gender?hub=68313 (scroll to the bottom of the page)

Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in Water Operations

World Bank (2016) | Available in: English, Spanish, French

A structured toolkit covering gender analysis, monitoring and evaluation, women's participation, and capacity-building across water sector operations, with suggested indicators and practical guidance for each. The M&E section is particularly useful for teams needing to design gender-responsive results frameworks and accountability mechanisms for water projects.

Access:

- https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/922021536852796350/pdf/Toolkit-for-Mainstreaming-Gender-in-Water-Operations.pdf (English)
- https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/366091632722055866/pdf/Toolkit-for-Mainstreaming-Gender-in-Water-Operations.pdf (French)
- https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/609221632721033759/pdf/Toolkit-for-Mainstreaming-Gender-in-Water-Operations.pdf (Spanish)

UNESCO WWAP Toolkit on Water and Gender — Sex-Disaggregated Data Module

UNESCO / WWAP (2019) Available in: English, French, Spanish

Part of UNESCO's broader toolkit on water and gender, this module provides practical guidance on generating and using sex-disaggregated data for monitoring water governance outcomes. It is directly applicable to results measurement in transboundary water programmes and supports reporting against gender-specific SDG targets.

Access:

- https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000367971
- https://www.unesco.org/en/wwap/gender