



GESISAP

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

2024 – 2029

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Table of Contents

1| Introduction: Acting for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion1
How to Use the GESISAP 1
Purpose of the GESISAP2

2| Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategic Action Plan (GESISAP)3
GESI Strategy Principles3
GESISAP Strategic Outcomes.....3
Activity Framework5
Implementation Road Map..... 10

Conclusion 10

1| Introduction: Acting for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Following the Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA) Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy, this document comprises of a GESI Strategic Action Plan (GESISAP) for the period of 2024-2029. The GESISAP includes an activity framework that enables the mainstreaming of gender and social inclusion into existing and new ARA-led activities.

Prioritizing gender-transformative action through informed research, knowledge sharing and capacity strengthening, the strategy is guided by the ARA GESI Strategy, which provides a GESI-specific theory of change, along with an operational framework that guides the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of GESI activities. Informed by key recommendations from an institutional assessment of the ARA and its membership, the strategy provides guiding principles, as well as clear and actionable outcomes with corresponding activities that guide the ARA's work as an organization, as well as collaboration with and by ARA members.

In addition to the Strategic Action Plan, this document provides an implementation roadmap, which provides an overview of how implementation, monitoring, evaluation and renewal should be carried between the years 2024 and 2029. This strategy provides activities for the five-year period, recommending that the final year of implementation include an evaluation of impact and updating/renewal of the GESI Strategy. The GESISAP is complimented by the GESI Implementation Toolkit, which provides specific and practical details to implement the letter and spirit of the GESISAP.

It is expected that the overall impact of the GESI Strategy will be two-fold, positioning the ARA as a leading global network in enabling GESI-informed action-oriented adaptation research and advocacy, while also empowering the ARA membership to develop and access knowledge tools including regional and global knowledge sharing and capacity strengthening events and products. While the GESISAP provides activities that target the ARA and its membership as a global network, it is paramount that activities and the knowledge products that result from them include region-specific knowledge where and when possible, so as to maximize the impact and sustainability of knowledge generated.

How to Use the GESISAP

The GESISAP includes the following:

Part 1: Background and purpose of Action Plan

Part 2: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategic Action Plan (GESIAP) inclusive of core principles, priorities, overview of action plan outcomes, and an implementation road map.

The Action Plan can be used by the ARA Secretariat to guide the implementation of GESI-related activities related to:

- 1) Mainstreaming gender into existing operations, including micro-grant applications and research
- 2) Building a network of GESI experts to inform and contribute to knowledge-sharing activities and knowledge product development

The Action Plan can be used by the ARA membership to enhance capacity for GESI mainstreaming, and to facilitate networking, growth, and collaboration among members.

The Action Plan should be used in tandem with the GESI Implementation Tool-Kit, which provides guidance for the implementation of the GESISAP.

Purpose of the GESISAP

The ARA is global collaborative effort will seek to catalyse increased investment and capacity for action-orientated research that supports effective adaptation to climate change – primarily in developing countries – at the scale and urgency demanded by the science.

The ARA Secretariat, hosted by SouthSouthNorth, serves as a coordination mechanism for Members, that advocates for informed and action-oriented research that can inform adaptation and resilience on a global level. The ARA is strategically placed to facilitate and enable informed research planning, as well as collaboration, peer-learning and partnership across its global membership.

The role of the Alliance is not to execute the GESI Strategy as individuals or single entities or as Secretariat and membership as separate and distinct from each other, but rather, to engage both Secretariat and the collective membership to strengthen GESI in Member-led activities, leveraging the strength of the ARA network as social capital, and building the strength and impact of participating community members.

The ARA maintains that GESI is an integral part of facilitating research and knowledge generation for adaptation solutions that are sustainable, impactful, and resilient. The ARA will therefore advocate for and facilitate through collaborative learning, the integration of GESI into the work of Members; this will strengthen the [ARA's intended impacts](#), including reducing climate risk and building resilience for the most vulnerable, improving access to climate finance for membership, and increased gender knowledge and capacity in developing countries.

2| Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategic Action Plan (GESISAP)

Informed by membership needs, ARA priorities, and a GESI-specific theory of change (developed based on the Cinner and Barnes framework), this Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategic Action Plan (GESISAP) enables the provision of actionable steps to support to GESI informed activities on the part of ARA and its membership. This section details strategic outcomes of the Action Plan, followed by the Action Plan framework, which guides the ARA's GESI focused activities over the period of 2024-2029.

GESI Strategy Principles

The GESI Strategy aims to build on the Adaptation Research for Impact principles, providing GESI-specific activities that guide the ARA's activities as an alliance. As such, the GESI strategy is guided by the following three principles:

Principle 1

The GESI Strategy will contribute to the Adaptation Research for Impact principle of being equitable in practice by offering impact-focused and measurable actions toward GESI

Principle 2

The GESI Strategy will offer activities that are informed by and developed for user (member) needs, including the facilitating of peer-learning and co-production of knowledge.

Principle 3

The GESI Strategy will be evolving and flexible, enabling the ARA's ongoing growth as an organization committed to GESI, and will promote activities that support sustainable growth of the membership.

GESISAP Strategic Outcomes

Guiding the development of the GESI Strategy and Strategic Action Plan, the ARA membership identified strategic priorities including research and capacity strengthening agenda setting, knowledge sharing and collaboration, monitoring and accessibility of

resources and grants. Based on this, the following key outcomes have been identified for the GESISAP.

Outcome 1: Supporting GESI-Mainstreamed Impact Research

The strategy supports research that mainstreams GESI into data collection, stakeholder engagement and analyses yield findings and knowledge products that are informed by and inclusive of the needs of vulnerable groups. The four (4) entry points identified by the ARA as [entry points for GESI mainstreamed climate research](#) guide the ARA's activities:

- Taking an intersectional approach to participatory and inclusive research agenda setting,
- Integrating GESI into climate-smart development interventions,
- Advancing GESI outcomes through informed institutional and policy action, and
- Enhancing access to resources and agency of marginalized groups.

Outcome 2: Facilitating Capacity Building & Behaviour Change

The strategy facilitates the capacity of member organizations to mainstream GESI into research and programs, as well as collaboration and partnership of members for sustained capacity strengthening and behaviour change efforts. Enhancing capacity for implementation of GESI tools and frameworks facilitates behaviour change towards systemic inclusion of vulnerable groups; this includes facilitating behaviour change for organizations that do not currently consider gender and/or vulnerable groups in their objectives and mission. Capacity building efforts should be informed by the needs of the membership, which can be identified through [consultative processes](#), learning from those already carried out, and those to be carried out in future.

Facilitating capacity building within and through the membership using peer-learning mechanisms will also enable the ongoing capacity strengthening of the ARA itself.

Outcome 3: Enhancing Asset Building & Access to Climate Finance

The strategy facilitates the alignment of the ARA's [Grassroots Action Research Micro-grants](#) programme to facilitate projects that include GESI impact research/activities, including a GESI requirements checklist that must be fulfilled by grant [awardees](#).

GESI activities facilitated through Outcomes 1 and 2 will also enhance the capacity of member organizations to understand, develop and implement GESI mainstreaming mechanisms serves to support access to climate funding for those organizations, as alignment with and the implementation of gender policies and action plans is often a requirement for funding grants and accredited entity status; this is the case with major climate funding agencies including [Global Environment Facility](#), [Green Climate Fund](#), [Caribbean Climate-Smart Accelerator](#), [Adaptation Fund](#), and others.

Outcome 4: Monitoring, Evaluation, Peer-Learning and Reporting

The strategy guides the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of ongoing GESI-related activities, as well as peer-learning is critical for the sustainable implementation of the GESISAP.

Firstly, the strategy facilitates the development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms for the GESISAP, as well as implementable gender-sensitive M&E tools that can be used by participating community members, enhances the impact of the GESI Strategy, and the sustainability of GESI activities.

The implementation of this strategy also supports and benefits from peer-learning as part of the M&E process, wherein evaluative processes facilitate the gathering of lessons learned from the ARA and participating membership.

The strategy outlines the development of a reporting plan for the GESISAP within the timeframe of 2024-2029, and thereafter, that measures the impact of the framework over time.

Activity Framework

The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategic Action Plan (GESISAP) activity framework which accompanies this GESI Strategy and Framework guides the ARA's GESI activities, writ large, for the five-year period of 2024-2029.

The GESISAP includes activities that support gender equality, social inclusion and women's empowerment within the ARA and among the ARA membership. The GESISAP will be co-implemented by the ARA Secretariat and the membership, prioritizing collaborative growth and learning, and leaning on members as experts in their local contexts; as such, the GESISAP includes priority strategic actions that are both internal and external, linked to engagement with participating community members. The GESISAP activity framework is provided in Table 1.

Core activities critical to the success of the strategic action plan include developing a GESI & Adaptation Expertise Listing based on ARA member volunteers; these members will support the implementation of the strategy elements related to partnerships, capacity strengthening and knowledge sharing overall, and benefit from enhancing their own networks and reach. It must be acknowledged that best practices and GESI trends will differ by region, as will barriers to implementation and GESI informed research and data collection. As such, it is suggested that this expertise listing be categorized by region¹; doing

¹ Six regions: North America, Latin America, Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Pacific.

so will support the development of region-specific knowledge products and facilitation of region-specific knowledge sharing.

A second critical activity includes reviewing the ARA micro-grants application criteria and related process to identify GESI criteria and impact indicators; this ensures that the microgrants process is targeted and impactful and made more accessible for organizations prioritizing GESI.

Overall, the activity framework provides actions that should be co-led with the ARA secretariat and its members. As such, the groundwork necessary to facilitate this co-leadership process is provided for in the activity framework. While the activities suggested apply to the Secretariat as well as supporting members to be identified, the expertise of region-specific actors should inform region-specific knowledge products and sharing.

Table 1: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategic Action Plan: Activity Framework

Outputs	Activities	Indicators / Evaluation Method	Partners	Recurrence
Outcome 1: Supporting GESI-Mainstreamed Impact Research				
Develop a region-specific ² expertise listing among the membership; enabling members to self-identify their expertise and global/local contexts.	GESI & Adaptation Expertise Listing made available on the ARA website, including key areas where members can support in knowledge sharing and peer-learning by region.	<p>GESI Expertise Registration Brief circulated via email and made available on ARA website.</p> <p>Self-Registration Expertise Listing available on ARA website.</p> <p>Enhanced Consultative Process Outcomes for GESI & climate action.</p>	ARA Membership (New and Existing Members) with support from the Secretariat	Ongoing
<i>‘GESI and Climate-Resilient Development Interventions’</i> capacity strengthening webinars.	6 Interactive webinars (1-per region) featuring ARA members as panellists/presenters, and ARA as facilitator.	<p>Selection of webinar panellists using Membership Expertise Listing.</p> <p>Webinar recordings made accessible to ARA membership.</p>	ARA Secretariat, ARA Membership (Existing Members) Keynote Guest Speakers	Annual
Development of local/regional best-practice briefs / guiding documents for integrating GESI into adaptation research.	Assignment of funds to onboard selected 6 consultants or consultant teams to develop 4 Best-Practice Briefs on key themes based on the ARA’s four entry points .	<p>Selection of Brief topics by membership via voting platform.</p> <p>Development and sharing of TOR and selection criteria with ARA membership.</p> <p>Onboarding of consulting members.</p>	ARA Secretariat supported by 6 Selected Experts / Expert Teams (New and Existing Members)	Annual

² Six regions: North America, Latin America, Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Pacific.

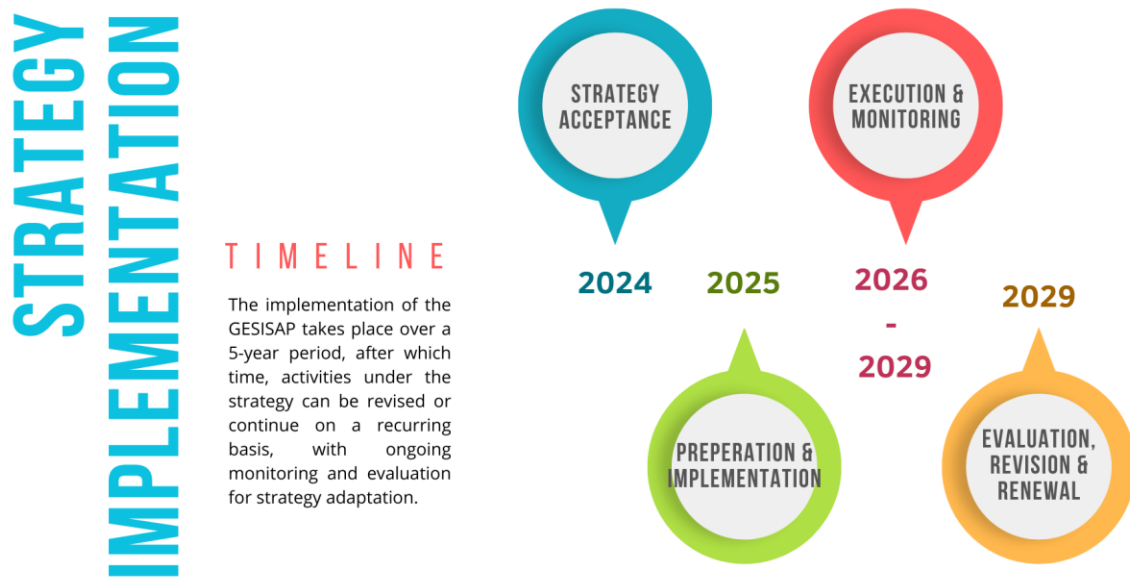
Outputs	Activities	Indicators / Evaluation Method	Partners	Recurrence
		Best-Practice Briefs representing various regions made accessible to ARA membership.		
Outcome 2: Facilitating Capacity Building & Behaviour Change				
GESI Capacity Strengthening Workshops	Facilitation of 4 Capacity Strengthening Workshops made available to all ARA members.	<p>Selection of Workshop Topics via membership voting (using 7 priority topics identified by members).</p> <p>Selection of workshop facilitators using Membership Expertise Listing</p> <p>Workshop Recordings made accessible to ARA membership.</p>	ARA Secretariat supported by select Workshop Facilitators	Annual
GESI in Adaptation Research for Impact Peer-Learning Workshops.	Facilitation of 4 Peer-Learning Workshops made available to all ARA members.	<p>Finalization of Research Workshop Agenda by membership via voting platform.</p> <p>Make available Guidance Documents and Checklists developed as workshop outputs.</p> <p>Workshop Recordings made accessible to ARA membership.</p>	All Members supported by the Secretariat	Annual
Outcome 3: Enhancing Asset Building & Access to Climate Finance				
GESI criteria added to micro-grant application process.	Reviewing micro-grants application criteria and related process to	Awardee reports to inform ARA Micro-Grant Reporting on GESI Indicators.	Micro-Grant Selection Committee	Per Grant Cycle

Outputs	Activities	Indicators / Evaluation Method	Partners	Recurrence
	identify GESI criteria and impact indicators.		Micro-Grant Applicants & Awardees	
Outcome 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Peer-Learning				
Monitoring: GESI Impacts Annual Report	Assessment of GESI Impact Outputs	<p>Identification of GESI Reporting Team</p> <p>Dissemination of GESI Engagement Feedback Survey to ARA membership.</p> <p>GESI Impacts Annual Report made publicly accessible via ARA website.</p>	ARA Membership	Annual
Evaluation: Membership Informed Strategy Renewal Evaluation & Recommendations Report.	Evaluation of GESI Outputs and fulfilment of the GESI Strategy.	<p>Identification of GESI Review Committee.</p> <p>Membership Consultative Meeting open to all members for input into GESI Strategy Renewal.</p> <p>Strategy Renewal Evaluation & Recommendations Report.</p> <p>Updated GESI Strategy made publicly accessible via ARA website.</p>	ARA Membership	End of Strategy Term

Implementation Road Map

In partnership with the ARA identified interested members, the implementation of the GESISAP will be executed over a five-year period, as per the implementation road map presented in Figure 1. This roadmap is presented as a guideline for the overall implementation of the GESI Strategic and Strategic Action Plan, showing the core phases for the execution of GESI-focused activities. It should be noted here that monitoring of impacts should happen alongside implementation and execution, and then be followed by evaluation. It is expected that at the end of this five-year period, both the GESI Strategy and Strategic Action Plan are evaluated based on inputs from ongoing monitoring, as well as through an external evaluation committee; findings of this evaluation should inform the updating and renewal of the ARA's GESI strategy and actions.

Figure 1: GESISAP Implementation Road Map



Conclusion

Both the GESI Strategy and Strategic Action Plan presented above are informed by the ARA GESI assessment carried out in 2024 and supported by the GESI Implementation Tool Kit which provides guidance, tools and resources to support capacity for implementation.

Through the implementation of this GESISAP, the ARA positions itself as a gender-responsive and socially inclusive network, leading in GESI-informed adaptation research and impact, globally.