



## DISABILITY INCLUSION IN CLIMATE FINANCE:

*A background paper for the disability inclusion approach for climate investment funds*

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### TOPICS

- Social Inclusion
- Just Transition
- Stakeholder Engagement

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- 1. The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) — one of the world’s most significant multilateral funds — utilizes climate financing to help low- and middle-income countries accelerate low-carbon, climate-resilient development.** CIF places social inclusion at the center of its efforts and supports transformational change and climate-smart development for everyone, laying the groundwork for an inclusive and climate-smart future. At the core of CIF’s initiatives are diverse partnerships that de-risk green markets and unlock additional investments and financing, as well as gender empowerment. To date, 15 contributor countries have pledged over USD 10 billion to CIF, which is expected to mobilize an additional USD 62 billion in co-financing for 72 recipient countries. Since its establishment, CIF’s work has contributed to the areas of clean technologies, energy access, climate resilience, and sustainable forests. Now, after identifying the next frontier of climate challenges, CIF is investing in five new areas: (a) the transition from coal; (b) climate smart cities; (c) nature-based solutions; (d) industry decarbonization; and (e) renewable energy integration.
- 2. Persons with disabilities<sup>1</sup> are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change, yet they are often overlooked in climate decision-making. As a result, their needs are marginalized in climate investments.** According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), persons with disabilities are the most acutely affected by climate change, given that their vulnerability is often exacerbated by other social exclusion factors, such as gender, minority status, and membership in an Indigenous People’s group.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, they are frequently disregarded as potential workforce members, therefore being more susceptible to facing higher levels of unemployment and poverty than other groups. In developing countries, 80 to 90 percent

of working-age persons with disabilities are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50 and 70 percent.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, because of their limited access to transportation, accommodation, education, and healthcare, they are prevented from accessing and contributing to green economy. As evidenced in disaster risk management programming and industrial design, persons with disabilities and their representatives possess the skills and knowledge to inform the development of inclusive and accessible adaptation strategies and mitigation measures and address barriers they may face in accessing services and support in the events of climate-related shocks.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, including persons with disabilities in the decision-making process and results frameworks will improve safeguards, opportunities, and accessibility in climate action. Conversely, failing to involve persons with disabilities in climate action and planning may carry significant consequences, including the risks of undermining their ability to access services and rights as per the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD).<sup>5</sup>

**3. Without targeted actions, climate investments may inadvertently contribute to structural inequalities that reinforce the exclusion of people with disabilities.** While disability inclusion is getting more prominence in international development efforts, specific emphasis and practical guidance on integrating it into climate investments is needful. Despite international recognition of the greater vulnerability of persons with disabilities to climate change, disability issues have received little attention from practitioners, policy makers, and scholars in this field. Only 37 of the 192 Parties to the Paris Agreement mention persons with disabilities in their National Determined Contributions (NDCs) which means that 81 percent of states do not mention persons with disabilities in their NDCs.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, many of the NDCs that refer to persons with disabilities do not include concrete measures to consult with them or protect their rights. As countries take measures to combat

climate change and adapt to its impacts, it is critical to understand how these efforts can be designed and implemented in ways that respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities.

**4. Climate policies and investments must identify differential impacts of climate change for persons with disabilities and incorporate targeted actions to ensure inclusion and accessibility for all.** This background paper has been developed to inform the CIF's approach to disability inclusion and provide concrete and actionable guidance on how to apply it to investment projects in different sectors. By addressing the knowledge gap on disability inclusion in climate finance, this paper also intends to be useful for other climate finance funds and other development partners in the development of more inclusive approaches and policies. More specifically, this paper aims to:

- 1) Provide a rationale for disability inclusion in the context of climate finance.
- 2) Outline an operational approach to disability inclusion in investment and technical assistance projects.
- 3) Identify sector-specific considerations for disability inclusion.
- 4) Sketch out commitments to disability-inclusive practices at the organizational level.



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# 1. DISABILITY INCLUSION AND CLIMATE FINANCE

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## 1.1. Persons with disabilities represent over 15 percent of the world population, and over 80 percent of them live in developing countries.<sup>7</sup>

Regional- and country-level data on disability are hard to compare due to the variability in definitions and measurement approaches, as well as gaps and inconsistencies, among them (see Box 1). This is reflected in existing estimates across various regions. For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean region, it is estimated that there are 85 million persons with disabilities — about 14.7 percent of the regional population. Furthermore, about 1 in 3 households (or 52 million) have at least one person with a disability, and nearly 3 in 10 persons with disabilities (or 16.9 million) report a severe

### BOX 1. Disability data

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Comparisons of data on disability across countries and regions are complicated due to the use of different definitions and data collection and analysis approaches. The set of questions, developed by the [Washington Group on Disability Statistics](#) on the functioning of adults for disability disaggregation, has been validated as a suitable standard for measuring disability prevalence. It includes six questions that address core functional domains, namely, seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care, and communication, assessing the difficulties experienced in each domain. Modified versions of these questions can be incorporated into [household surveys and national censuses](#).

disability.<sup>8</sup> The Asia-Pacific region reports around 690 million people, accounting for approximately 70 percent of the global population of persons with disabilities.<sup>9</sup> In sharp contrast, according to official government statistics from Africa, the percentage of persons with disabilities is reported to be as low as 2 to 5 percent, though in some countries, it is likely to be between 20 and 22 percent due to the prevalence of conflicts, forced displacements, and a lack of access to adequate medical services.<sup>10</sup> These numbers are set to increase because of chronic diseases, an aging population, ongoing conflicts, and climate emergencies. At the same time, non-climate stresses can increase vulnerability to climate change and impede the resilience and adaptive capacity of individuals and communities because of resource deployment to competing needs.<sup>11</sup>

**1.2. Persons with disabilities are more likely to be poor and face other forms of social exclusion and discrimination. There is a strong link between disability and poverty in low- and middle-income countries.**<sup>12</sup> Although gaps between persons with and without disabilities vary among countries, in some countries the gaps reach more than 20 percentage points in income poverty, 15 percentage points in the ability to afford a meal with protein every second day, 50 percentage points in experiencing good health, in literacy rates and in employment-to-population ratios.<sup>13</sup> 1 in 5 households classified as “extremely poor” have a person with disability.<sup>14</sup> A 2022 UNICEF report found that households with children with disabilities in Philippines have a higher cost of living compared to those with children without disabilities.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the poorest people are predicted to continue experiencing the worst effects of climate change, including the loss of income and livelihood opportunities, displacement, hunger, and adverse health impacts.<sup>16</sup> Disability intersects with other social exclusion factors, such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), religion, culture, migration status, and socioeconomic backgrounds, however, the impact of this overlap

on an individual’s experiences is understudied.<sup>17</sup> The share of persons with disabilities is significantly higher among Indigenous peoples, people from lower-income groups, and elderly people.<sup>18</sup>

**1.3. Persons with disabilities face additional barriers in accessing electricity, even though for some of them access to electricity is fundamental to their existence.** The conventional universal energy access agenda has predominantly focused on the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and the elderly while there has been limited focus on energy access, availability, and affordability for persons with disabilities.<sup>19</sup> The UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development (2018) estimated that less than 50 percent of households with persons with disabilities have access to energy due to fewer financial resources to pay their energy bills. Overall, more than 1 billion people (including persons with disabilities, older persons, and those with temporary health-related issues) need at least one form of assistive technology.<sup>20</sup> Energy disruptions can leave some persons with disabilities stranded, impaired, or even in life-threatening situations due to their dependence on electricity and refrigeration to power their assistive technologies and store essential medicines, among other critical needs.

**1.4. Persons with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in the labor market, and the effects of climate change will further exacerbate their difficulties in accessing new green jobs.** The global employment ratio for persons with disabilities is 36 percent, compared with 60 percent among the population without disabilities.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, once in employment, persons with disabilities face obstacles, such as limited career advancement opportunities and relegation to low-paid or part-time jobs.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, enterprise-specific employer protection policies are often inadequate and require national interventions to ensure social protection and long-term health coverage for



persons with disabilities. Finally, the transition to low-carbon economies can create 18 million new jobs,<sup>23</sup> but without targeted measures to combat discrimination and provide reasonable accommodations, persons with disabilities, and especially women, face the risk of being excluded from these opportunities related to green jobs. This phenomenon will also negatively impact the sector, preventing it from building a more diverse workforce, generating GDP gains, harnessing untapped resources of productive potential, and achieving sustainable development. The International Labor Organization (ILO) recommends disability-inclusive policies and programs during the transition from a high carbon to low carbon economy that include skills development opportunities for persons with disabilities to address their underrepresentation in the workforce.<sup>24</sup> Considering evidence of employment discrimination leading to an annual loss in global GDP of USD 1.37–1.94 trillion,<sup>25</sup> employers can begin to expand their pool of talent, skills, and creative business solutions by integrating persons with disabilities into their human resource strategies.<sup>26</sup>

**1.5. Resilience to climate change impact on persons with disabilities is hindered by the barriers that they face in accessing mitigation and adaptation efforts and services.** Climate change makes persons with disabilities more vulnerable and extreme climate events can leave persons with disabilities without shelter, food, and water. Around 1 billion people live in urban slums, fragile hillsides, or flood-prone riverbanks, where they are highly vulnerable to extreme climate events and highly polluted urban environments.<sup>27</sup> Persons with disabilities living in these areas most likely experience overlapping disadvantages, such as a lack of infrastructure, basic services, and access to safe water and sanitation.<sup>28</sup> For example, a study in the coastal zone of Bangladesh revealed that the majority of persons with disabilities neither received any training on disaster preparedness nor were able to access the disaster shelters. Rising temperatures and frequent extreme weather will further exacerbate the challenges of access to food for persons with disabilities.<sup>29</sup> Due to mobility issues and the existing barriers of access to medicine, emergency communications,



early warning systems, transportation, evacuation shelters, relief, and recovery efforts, persons with disabilities often experience disproportionately high rates of mortality. Additionally, they experience more acutely other health impacts induced by climate change, such as malnutrition, noncommunicable diseases, respiratory conditions, infectious diseases, and injuries. The existing inequalities in healthcare and assistance for persons with disabilities are poised to be exacerbated in the aftermath of climate-related emergencies due to the unequal distribution of resources and the current strains on them.

**1.6. The exclusion of persons with disabilities from decision-making exacerbates barriers to their equal participation and opportunity to fight against climate change and contribute to climate governance.** Participation is a fundamental human rights principle and a requirement in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).<sup>30</sup> However, persons with disabilities face physical and social barriers in accessing climate governance. For instance, even global events such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) are still facing some accessibility challenges, which could lead to the underrepresentation of persons with disabilities at climate negotiations.<sup>31</sup> Creating a space for persons with disabilities to participate in the local, regional, and global efforts against climate change can ensure sustainable and inclusive approaches for climate solutions. Otherwise, persons with disabilities can be adversely impacted by well-intentioned responses to climate change that are formulated and accepted on their behalf (see Box 2). The voices of persons with disabilities tend to be dismissed and, as a result, their needs are often overlooked by the general public, while more attention is paid to the needs of more visible groups.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, it is crucial for states to recognize and pursue a disability-rights approach to climate governance that identifies the different impacts of climate change for persons with disabilities and outlines

## **BOX 2. Unintended consequences of policy measures adopted without consultation**

After plastic straws were banned from consumption in the United States (US), disability rights groups and advocates publicly voiced their concerns about the impact of this ban on persons with disabilities. Many of them use plastic straws to consume food, beverages, and medicine. Unfortunately, virtually every alternative to plastic straws for specific groups has at least one, if not several, drawbacks, including requiring persons with disabilities to carry reusable straws and sterilize them for reuse ([Creaky Joints 2019](#)). Persons with disabilities have also expressed concerns about the stigma they could face for using straws or asking for them in public places amid bans ([NPR 2018](#)).

the standards, principles, and resources for designing accessible adaptation and mitigation programs.<sup>33</sup> In addition, research suggests that involving persons with disabilities in discussions about climate disaster preparedness and recognizing their interdependence and problem-solving abilities can make communities more adaptable<sup>34</sup> and can offer valuable insights into climate change issues.<sup>35</sup>

**1.7. In the event of displacement due to climate change or other disasters, persons with disabilities face multiple challenges in migrating safely, which means that they are often left behind without assistance.** As the effects of climate change begin to be felt globally, there will be an increase in climate refugees. The United Nations International Organization for Migration (UN IOM) forecasts 200 million such refugees by 2050, who will move either within their countries or across borders on a permanent or temporary basis.<sup>36</sup> However, persons with disabilities are often disadvantaged when communities are migrating, as they could be forced to remain in locations affected by climate change. For example, in the Pacific Island of Kiribati, residents, including persons with disabilities, have to move their homes every two to three years.<sup>37</sup> In the event of migration, persons with disabilities face multiple



challenges, such as a lack of infrastructure and assistance; inadequate immigration policies without specific provisions for persons with disabilities at refugee camps and/or host communities; and separations from support networks, such as the family, the community, and relevant associations and institutions (see Box 3).

- 1.8. Women and girls with disabilities may face a more severe impact from climate change due to structural inequalities.** In addition to challenges faced by all persons with disabilities due to limited physical mobility, increased vulnerability to infectious diseases, as well as poor access to services, information, and networks (particularly during emergencies and displacement), women with disabilities often face greater economic and social isolation compared with men with disabilities.<sup>38</sup> Girls and women with disabilities also face high levels of gender-based violence that often goes undetected and unpunished. Globally, 1 in every 3 women experiences physical or sexual violence during her lifetime.<sup>39</sup> Those rates are far higher for women with disabilities while women with intellectual disabilities are at even higher risk of violence, including sexual violence.<sup>40</sup> Children with disabilities, especially girls, experience many forms of violence by perpetrators within their extended family and the wider community, with no opportunities to get help.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, preexisting and

compounding discriminatory gender norms, hindering the social mobility of women and girls, reduce their capacities to access life-saving services during disasters.<sup>42</sup>

- 1.9. Climate change poses a significant threat to Indigenous communities due to their heavy reliance on natural resources and limited access to financial and technical assistance.** Around 6 percent of the global population is comprised of Indigenous Peoples, that is 476 million people worldwide. Often, Indigenous persons with disabilities experience multiple forms of discrimination based on their status and their disability, preventing them from fully enjoying their rights.<sup>43</sup> Global statistics on Indigenous peoples with disabilities, even though scarce, indicate that they have a higher likelihood of experiencing disabilities than the general population (Box 4).

- 1.10. Older people with disabilities represent a sizeable group and may also have specific challenges related to the climate change.** The incidence of disability rises with age: almost half of older persons worldwide are living with some form of disability, a proportion that increases as people age within the “older” age group, and older persons represent a majority of persons with disabilities. Accordingly, climate change impacts on persons with disabilities are more likely to be borne by older persons. There are also areas where age and disability have compounding effects. For example, older persons with disabilities disproportionately experience poor housing conditions, which aggravates their vulnerability to climate-related emergencies and temperature effects. Intersecting forms of bias and discrimination can lead to invisibility of older persons with disabilities, particularly those with cognitive disabilities, and to their exclusion from policy responses.<sup>44</sup>

- 1.11. Climate change also causes new health challenges and disabilities.** For example, extreme weather events can cause accidents, disrupt accessibility, or damage auxiliary devices,

### **BOX 3. Disability discrimination caused by migration policies**

In May 2022, The Guardian reported that New Zealand denied entry to the autistic daughter of a Filipino couple. The 12-year-old girl was denied entry under immigration policies preventing the entry of people with disabilities and illnesses. This is not the first time that New Zealand has denied entry to immigrants who might impose high medical costs on the health system. Thus far, New Zealand has rejected hundreds of persons with disabilities from migrating there. According to the country’s new rules, there’s a maximum limit of USD 41,000 over five years on an immigrant’s potential costs to the country’s healthcare system (McClure 2022).

## BOX 4. Disability and Indigenous People

The World Report on Disability, 2011, estimates that 15 percent of the world's population has a disability. In Latin America, available statistics for seven countries (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay) show that there is a higher rate of disability among Indigenous persons than the rest of the population. For persons aged 19 and older, there are more Indigenous persons with disabilities than non-Indigenous for all seven countries, with sizeable gaps in Costa Rica and Uruguay. In Australia, about half of Indigenous adults reported a disability in 2008, as compared with a national figure of 18.5 percent in 2009 gathered through a survey of disability, ageing and carers. In New Zealand, statistics were published in 2006 on disability and Maori. A disability survey found, after adjusting for the age structures of the two populations, that the age-standardized disability rate for Maori was 19 percent, compared with 13 percent for non-Maori. More Maori persons with disabilities are living in poverty or have no educational achievements, as compared with non-Maori persons with disabilities. In Canada, some statistics have been provided on aboriginal persons with disabilities by state and by Indigenous people. In 2000, the observer for Canada informed the Working Group on Indigenous Populations that aboriginal children were three times more likely than non-Indigenous children to have physical disabilities. A First Nations regional longitudinal health survey conducted in 2002/03 provided some information about prevalence, employment, education, income, and health status, in addition to making recommendations. The survey showed that about 22.9 percent of on-reserve persons aged 18 and over had disabilities. (UN, [Study on the situation of indigenous persons with disabilities](#))

thereby affecting the livelihoods and jobs of persons with disabilities and disrupting their community ecosystems. Moreover, they can result in injuries among populations without disabilities. Also, in the event of climate disasters, economic losses may lead to a reduction in job opportunities, especially among persons with disabilities, who may struggle with finding employment, often due to employers' misconceptions about their capacities<sup>45</sup> and/or inability to provide reasonable accommodations that meet accessibility requirements. Lastly, given that persons with disabilities have

disproportionately lower incomes, and often rely on assistive technologies, savings, and assets, they may face increased challenges in supporting themselves financially during emergencies or returning to work.

### 1.12. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) defines the obligations of member states for supporting a disability-inclusive, human rights-based approach to climate governance as follows.<sup>46</sup>

- a. Assess and document the differing impacts of climate change on the rights of persons with disabilities through an approach that recognizes overlapping forms of inequality.
- b. Develop and implement evidence-based climate mitigation and adaptation policies to prevent and minimize the negative impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities.
- c. Provide accessible information on climate change to persons with disabilities.
- d. Strengthen the capacity of persons with disabilities to participate in climate decision-making concerning them.
- e. Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to effective remedies when they experience harm from climate action or inaction.
- f. Support international efforts to combat climate change and enhance the climate resilience of persons with disabilities in low- and lower-middle-income countries through international cooperation and assistance.<sup>47</sup>



## 2. BACKGROUND ON MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS' AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS' POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES ON DISABILITY INCLUSION<sup>48</sup>

**2.1. The African Development Bank recognizes disability inclusion as an emerging issue in the social assessments undertaken during its Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs).** The ESIAs require, among others, the disaggregation of all relevant data based on sex, ethnicity, disability, religion, age, social and cultural conditions, and social and Indigenous origins. Then, differentiated measures, depending on groups' varying levels of vulnerability, are assessed to address groups' specific needs. The Updated Integrated Safeguards System will further strengthen this requirement. Seeking inclusion through the disaggregation of distinct groups in the assessment process is a challenge for environmental and social assessments. There is a demand for all-encompassing assessments,

considering gender, human rights, sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH); gender-based violence (GBV); disabilities; and more. Therefore, to ensure the assessment process is as inclusive as possible, the updated Integrated Social Safeguard policy will use the broad classification of vulnerable groups, aiming to capture all these categories and address the risks associated with them in different project settings.

**2.2. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), through its Strengthening Disability-Inclusive Development 2021–2025 Road Map, commits to disability-inclusive development. This is to enhance the impact of its work with and for the poorest and most excluded people in the region,**



**including addressing their vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters.** The road map includes practical steps to greater disability inclusion in projects, research, and organizational systems, and supports the implementation of the ADB Strategy 2030 on social inclusion, social development, gender mainstreaming, and disability-inclusive development. It aims to empower persons with disabilities to actively participate in the development agenda, as well as increase the capacity and knowledge of ADB's staff on the issue and best practices. Additionally, it intends to help ADB create the foundation for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to disability-inclusive development in the longer term. Finally, the establishment of a consultative group will play an important role in monitoring ADB's progress by providing feedback and helping to shape its work in disability-inclusive development. The group will include national and regional Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), as well as those working with persons with disabilities, academics, and other experts.

**2.3. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) adopted its Equality of Opportunity Strategy (EOS) for 2021–2025 to broaden and strengthen the bank's distinctive private sector-focused approach to economic inclusion for persons with disabilities.**

The strategy builds on EBRD's successful engagements with its investee companies — most of which are private — in promoting equal access to employment, skills development, and vital services for persons with disabilities and others. The EOS acknowledges the unpredictable and dynamic nature of opportunity factors, which are shaped by external events such as long-term stressors and shocks, changing social norms, biases, and legal frameworks. Also, the EOS takes into consideration characteristics that intersect with one another and change throughout a person's life, impacting access to employment. These characteristics are age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture,

migration status, socioeconomic backgrounds, disability, skill types and levels, displacement, as well as life events triggered by other external factors, including climate change.

**2.4. Unlike the mandates of other international finance institutions, the EOS places an emphasis on the private sector's role in addressing inequalities and includes a clear pathway for investment opportunities and policy engagements to address inequalities.**

Among other benefits, EBRD's engagement might create job opportunities for persons with disabilities by delivering accredited, work-based training programs and employability support; enabling inclusive education and training through technical support and capacity building; improving companies' human resource (HR) policies and practices to promote equal opportunities; increasing the share of workers with disabilities in a company's workforce; enhancing the accessibility of infrastructure, transport, and other services (including digital services); and contributing to legislative, regulatory, and institutional reforms to advance the economic rights and opportunities of workers with disabilities.

**2.5. The World Bank (IBRD) has adopted the Disability Inclusion and Accountability Framework to mainstream disability inclusion in all its projects, analytics, and policies.**

The framework serves as a road map that presents entry points for including disability in its policies, operations, and analytical work while building internal capacity for implementing disability-inclusive development programs. The framework targets staff, client countries, development partners, and persons with disabilities and it is guided by the principles of nondiscrimination and equality, accessibility, inclusion, participation, partnerships, and collaboration. It outlines six key steps toward disability inclusion at the World Bank:

- a. Apply a twin-track approach for recognizing persons with disabilities among the beneficiaries of all projects, while also



carrying out specific projects to address primary inclusion gaps;

- b. Adopt explicit references to disability in general policies, guidelines, and procedures that shape the World Bank's activities;
- c. Identify focus areas for disability-inclusive projects and advisory services;
- d. Collect data to improve the evidence base on persons with disabilities;
- e. Build staff capacity and organizational knowledge on disability inclusion; and
- f. Develop external partnerships for implementing the disability inclusion agenda.

**2.6. The World Bank has also incorporated disability inclusion into its Environmental and Social Framework (ESF).** The ESF is intended to strengthen the World Bank's commitment to identifying vulnerable or disadvantaged groups and individuals (including persons with disabilities) and assessing risks, preventing impacts, and addressing barriers to accessing project benefits.<sup>49</sup> The inclusion of persons with disabilities in the World Bank-financed projects is guided by three core principles underlying ESF: a) mitigate the risk of increased vulnerability among persons with disabilities; b) provide, where reasonable, opportunities to

take advantage of project benefits, including employment; and c) include persons with disabilities in consultations and stakeholder engagements in a meaningful way.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, the Environmental and Social Performance Standards set forth by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) require the identification of social and environmental impacts on persons with disabilities to not only prevent injuries but also mitigate the increased vulnerability to such incidents.<sup>51</sup>

**2.7. The Inter-American Development Bank Group (IDBG)<sup>52</sup> is committed to gender equality and empowerment as well as to equal access to opportunities for diverse peoples and population groups across Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).**

The Bank focuses on four diverse groups that face discrimination based on their collective identity: (i) persons with disabilities; (ii) Indigenous peoples; (iii) Afro-descendants; and (iv) people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual and other diverse gender identities and sexual orientations (LGBTQ+).

**2.8. The IDBG supports Gender and Diversity (G&D) policies in the LAC region through its operations, technical assistance and generation of data and evidence, covering women and**





**diverse peoples and population groups, including people with disabilities.** The Gender and Diversity Sector Framework Document (SFD) argues that three challenges that form the deep roots of persistent inequities experienced by women and diverse groups must be addressed in the region: (i) structural inequities that perpetuate processes of exclusion; (ii) unequal treatment for the same characteristics; and (iii) weak institutional capacity to design and execute G&D policies. It also proposes to focus the IDBG work on reducing gaps in social and economic outcomes for women and diverse groups, actively promoting G&D equity and putting special attention to intersectional identities.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the Gender and Diversity Action Plan 2022-2025 provides detailed guidance to reinforce gender and diversity mainstreaming – which includes people with disabilities - throughout the IDBG’s actions to expand and improve the quality of its interventions. Diversity strategic areas of actions related to climate change include: (i) improving the capabilities of diverse populations to mitigate, adapt and become more resilient to climate change through the transfer of knowledge and technology and targeted responsive social protection and health services; (ii) promoting the participation of diverse populations in the decision-making process of the climate change agenda and biodiversity preservation in the local, national, and international context; and (iii) increasing diverse populations’ access to high-quality jobs related to the necessary transformation to achieve an economy low in carbon emissions and resilient to climate change.

**2.9. During 2023,<sup>54</sup> 65% of IDBG’s approved projects were aligned to diversity; 50% of those projects considered people with disabilities.** According to the IDBG Institutional Strategy, at the time of a project approval, a project needs to include three elements to be strategically aligned to gender and/or diversity: (i) an analysis of the development problem or gap related to gender and/or diversity; (ii) at least one activity/ solution that addresses the specific gender

and/or diversity issue identified; and (iii) at least one indicator in the project results matrix. From January to September 2023, 65% of IDBG’s approved projects were aligned to diversity; 50% of them considered people with disabilities’ needs, surpassing the 25% institutional target.

**2.10. The IDBG also recognizes the need to establish more stringent protections for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities in its Environmental and Social Policy Framework.**

Under the framework, IDBG projects should consider any risks that could adversely impact persons with disabilities, ensuring that they have equal access to and can benefit from project activities without any discrimination.

**BOX 5. Disability inclusion and climate change at the [16th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(COSP\)](#)**

At the 16th Conference of States Parties of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP) climate change and its impacts represented a prominent topic of discussion at the opening remarks of the Secretary General and the various side events. The main debate on disability rights and climate nexus was predominantly around consultations, participation, and opportunities. During the side events, dedicated to climate action, there was a consensus among participants that disability is crucial for sustainable development. Unanimously, organizations representing persons with disabilities at the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (formerly known as the Post-2015 Development Agenda) recognize persons with disabilities as central to achieving sustainable development, with multiple solid references to them throughout the agenda. As a result, 5 Sustainable Development Goals specifically reference people with disabilities.



### 3. BACKGROUND ON RECENT COMMITMENTS TO DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE BY SELECTED CONTRIBUTOR COUNTRIES TO CIF<sup>55</sup>

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**3.1. Canada, domestically and internationally, expresses its commitment to increasing the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the design and delivery of its programs, policies, and other initiatives funded through Global Affairs Canada.** Canada, which supports the Global Disability Summit Charter for Change (a funding platform for promoting the rights of persons with disabilities),<sup>56</sup> hosted the

2019 Global Action on Disability Network (GLAD) Annual General Meeting (see Box 6). In February 2022, Canada announced its financial support to local organizations in developing countries that promote the rights of persons with disabilities.<sup>57</sup>

**3.2. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has commissioned a Global Project on Inclusion of**



**Persons with Disabilities (2019–2022) to help implementing organizations in giving greater consideration to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development activities.<sup>58</sup>**

It actively promotes the rights of persons with disabilities through funding and incorporates various measures to empower them to engage with their communities. BMZ has funded 133 projects in 58 partner countries that directly contribute to the inclusion of persons with disabilities.<sup>59</sup>

**3.3. Japan International Corporate Agency’s (JICA) support for the inclusion of persons with disabilities extends beyond social welfare, aiming to enable persons with disabilities to become important actors in their communities.**

JICA, through its development programs, strives to achieve “the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities in developing countries with emphasis on support that ensures active participation of persons with disabilities in society.”<sup>60</sup> JICA has also adopted a twin-track approach that mainstreams the inclusion of persons with disabilities as beneficiaries in overall development initiatives and supports disability-specific initiatives.<sup>61</sup>

**3.4. The United Kingdom (UK) declared its commitment toward the promotion of the inclusion of persons with disabilities at the 2018 Global Disability Summit, and soon after, launched the second National Disability Strategy (2018–2023).**

The strategy highlights the critical role of the UK as a global actor in the realm of disability rights.<sup>62</sup> In line with the national strategy, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) launched its own Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy 2022 to 2030, revolving around four priority areas: a) inclusive education; b) social protection; c) economic empowerment; and d) humanitarian response, incorporating climate action as an emerging theme. Key focal points, pertaining to the disability and climate change agenda, include: a) expanding the consideration of disability in the international climate finance





portfolio; b) investing in robust research and evidence-based inclusive and just climate action; and c) building partnerships with key allies, such as CIF and the Green Climate Fund, to accelerate global attention and action.<sup>63</sup> FCDO has implemented minimum standards across all the work it is funding to ensure an inclusive approach on disability.<sup>64</sup> It also coordinates and collaborates on the disability agenda with a diverse range of multilateral and bilateral actors, including those operating in fragile and conflict-affected countries (see Box 6).<sup>65</sup>

**3.5. The United States promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities globally through multiple development and networking platforms.** The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has established the USAID Disability Policy — the first by a bilateral donor — whose approach amounts to a) do not discriminate against persons with disabilities and b) work to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, USAID provides grants on disability and climate action-specific interventions for its missions. It manages the Disability Program Fund, which provides resources to various missions globally to incorporate disability inclusion in all aspects of its programming and projects. This fund has supported more than 150 programs and activities in 65 countries.<sup>67</sup>

**3.6. Norway recently launched Equality for All: Norway’s Strategy for Disability Inclusive Development (2022–2025) in an “effort to promote equality and the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities.”<sup>68</sup>** The strategy is an opportunity for future efforts to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Norway’s international development assistance. The strategy has two objectives: a) to promote compliance with the UN CRPD; and b) to work proactively to support the 2030 Agenda’s goal of leaving no one behind. The strategy is also introduced as one of the wider efforts to promote equality and reduce disparities. Similar to other donor

## BOX 6. Disability Rights UK

Disability Rights UK, run by people with lived experiences of disability, leads an international coalition comprising of Disabled People Organizations and Disability Climate Activists. Their aim is to strengthen the dialogue around climate change and disability inclusion across various platforms. Disability Rights UK addressed COP27, emphasizing the importance of mainstreaming disability inclusion in climate mitigation and adaptation financing to improve disaster preparedness and yield results-oriented solutions. It advocates for advancements in Disaster Planning, the reduction of climate impacts, addressing environmental hazards, and more importantly, for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate finance. CIF AU has consulted with experts from Disability Rights UK on the draft of the Action Plan and will maintain an active dialogue during the Plan’s implementation.

agencies, Norway applies a twin-track approach of mainstreaming the inclusion and rights of persons with disabilities and incorporating targeted measures.<sup>69</sup> Finally, the strategy prioritizes the climate agenda, with adaptation as one of its key thematic areas.

# 4. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION IN CLIMATE INVESTMENTS

4.1. To embed disability inclusion in climate discourse, disability must be understood as a result of the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers, according to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).<sup>70</sup> These factors include discrimination, inaccessible built environments, and limited social support. Recognizing social and environmental conditions as determinant factors of disability places the responsibility on the state party and society to implement the substantive article of the CRPD and eliminate barriers experienced by persons with disabilities. This may include awareness-raising, designing, and implementing disability-inclusive policies, integrating universal design, ensuring participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes, and the provision of reasonable accommodations. These efforts are geared towards facilitating equal access to opportunities and upholding the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities (see Box 7).<sup>71</sup>

4.2. Integrating disability inclusion principles in climate investments is essential to ensure all individuals, regardless of their ability, gender, age, income, ethnicity, and race status, can benefit and be protected from unintended negative consequences of transitioning to a low-carbon and climate-resilient development pathway. Practitioners have limited access to

### BOX 7. CRPD's definitions

**Universal design:** Design products, environments, programs, and services to be usable by all persons to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptations or specialized designs.

**Reasonable accommodations:** Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy or exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis. These accommodations should not impose a disproportionate or undue burden on persons with disabilities while their denial is considered a form of discrimination.

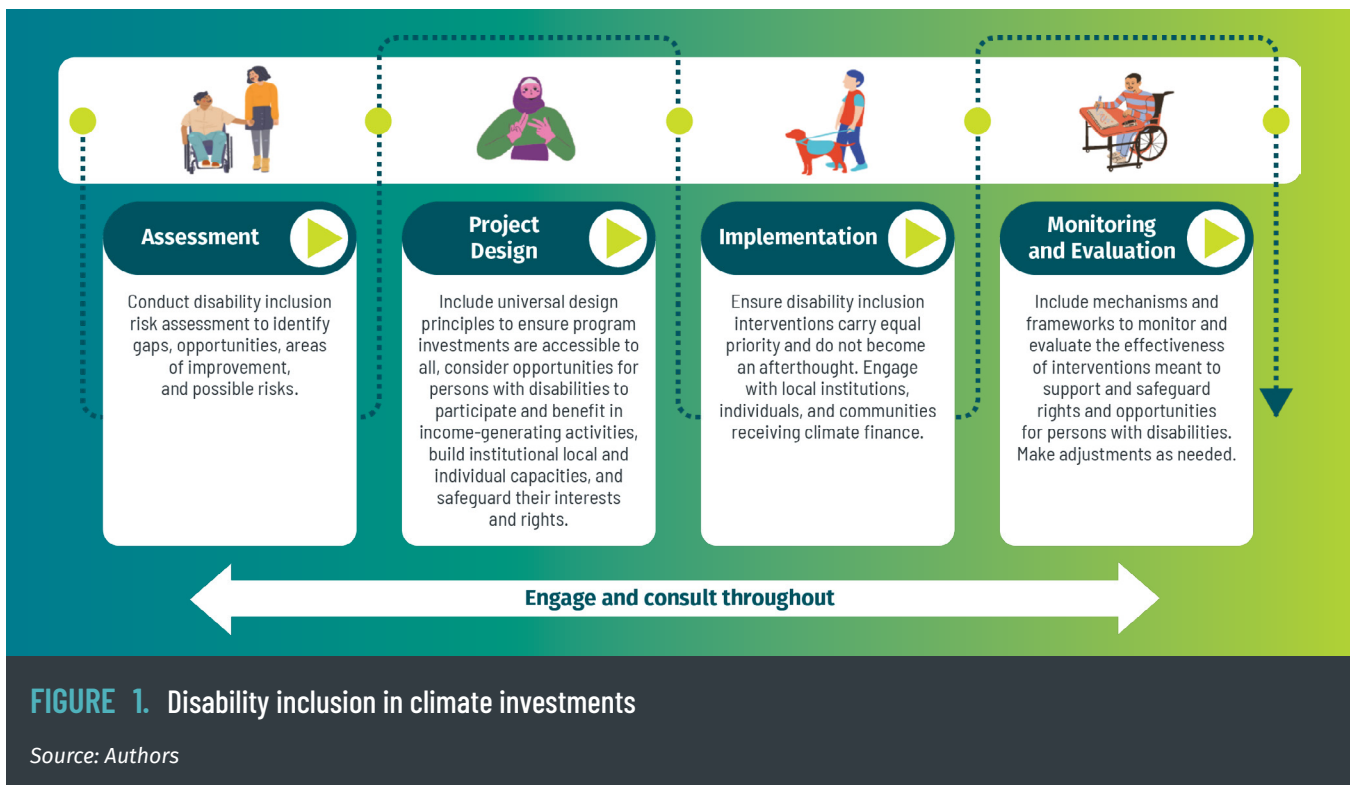


guidance on integrating disability inclusion in climate investments, especially for those aimed at reducing, sequestering, or avoiding carbon emissions. This section aims to fill this gap and provide an operational framework for disability inclusion in climate investments. In operational terms, disability inclusion allows practitioners in the climate sector not only to focus on the outcomes of disability inclusion but also to recognize and resolve the underlying factors that perpetuate exclusion. Incorporating disability inclusion programming within climate investments and project design can generate opportunities, safeguard rights and livelihoods, and ensure equitable access to services for persons with disabilities. This has the potential to maximize investment outcomes. Nevertheless, disability inclusion needs to be considered throughout the project or program’s design and implementation cycle. Disability inclusion in climate finance is an ongoing process of learning, adapting, and collaborating with stakeholders. When climate actions are intentionally designed with disability inclusion in mind, climate investments can foster a more

equitable and resilient society that leaves no one behind.<sup>72</sup>

## I. Engage and Consult

**4.3. To create an inclusive and accessible project, it is essential to actively involve persons with disabilities and organizations working on disability rights as early as possible in the project design process.** By incorporating their perspectives and experiences in climate change impacts and disability-related challenges, we can ensure that the project addresses their specific needs. To facilitate meaningful participation throughout the project lifecycle, consultations should be conducted in a manner that respects and values the cultural traditions. It is also important to provide necessary accommodations, such as accessible communication materials, assistive technology, and accessible meeting spaces. A feedback mechanism must be established to ensure input from persons with disabilities is regularly sought throughout the project preparation and implementation cycle.



**FIGURE 1.** Disability inclusion in climate investments

Source: Authors



Evidence suggests that timely engagement and intentional design of disability-inclusive, participatory processes cultivate co-creation that integrates diverse perspectives (see example in Box 8).

- 4.4. Collaboration between sectoral experts, industry specialists, and organizations of persons with disabilities is important to ensure that a wide range of disability experiences is considered adequately and meaningfully in technical designs.** Depending on the nature of the project, innovative approaches, prioritizing the lived experiences of persons with disabilities and placing them at the center of the intervention design process can be employed.
- 4.5. Awareness-raising should be coupled with the destigmatization of disabilities to promote equity and inclusion.** Besides recognizing disability diversity, challenging stereotypes includes, among others, using inclusive language, promoting accessibility, emphasizing legal rights, building empathy, addressing intersectionality, sharing inclusive practices, engaging persons with disabilities, measuring impact, ensuring sustainability, and forming partnerships. The collective effect of these efforts is to create a society that values and fully integrates individuals with disabilities.

## II. Disability Inclusion Pathways and Risk Assessment

- 4.6. A two-pronged approach is needed to design disability-inclusive climate interventions: the “do no harm” approach and proactive disability inclusion.** The “do no harm” dimension ensures that the potential risks of a project for persons with disabilities are minimized to an acceptable level while the second dimension proactively integrates disability-inclusive principles in the design of project interventions. The first step should be risk and needs assessment to evaluate potential risks and understand the demographic and institutional landscape of the project area.

### BOX 8. Example of disability-inclusive climate change and environmental education in Zimbabwe

In 2019, the Global Greengrants Fund awarded Zimbabwe Sunshine Group (ZSG) a grant to develop inclusive climate change and environmental education programs in the Masvingo, Mashonaland Central, and Matabeleland South provinces. Farmers in the predominantly rural Masvingo province rely on natural resources for energy and livelihood, making them key stakeholders in the climate change conversation. Despite the clear implications of climate change-induced harm to livelihoods, many individuals lack awareness or information about the negative impact of climate change. Through physical theater and sign language, ZSG implemented the “Watch-Understand-Act” program. To ensure inclusion, the program translated relevant documents in native languages and carried out visual presentations. At least four people with hearing or speaking impairments participated in each presentation to ensure the disability community was represented. Through an information-sharing platform for young people living with disabilities, ZSG trained students on climate justice and disability rights in 2020. To empower young leaders towards climate justice, disability rights, and activism, ZSG developed the Disability Rights Young Leaders Platform, which, among others, “trained the trainers” at Danhiko College and Green Choice Waste Solution Organisation — Gwanda. As representatives of persons with disabilities, ZSG launched the Not Without Us — Kwete Tisipo petition and established a platform for young disabled people to share information on environmental justice and disability rights.

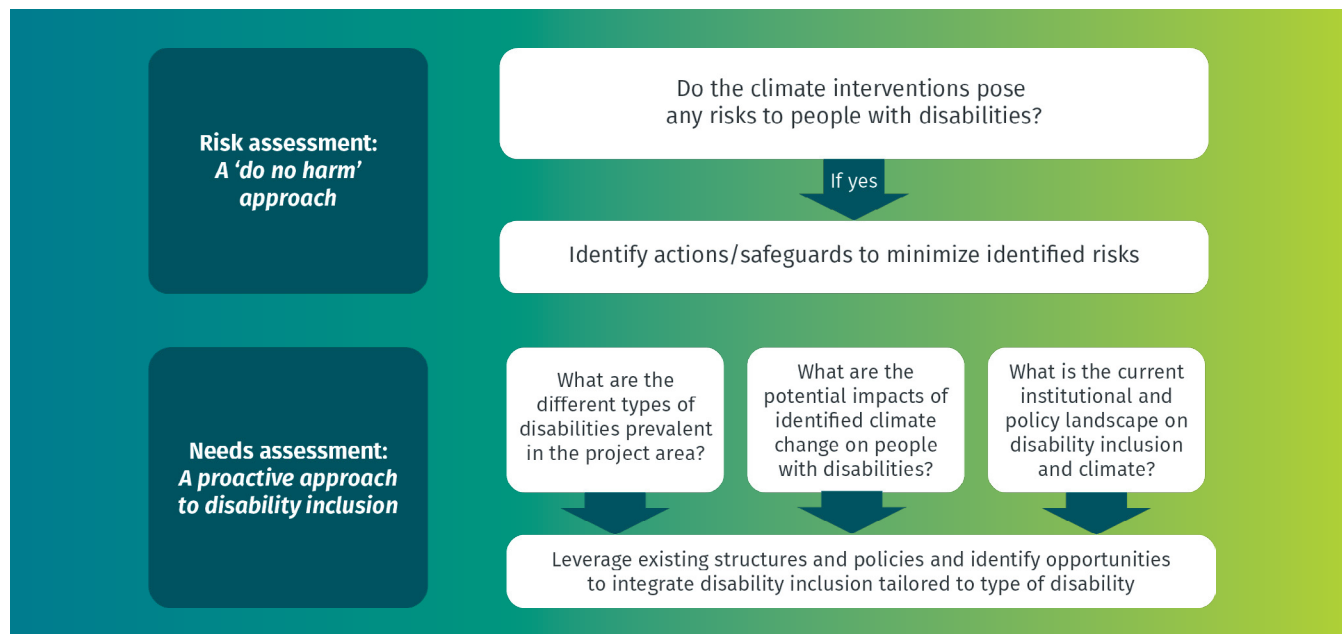
This may include assessing a) the climate and disaster risks to the wider population and how they may exacerbate existing vulnerabilities of persons with disabilities in the project area; b) prevalence and types of disabilities in the area; c) a gap analysis that assesses existing disability inclusive infrastructure, policies, and interventions in place and barriers to participation; and d) the potential risks of the project and its differential impacts on persons with a range of disabilities. The risk assessment should help identify interventions and mechanisms to minimize risks the project may pose on persons with disabilities while

the needs assessment should help identify how current and future climate conditions may impact persons with disabilities, interventions needed to minimize these risks, and existing institutions and policies that can be leveraged, as well as entry points for disability inclusion based on the nature of the project (see Figure 2 for the “do no harm” approach in risk assessment).

- 4.7. **Risk and needs assessments will inform areas and methods of interventions.** Persons with disabilities have varied needs, and addressing those needs requires context-specific approaches to avoid unintended negative consequences that may arise from uninformed project designs based on faulty assumptions. It is necessary to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities and ensure that climate actions are both sustainable and inclusive.
- 4.8. **The Disability Inclusion Pathway and Risk Assessment should include analysis of existing gaps between persons with disabilities and**

**persons without disabilities.** Therefore, special attention should be paid to the intersection of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), race, and ethnicity, as well as structural barriers and processes preventing persons with disabilities from fully participating in societies.

- 4.9. **Disability inclusion opportunities and risk assessment involve examining various policies, commitments, accessibility standards, and disability data intersecting with identified climate risks to ensure that climate action is inclusive and effective in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.** Analyzing national and international policies allows climate investments to identify gaps and opportunities for collaboration, whereas assessing best practices and accessibility standards allows them to incorporate successful approaches from different contexts. Additionally, incorporating disability data into the assessment process provides evidence to guide decision-making and priority setting. The first step for policy analysis is to identify the



**FIGURE 2.** A two-pronged approach to ensure climate interventions uphold a ‘do no harm’ approach and effectively integrate disability inclusion principles

Source: Authors

relevant policies, which may include national laws, international conventions, regulations, and guidelines related to various relevant sectors and determine whether they explicitly include disability rights and relevant provisions. It's also important to assess implementation mechanisms, such as responsible government agencies and institutions, coordination structures, monitoring and evaluation processes, complaint mechanisms, and accountability frameworks, as well as policies' alignment with international standards on disability rights and accessibility requirements (universal design).<sup>73</sup> By conducting a comprehensive policy assessment, practitioners can identify gaps and opportunities for disability-inclusive climate actions.

**4.10. Incorporating disaggregated data on disability status and type is crucial during the assessment phase to ensure climate adaptation and mitigation interventions are inclusive, targeted, and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities and can leverage their capabilities. This data can be effectively utilized alongside sectoral contexts and opportunities (see Box 9).**<sup>74</sup> Disaggregated data on disability, when combined with the findings of climate and disaster risk assessments, can help understand how persons with disabilities might be impacted by current and future climate conditions. This information is essential for building their capacity to adapt to and cope with climate impacts. The data can also help design inclusive climate mitigation interventions tailored to leverage varied capabilities of different types of disabilities prevalent in the communities or targeted areas. This may include evaluating the accessibility of the built environment and job opportunities to identify existing barriers and addressing them to ensure full participation.<sup>75</sup>

### III. Monitor and Evaluate

**4.11. Disability inclusion needs to be integrated into results frameworks, monitoring systems, and evaluation.** Disaggregating indicators to capture benefits and impacts of project interventions for persons with disabilities will be the first step towards building a knowledge base that can inform the expansion of disability-inclusive climate action. This includes setting up systems to collect data, disaggregated by disability status; indicators in the project results frameworks to measure the impacts of activities targeting persons with disabilities; and qualitative approaches to capture best practices and lessons learned from integrating disability inclusion into projects. These insights are invaluable for identifying effective strategies and pitfalls and replicating good practices in other contexts to prevent the need to reinvent the wheel for each new project. Last but not least, involving persons with disability in results' evaluation contributes to improved accountability and quality assurance of interventions.

#### BOX 9. Sources for Disability Data

- European Disability Forum (EDF), [Disability Statistics](#) (2021).
- Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, [Annual Disability Statistics](#).
- United Nations, [United Nations Disability Statistics Programme](#).
- [Washington Group on Disability Statistics, Question Sets](#).
- World Bank, [Disability Measurement in Household Surveys: A Guidebook for Designing Household Survey Questionnaires](#).
- UNICEF, [Module on Child Functioning: Questionnaires](#).





## 5. SECTOR-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS ON DISABILITY INCLUSION

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**Investments in climate mitigation and adaptation represent a unique opportunity for disability inclusion as a core tenet of just transitions and green growth strategies.** International support for disability-inclusive disaster risk management is evident in numerous policy frameworks and declarations, which also provide valuable guidance on the effective implementation of disability inclusion. However, other focus areas, especially climate change mitigation efforts, have remained largely unexplored from a disability inclusion perspective. For this reason, this paper focuses on identifying entry points in just energy transition, climate smart cities, and nature-based solutions.

### I. Just Energy Transition (including coal phase out)

**5.1. Transitioning to cleaner energy sources can be a net generator of jobs, and if executed correctly, it can create new opportunities for a sustainable and inclusive labor world.** Shifting towards a low-carbon economy can represent a tremendous opportunity for persons with disabilities, who currently face many socio-economic vulnerabilities in the workforce. However, to ensure a just transition and achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, as well as the UN SDGs, persons with disabilities, who

constitute 15 percent of the global population, should not be left behind but rather involved at every stage of the process. The move to a low-carbon economy is expected to have transitional challenges for workers and communities, making the greening of the economy a social justice issue. In this context, the just transition framework<sup>76</sup> offers a range of social and economic interventions needed to secure rights and livelihoods and enhance green jobs opportunities and climate ambitions. At the same time, a just transition contributes towards an economic shift to a sustainable pathway, needed for climate change mitigation and adaptation. A key premise of a just transition is that persons affected by the greening of the economy should be considered by the decision makers and be offered adequate support through social policies and skills development to facilitate their transition.

- 5.2. Quantitatively, there is disproportionately low representation of persons with disabilities in the global labor market.** Across eight geographical regions, the employment-to-population ratio (EPR) for persons with disabilities aged 15 years and older is 36 percent on average, whereas the EPR for persons without disabilities is 60 percent. In the European Union about 47 percent of persons with disabilities are employed compared to 72 percent of persons without disabilities. A staggering 70 to 80 percent of working-age persons with disabilities across Africa are unemployed. In India — home to 15 per cent of the global population — almost three out of four persons with disabilities are excluded from the labor force. From a qualitative perspective, even when persons with disabilities are employed, they face obstacles such as small promotional prospects and bad working conditions. They are also more likely to be in contingent part-time or low-paid jobs.
- 5.3. Incorporating disability-inclusive human resources (HR) policies is crucial to ensure rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities.** A disability-inclusive HR policy

can benefit both employees with disabilities and the organization by fostering a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace. The following key elements should be considered when implementing disability-inclusive HR policies: establishing a nondiscrimination policy, promoting equal employment opportunities, providing reasonable accommodations and disability leave, conducting training, ensuring accessibility, providing mental health support, updating benefits, encouraging employee resource groups, offering fair performance evaluation, safeguarding privacy, monitoring effectiveness, and maintaining legal compliance. As a result, these policies can contribute to fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace, which will not only benefit employees, but the organization's reputation and competitiveness.

- 5.4. The shift from coal to clean and renewable energy sources must occur in a rapid but just manner.** While new jobs will be created in fields such as renewable energy and energy efficiency on the climate mitigation front, they will require the development of new vocational skills. Additionally, some existing jobs will be substituted because of shifts in the economy from less to more efficient or from high-carbon to low-carbon, and others may be eliminated. For example, the phase-out of several polluting processes, such as coal extraction and petrochemical production, creates a need for new skills and jobs in renewable energy. In such circumstances, access to public education, skills development programs, and social protection schemes is critical, as well as on-the-job re-skilling and training to align with green principles.
- 5.5. The framework for incorporating disability inclusion in just energy transition activities include four stages:** establishing context, determining entry points, integrating associated considerations (climate mitigation and renewable energy integration projects), and mitigating risks.



**5.6. The first step towards improving disability inclusion in a just transition program is to collect information to answer the following questions:**

- a. What is the national legal context for inclusion of people with disabilities in education and the labor market?
- b. To what extent are people with disabilities and social protection measures considered in climate policies, such as NetZero targets?
- c. What national/local institutions are responsible for or advocating for disability rights?
- d. What disaggregated data is available about the local population of people with disabilities?
- e. What regulations for accessible infrastructure exist in country?
- f. Who are the key local actors innovating in accessibility and inclusion?
- g. What types of jobs exist in both the sunset and sunrise industries? Is there data on people with disabilities employed in these sectors.

**5.7. The most common entry points for incorporating disability inclusion in the just energy transition program include:**

- a. Policy, frameworks, and institutional capacity
- b. Infrastructure and design
- c. Labor market
- d. Energy demand, use, and affordability
- e. Participating of people with disabilities in general and specifically initiatives/businesses led by persons with disabilities
- f. Climate change mitigation awareness

**5.8. Based on key components of coal transition and renewable energy programs, the following considerations are important in designing actions aimed at integrating the disability inclusion in the just energy programs:**

- a. Any new infrastructure should adhere to universal design principles. Coal assets should be redesigned and repurposed with universal design and occupational safety and health (OSH) considerations. Full accessibility requires long-term planning in collaboration with persons with disabilities, starting from the initial stages of design.
- b. Renewable energy should be affordable for all persons with disabilities, given the strong link between poverty and disability, through targeted discounts and social protection schemes.
- c. Jobs programs should be provided to help skill, reskill, and upskill persons with disabilities according to the needs of different groups. A multi-pronged approach may be required to build the capacity of people with physical and sensory diversity as the sunset industries take over and employ new professionals or reemploy sunrise industry professionals. Identify more solutions (e.g., quotas, skilling) for the improved inclusion of groups with disabilities in green jobs as the energy transition progresses.
- d. Ensure the equitable transition to a new energy grid, and that the transition to universal electricity for all explicitly





- covers the needs of persons with disabilities, considering that they suffer disproportionately from a lack of access to electricity and power.
- e. Protection and backup measures should be in place in case of energy disruptions to provide other sources of energy for persons with disabilities.
  - f. Persons with disabilities should be considered as consumers, workers, and entrepreneurs through the energy value chain in the transition to renewable energy. All information should be accessible in various formats to accommodate a wide range of impairments.
  - g. New cooktops, stoves, and pots used during the transition to clean energies should be adaptive and accessible by people with physical and sensory diversity or limitations. Cooktops and carbon fuel can increase respiratory systems-related disabilities while persons with disabilities may have difficulty accessing clean fuels, undermining their ability to cook and eat. Accessibility design and easy-to-follow instructions should be integrated, keeping in mind the needs of people with physical limitations, visual and hearing impairments, and those with other diverse sensory experiences. This will help ensure that persons with disabilities are able to adequately use these products.
  - h. Enhance STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education and internship training to expand the employment of persons with disabilities in energy utilities, including managerial roles.
  - i. Ensure that net billing schemes and the assessments of their social impact take into consideration both tariffs and subsidy designs, particularly regarding the energy services access for persons with disabilities.
  - j. Support business models that empower persons with disabilities as consumers to make them active participants in demand-side management.

**5.9. Associated considerations specific to renewable energy integration projects to coal phaseouts are presented below and in Box 10:**

- a. Provide social protection measures for workers with disabilities. The mining sector has the highest percentage of persons with health limitations caused by working conditions than any other sector in the energy industry. In countries with developed disability protection policies, many workers who are laid off because of mine closures, could be eligible for a disability status. But to avoid burdening social services, measures for workforce integration are needed. Persons with disabilities caused by the working conditions in the mining sector should be

**BOX 10. Example of targeted capacity-building and transparency by Siemens Gamesa Renewable**

Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy, based in Spain, is the world's second-largest wind turbine company, providing onshore and offshore wind services around the world.

In Hull, UK, Siemens Gamesa partnered with Pathway Plus in 2017 to offer internships to students with disabilities and subsequently provide them employment at Siemens Gamesa in the UK. Interns were given work placements in various departments in the wind turbine blade factory to build their capacity and develop skills necessary for factory employment. This kind of targeted capacity-building can ensure that the skills that persons with disabilities gain are aligned with the needs of the sector.

In Canada, Siemens Gamesa publicly announced a multi-year accessibility plan for 2017–2021, aiming to remove accessibility barriers for its employees and customers and to align its operations with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA). The accessibility plan focuses on concrete steps to remove barriers and enhance the experience of both employees and customers with disabilities. Making such a plan public can increase transparency and accountability for a business and ultimately inspire trust and goodwill.

*Source: Just Transition, ILO*

- included in skills training to transition to a different employment or be provided with disability insurance payments.
- b. Prioritize the needs of persons with disabilities who are employed around coal mines supply chains and are typically not eligible for official retrenchment packages.
  - c. Ensure that persons with disabilities do not go without energy for any reason during the transition from coal and that those relying on the new power grid can afford the new energy sources.
  - d. Incorporate a disability-inclusion action plan in the reskilling and upskilling programs to target improvements in the economic regeneration packages for compensating persons with disabilities in the workforces of sunrise and sunset industries.
  - e. Support workers with disabilities with temporary income to sustain them through the transition. Ensure that disability-inclusive HR policies are implemented in sunrise industries.

**5.10. Practitioners should take into account common challenges, gaps, and associated risks related to the integration of disability inclusion in just energy transition activities:**

- a. Lack of adaptation to specific local context, from national to a city to neighborhoods, where energy needs and state of infrastructure varies greatly. For example, neighborhood disparities can exist which can impact the reach of projects and programs. There is commonly a higher prevalence of people with disabilities in lower-income neighborhoods.
  - ⊗ Not reaching the hardest to reach, such as people with disability living in informal settlements, worsening inequality.
- b. Lack of engagement of people with disabilities and inclusive design processes from the outset.
  - ⊗ For policy, if just transition doesn't embed disability inclusion,

implementing organizations may not consider it.

- ⊗ For infrastructure, it is more challenging and expensive to add in inclusion and accessibility at later stages.
  - ⊗ Disintegration of trust and loss of motivation/agency among marginalized citizens.
  - ⊗ Lack of inclusive policies, increased inequality.
  - ⊗ Lack of intersectional approaches; disability intersects with other factors of marginalization such as gender, age, ethnicity.
- c. Shortcomings in policy implementation designed together with people with disabilities.
    - ⊗ Risk to trust if participants feel there is a lack of accountability.
    - ⊗ Harm to future participation as well as project outcomes.
  - d. Funding constraints and lack of flexible climate change financing.
    - ⊗ Reduced capacity to consult, adapt and react to the needs and demands of diverse people and communities.
    - ⊗ Reduced opportunity for inclusive innovation.
  - e. Lack of ways to share knowledge and best practice between disability and sector specialists.
    - ⊗ Loss of innovation, duplication of work, decreased efficiency and slower progress.

## II. Climate Smart Cities

**5.11. Cities are simultaneously major culprits for climate crisis and victims of its acute impacts.**

While they consume more than 75 percent of the world's energy and produce significant levels of GHG emissions, cities are also the most impacted by devastating floods, heatwaves, and sea-level rise. Nevertheless, cities account for 80 percent of the global GDP and are centers of innovation,

where low-carbon and climate resilient development is most likely to occur.

**5.12. Climate smart cities can encompass diverse interpretations, but in this context, we define it as a climate-smart model of urban development, characterized by coordination, compactness, and connectivity — all geared towards driving large-scale mitigation and resilience.** This entails carrying out climate risk assessments for cities, and identifying and prioritizing strategically aligned projects that boost resilience to current and future climate impacts and contribute to a reduction in carbon footprint. It is also increasingly recognized that the digital divide is a significant barrier to inclusive climate smart cities and that integrating inclusive city principles in low-carbon smart cities could enhance resilience and result in wider benefits.

**5.13. The framework for incorporating disability inclusion in just energy transition activities include four stages:** establishing context, determining entry points, integrating associated considerations (for the urban environment as well as accessible transportation), and mitigating risks.

**5.14. The first step towards improving disability inclusion in climate smart cities programs is to collect information to answer the following questions:**

- a. What is the national legal context for inclusion of people with disabilities in urban development?
- b. What regulations, policy and best practice for inclusive planning and accessible infrastructure exist in country?
- c. What national/local institutions are responsible for advocating for disability rights?
- d. What disaggregated data is available about the local population of people with disabilities?
- e. What local capacity is there for inclusive design?
- f. Who are the local innovators and key private sector actors engaging in smart city development?





**5.15. The most common entry points for incorporating disability inclusion in climate smart cities programs include:**

- a. Policy, frameworks, and institutional capacity
- b. Systems approach (holistic approach to accessibility)
- c. Built environment, infrastructure, and design
- d. Quality of urban life
- e. Technology and tools
- f. Participation of people with disabilities

**5.16. Urban environments will be one of the most affected areas in the event of frequent and high-intensity extreme weather events that result from climate change,<sup>77</sup> thus severely impacting persons with disabilities living in those areas.**

Adaptation efforts that do not address underlying inequities and power imbalances will not be transformative and may entrench or exacerbate already existing inequities<sup>78</sup> (see Box 11). To proactively address any challenges that persons with disabilities might face in the event of climate impacts in urban areas, the following activities should be considered:

- a. All new infrastructure investments should aim to adhere to universal design principles, especially electromobility, green housing and buildings, and green urban planning. Examples include accessible public spaces and the associated network of pedestrian infrastructure.
- b. All infrastructure investments should consider enhancing safety measures for women and girls with disabilities.
- c. All improvements, retrofitting, or additions to buildings and facilities should ensure that they are accessible to all, in accordance with the principles of universal design and reasonable accommodations.
- d. Emergency and evacuation shelters should adhere to universal design principles to ensure they are accessible to people with physical, sensory, and other types of disabilities.

**BOX 11. Addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in emergency preparedness and community climate action plans**

Bristol's City Council, the Bristol Disability Equality Forum, and a local OPD produced a series of emergency response plans, taking into consideration four disability-related basic needs that can emerge after disasters. These are: (1) health maintenance, which includes medicine, electricity, and medical care; (2) physical accessibility of the area; (3) effective and accessible communication; and (4) program access, or the accessibility of the programmatic responses of the emergency response plan. These guidelines and plans include the adequate use of smart early warning systems and dynamic communications responses for ensuring the rapid and equitable distribution of information. Furthermore, they address the transformation of water management systems to better handle droughts and include procedures for relocation and improving the ability of systems to handle both domestic and international migration.

- e. Disaster response and rehabilitation strategies and policies must ensure that dignity, livelihoods, and access to adequate housing, basic services, health, and humanitarian services for persons with disabilities are protected and restored and adequate compensation is provided to persons with disabilities when they are relocated or rehabilitated.
- f. Accessible design can be enhanced by conducting audits of the constructed physical space, in collaboration with persons with disabilities to get feedback from them, based on their experiential knowledge. Recommendations should be integrated to improve the usability of the space by people with a diverse range of abilities based on the findings, wherever possible.
- g. Governments should develop accessible information communication technologies (ICTs), including mobile applications, government websites, public kiosks, and automated teller machines and should include accessible ICT services in their

urban development plans.<sup>79</sup> ICTs should be developed in an iterative manner through gathering feedback from people with disabilities about their usability while older persons with disabilities should be trained to use ICTs.

- h. Legal frameworks for sectors, such as electromobility, green housing and buildings, along with green urban planning, should promote the accessibility and disability-inclusive development of the sectors.
- i. Public employment services (such as job training) aimed to facilitate the green economy should be provided to help persons with disabilities transition to green jobs.

**5.17. Transport is a key source of emissions and pollution in developing countries. Modal shift to cleaner modes of transport, such as BRT, rail, non-motorized or active transport should be an essential component of climate smart cities. Persons with disabilities heavily depend on motorized transport, such as cars, to get around as it solves the last mile problem (see Box 12). By enhancing accessibility to public transport and non-motorized infrastructure, persons with disabilities will be enabled to switch to a cleaner mode of transit.** To ensure a modal shift, interventions in the public transport sector must consider the following:

- a. On an institutional level, the establishment of a dedicated department focused on system-wide accessibility is essential for planning, coordinating, and implementing initiatives that will enhance safety and accessibility for riders with disabilities and improve the overall customer experience for them. This department will play a key role in ensuring that disability-inclusive principles are embedded across all departments and planning processes.
- b. HR policies and practices in a transportation authority or agency must be inclusive and promote a disability-inclusive work culture, which also provides

## **BOX 12. Case study on making mass transit accessible for persons with disabilities in Massachusetts, USA**

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) established the Department of System Wide Accessibility (SWA) in 2007 to make public transportation accessible for persons with disabilities. Since its inception, it has implemented several initiatives geared towards achieving this target, namely, (i) inclusive hiring practices in the department itself; 85 percent of the hired staff, including senior managers, has a disability, (ii) disability awareness and sensitization trainings for MBTA service staff, including bus drivers and station staff, to offer travelers with disabilities the best customer experience, (iii) a Pathway to Accessible Transportation Infrastructure (PATI) plan to improve accessibility in stations, bus stops, and vehicles. SWA holds consultation and user experience sessions with riders with different types of disabilities to engage them in the design and decision-making planning processes, offers discounted fare cards for seniors and persons with disabilities, upgrades and maintains the infrastructure to ensure accessibility in the built environment, and leverages technology. MBTA piloted the installation of Bluetooth beacons to help visually impaired riders to locate waiting spots at bus stops. The agency installed Bluetooth beacons on bus stop signs that communicate via a smartphone app, telling users how close they are to the stop. MBTA also partnered with Aira, an app that connects blind users with human AI technology, to assist in wayfinding in MBTA stations for free. In addition, MBTA provides group and one-on-one travel training on the MBTA for visually impaired and blind riders. These initiatives supplement the MBTA's paratransit system, which is part of a two-pronged approach to ensure accessibility for individuals with various disabilities. The alternative system complements the public transit network while the city improves the accessibility of all pedestrian and transit infrastructure.

reasonable accommodations to staff with disabilities.

- c. Public transport infrastructure, including train stations, bus stops, train cars, platform design, and signage must be built according to universal and human-centered design principles to ensure it is usable and accessible by persons with physical, sensory, and other types of disabilities.

- d. Public transport fares should be subsidized for passengers with disabilities.
- e. Communication systems in public transport, such as public address systems, signage, and maps must adhere to universal and human-centered design principles.
- f. Leveraging technology must be considered to enhance the experience of users with disabilities in navigating mass transit infrastructure.
- g. A parallel paratransit system must be established while the public transit system undergoes accessibility advancements for persons with varied types of disabilities.
- h. Transportation agencies could coordinate efforts with the municipal governments to ensure pedestrian infrastructure is accessible and its accessibility is maintained in extreme climate events. This would address accessibility barriers in public transit systems, including the last mile problem, in a holistic and sustainable way.
- i. Services providers such as bus and train drivers and public transport agencies' on-site staff should receive sensitizing training, which will ensure that people with disabilities are provided with reasonable recommendations and their needs are met.
- j. Accessible design can be enhanced by conducting audits of the constructed physical space, in collaboration with people with disabilities to get feedback from them, based on their experiential knowledge and their expertise as users. Recommendations should be integrated to improve the usability of the space by people with a diverse range of abilities based on the findings, wherever possible.

**5.18. Practitioners need to be aware of the common challenges, gaps, and their associated risks related to integrating disability inclusion in climate smart cities programs:**

- a. Climate mitigation and adaptation interventions in cities may increase

accessibility barriers if inclusion is not 'baked in', such as new drainage infrastructure impacting level access and creating trip hazards.

- b. Inaccessible infrastructure is still being built, and in the race to low carbon solutions, there is a risk this will worsen, the transport sector is a standout example.
  - ⊗ Worsening inequality and infringement of the rights of people with disabilities.
- c. Cities are constituted of interconnected infrastructure, accessibility often falls between the gaps, for example last mile transport or the interchanges between transport modes.
  - ⊗ If a person's journey is not seamlessly accessible, it is not accessible and has the risk of limiting opportunities and access to the city for people with disabilities.
- d. Lack of accessible and inclusive participation processes, which can be particularly prevalent when digital tools are being used.
  - ⊗ Final outcomes, products and places are not accessible and increase divides, including the 'digital divide'.
- e. Technology can be an enabler, but it is not a silver bullet. Digital strategies and new technology such as an app may overcome barriers for some but is rarely a solution that is accessible to all.
  - ⊗ Expanding digital divide for people with disabilities and worsening inequality for those who are most disadvantaged such as people with disabilities who are also living in poverty.
- f. Cities are not equal. There can be widespread inequality within and between cities and in many cities, high proportions of people with disabilities live in low-income or insecure housing and settlements due to reinforcing cycles of disability and poverty.



- ⊗ There is a risk that city planning and strategies look at universal solutions that may leave the worst off further behind.

### III. Nature-Based Solutions

**5.19. Climate change presents a profound threat to our global ecosystems. As a result, the need to address competing land uses to tackle climate risks has become urgent, calling for an accelerated transition towards the sustainable management of natural resources (see Box 13).** An estimated 23 percent of total anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture, forestry, and other land use. Changes in land use and land cover, caused by these areas of human industry, have contributed to climate change, and have negatively impacted the provision of ecosystem services, exacerbating the degradation of land and water ecosystems. At the same time, a just transition that benefits the most vulnerable must be ensured.

**5.20. Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use, and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems.**<sup>80</sup> For example, flooding in coastal areas because of storm surges and coastal erosion is a common challenge that was traditionally tackled with human-made (grey) infrastructure, such as sea walls or dikes and coastal flooding. However, flooding can also be addressed by taking advantage of ecosystem services, such as the planting of trees that thrive in coastal areas. Mangroves reduce the impact of storms on human lives and economic assets, and support biodiversity by providing a habitat for fish, birds, and other plants.

**5.21. Indigenous people and local communities play a vital role in managing nature and addressing climate change.** The deep connection they have to the land and their traditional knowledge makes them invaluable in safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems. It is estimated that

#### **BOX 13. Example of disability-inclusive nature-based solutions program: From participation to leadership in climate-smart agriculture in India**

CBM India collaborates with local partners across states in India to train farmers in organic farming practices. Focusing on organic and traditional farming methods has reduced the need for expensive agrochemicals and improved soil quality and resilience. The baseline survey found that persons with disabilities wanted to be involved in climate-smart agriculture but were unable to due to accessibility barriers. To address this, CBM developed accessible environments, communications, and trainings. Accessible poly-tunnels and modified farming and adaptive agritools removed barriers for people who use wheelchairs and people with visual impairments. Accessible trainings were developed, which swapped lectures for more practical training and accommodated people's different needs. This included tactile communication materials and signage, video trainings, and the creation of models of bio compost systems to allow for physical demonstrations. The program promoted the leadership of persons with disabilities by facilitating them to become master trainers on climate-smart agriculture and business development. This led to greater recognition of the skills and leadership of persons with disabilities in communities, countering stigma, and to an increase in the number of persons with disabilities in leadership positions. In fact, 42% of boards had persons with disabilities, and women were on 30% of boards. Demonstrations of the success of their agribusinesses to government and banks led to increased funding and loans. The program worked with local government to promote greater awareness and participation of persons with disabilities. A group of farmers with disabilities meet with local government to successfully advocate for greater spending on disability inclusive agriculture in their local area.

*Source: Disability Inclusion in Nature-Based Solutions Programming, Social Development Direct*

80 percent of world's biodiversity is situated in Indigenous Peoples land (that is also rich in natural resources, gals, oil, timber, and minerals).<sup>81</sup> Around 20 percent of the carbon is stored in Indigenous territories mainly in Amazon Basin, Indonesia, and Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, Indigenous

communities are known for their sustainable agriculture practices, forestry, and fishing. Their knowledge and practices do not only contribute to climate change mitigation but also help build resilience against climate impacts.

**5.22. While no global data exists regarding Indigenous persons with disabilities, available statistics show that Indigenous peoples are disproportionately more likely to experience disability compared to the general population.**

Indigenous persons with disabilities often experience multiple discrimination and face barriers to the full enjoyment of their rights, based on their status and disability. Indigenous people are also disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation due to their livelihoods' direct interdependence with the ecosystem.

**5.23. The framework for incorporating disability inclusion in nature-based solutions programs include four stages:** establishing context, determining entry points, integrating associated considerations, and mitigating risks.

**5.24. The first step towards improving disability inclusion in nature-based solutions program is to collect information to answer the following questions:**

- a. Is there any national legal context for the rights of people with disabilities within environmental policy? For example, in environmental protection and conservation or biodiversity preservation and restoration.
- b. Is there local good practice guidance for disability inclusion or people-centered approaches in Nbs?
- c. What national/local institutions are responsible for or advocating for disability rights?
- d. What disaggregated data is available about the local population of people with disabilities?
- e. What regulations for accessible infrastructure exist?

**5.25. The most common entry points for incorporating disability inclusion in the nature-based solutions program include:**



- a. Policy, frameworks, and institutional capacity
- b. Benefits and risks for people with disabilities
- c. Co-design and mutual understanding
- d. Infrastructure and design
- e. Technology and innovation

**5.26. Persons with disabilities are often directly dependent on natural resources or are physically exposed to climate impacts.**<sup>83</sup> However, despite

the enormous impact of climate change on persons with disabilities who rely on natural resources, they are rarely included in the decision-making process or the design of adaptive approaches.<sup>84</sup> To ensure persons with disabilities take part in nature-based solutions projects to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, the following steps could be considered:

- a. Promote awareness-raising campaigns tailored for Indigenous people with disabilities to ensure information about their rights, impacts of climate change, and opportunities is accessible in different formats and languages.
- b. Ensure persons with disabilities do not suffer from the effects of increased water stress, food insecurity, and food prices.
- c. Mainstream, include in, and consult with persons with disabilities (and Indigenous people) on sustainably using and managing land resources.
- d. Make persons with disabilities and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) a part of every multistakeholder process in establishing a shared vision for sustainable land use.<sup>85</sup>
- e. Include persons with disabilities in community-based natural resource management systems and decision-making bodies.
- f. Provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in consultation sessions to ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making and design processes. In addition, a concerted

effort must be made to provide products and services that are accessible in design for people with disabilities in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and water resource management.

**5.27. Practitioners need to be aware of the common challenges, gaps, and their associated risks related to integrating the disability inclusion in nature-based solutions programs:**

- a. A people and planet approach is new and there is a lack of practical examples and clear processes to adequately deliver outcomes for both climate resilience and inclusive social development.
  - ⊗ A business-as-usual approach exacerbates existing social inequalities.
- b. The scale of NbS varies considerably, from a community-level urban drainage solution to a national-level biodiversity regeneration program, and there is little evidence of what works to achieve disability inclusion at these different scales.
  - ⊗ This makes it difficult to develop and implement overarching policies on disability inclusive NbS.
- c. Disability and NbS specialists are yet to establish a mutual understanding of their respective fields and the intersections.
  - ⊗ Lack of common ground and understanding of key terminology could impact relationships and limit capacity to co-design.
- d. Actors represent different sectors (international development, conservation, etc.) who have different priorities and approaches to social inclusion.
  - ⊗ Challenges to align knowledge and working practices.
- e. Indigenous people with disabilities are amongst of the most marginalized groups affected by environmental degradation. NbS solutions rarely address inequalities resulting from the intersection of disability and indigeneity.



- ⊗ Increasing inequality, discrimination, loss of traditional knowledge.
- f. In urban planning the demands on land for NbS can have unintended consequences for accessibility which also requires additional space.
  - ⊗ Accessibility worsens due to constraints created by the dedication of land to NbS (particularly in cities).
- g. There is a lack of disability-disaggregated population and user data to use in the design and monitoring of NbS. (This is not unique to NbS but critical for inclusive NbS).
  - ⊗ Planners and programmers are unaware that their solutions are exacerbating existing inequalities.



# Annex 1: Guiding Questions for Disability Inclusion

**FIGURE 3.** Guiding questions to ensure that the needs, views, recommendations, and rights of persons with disabilities and their communities are taken into consideration in the design of a climate investment project



## Annex 2: Guidance on Accessibility for Events

A2.1. Ensure that organization's premises are retrofitted according to universal design principles, with a dedicated diversity and inclusion team/department that ensures the equal participation of employees and guests with disabilities in events. Also ensure to receive feedback from persons with disabilities on various aspects of accessibility offered at the events and budget all related costs during event preparations. This may include but is not limited to the following features as recommended by CBM Disability Inclusion Global (Box 14):

- a. Accessible infrastructure, including entrances, parking, drop-off points, reception counters, doorways, bathrooms, meeting rooms, emergency exits, etc.
- b. Functioning and audio-enabled elevators, with signs in Braille.
- c. Accessible signage and wayfinding aligned with accessibility design standards (easy-to-understand font faces and typography, large font, high contrast, accessible placement, etc.).
- d. Adjustable work surfaces and well-lit workspaces.
- e. Disability-inclusive safety and security arrangements for all in-person meetings. These should include pre-event information, event information, and post-event feedback. Venue/event management staff should receive disability orientation and practice evacuation drills to accommodate people with different impairments.

A.2.2. Proactive measures to include persons with disabilities into consultation, meetings, and events:

- a. Include persons with disabilities in the planning process as invitees, speakers, or other kinds of participants, depending on the nature of the event. Proactively reach out to persons with disabilities — either

individually or through OPDs at national, regional, and international levels. Include persons with disabilities as speakers and presenters to ensure that their voices and perspectives are not only represented by their attendance but are also incorporated into the event itself.

- b. Include the question regarding reasonable accommodations in the registration forms, so that all attendees can indicate their needs/preferences. An option to contact the event organizing team via email or phone should be provided, in case an individual requires assistance to register for and inquire about reasonable accommodation. Ensure timely responses on all avenues of communication. There should also be an option to make some accommodations, whenever possible, during the event as well.
- c. Provide necessary details on who to contact regarding accommodations in communication/marketing materials for the event and reiterate this information during the event.
- d. Identify options for accessible transportation and lodgings, preferably near the event venue, as well as special commuting arrangements, in case such accommodations are requested.
- e. Develop a contingency plan for situations where the employed accessibility tools may fail.
- f. Record events, including closed captions.
- g. Ensure that pre- and post-event invites and communications are inclusive, to allow for requests to be made and for feedback to be collected.
- h. All materials must follow accessibility design guidelines (see Annex 3).<sup>86</sup>
- i. Share feedback surveys after events, meetings, and consultations to improve accessibility aspects.
- j. Consider including vendors and suppliers that could meet accessibility standards and



include accessibility standards in the terms of references.

- k. Assign a focal point to supervise accessibility on the day of the event and help participants and guests to tackle any issues related to accessibility.

A.2.3. Illustrative examples of accommodations that could be made for persons with different types of disabilities:

- l. People with mobility limitations:
  - 1. Whenever possible, ensure events are held at an accessible venue (wheelchair-accessible entrance(s); designated accessible parking spaces; held on the first floor or accessible by elevators; wheelchair-accessible bathrooms with ease of access from the event venue, etc.).
  - 2. Provide accessible seating.
  - 3. Ensure the availability of sufficient accessible transportation and lodgings.
  - 4. Ensure the availability of adjustable work surfaces and charging outlets placed/located in an accessible place for adaptive devices.<sup>87</sup>
- m. People with visual impairments/low vision, hearing impairments, speech impairments, and cognitive diversity/impairments:
  - 1. Ensure availability of sufficient sighted guides.
  - 2. Place signs in Braille to guide participants towards the event venue.
  - 3. Provide the flexibility of selecting a seat that works best for them as requested during online registration.
  - 4. Provide provisions for service dogs.
  - 5. Provide accessible workspaces and outlets in well-lit locations to charge adaptive devices.
  - 6. Send presentations well in advance of events whenever possible.
  - 7. Ensure all materials follow accessibility guidelines for design

and visualization and are presented in an accessible way (see Annex 3).

- 8. Provide a sign language interpreter if requested.
  - 9. In addition to these, provide other reasonable accommodations as requested.
- n. People with developmental and intellectual disabilities:
    - 1. Provide a designated quiet space of sensory-friendly area for individuals who may need them.
    - 2. Allow for additional time to process information and respond to questions and prompts.
    - 3. Encourage active participation by creating opportunities to contribute in ways that suit their abilities and preferences.

A.2.4. Accessibility measures for virtual events are presented below and additional resources are provided in Box 14:

- a. Communicate clearly to participants how they can request any accommodations and ensure that the method of requesting the accommodations is universally accessible.
- b. Share presentations and other supplemental event materials ahead of time, as well as after the event, whenever possible, while ensuring those materials are accessible.
- c. Check converted files (portable document formats) and materials to verify accessibility, especially if using automated tools to convert the materials.<sup>88</sup>
- d. Ensure captioning and audio description are provided upon request.
- e. Designate someone to provide URLs and other resources mentioned throughout the event to all, during the event and in subsequent follow-ups.
- f. Allow for questions to be posed verbally or in a text chat during the event, with questions sent in a text chat repeated out

loud, so everyone can hear the answer with context.

- g. Follow up after the event with an email or webpage and provide accessible meeting resources and recordings.
- h. Conduct post-event captioning and editing, especially if the captions are not professional and human-generated,<sup>89</sup> if necessary.

#### **BOX 14. CBM Global Disability Inclusion: Accessible Meetings and Events Toolkit**

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This toolkit provides guidance on planning, delivering, and following up on accessible and inclusive events and meetings. In addition to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the guidance includes key recommendations from the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to United Nations conferences and meetings, as well as information from the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.

International Disability Alliance: [Key Recommendations for Virtual Meetings](#)

## Annex 3: Guidance on Accessibility for Publications and Web Content

A.3.1. Minimum requirements on accessibility of published and digital materials:

- a. Compliance of website with the AA standard<sup>90</sup> (see Box 15).
- b. Basic accessibility requirement in editorial guidance:
  1. Use clear, accessible writing to ensure that global audiences — the vast majority of whom are not native English speakers — and visually impaired people utilizing screen readers can follow and understand messages.
  2. Use bias-free and inclusive communication, which means avoiding words, phrases, and expressions that denigrate or dismiss people due to an aspect of their identity or have historical associations with oppression and/or marginalization. For example, use “persons with disabilities (or disability),” not “the handicapped” or “disabled people.”

A.3.2. The following measures could be considered to further strengthen the accessibility of digital or print publications:

- a. Ensure all communications, advertising, event webpages, and other event-related content are accessible, and as with all web content, ensure alternative text descriptions accompany any non-text content such as images or videos.
- b. Engage web developers, content creators, persons with disabilities themselves, and/or disability experts knowledgeable in universal design principles for the web.
- c. Follow up after the event with accessible meeting resources and recordings via an email or a webpage.
- d. Develop and implement accessibility guidelines and training for authors, and for editorial, production, or other related staff.
- e. Use image descriptions, alternative text, and alternative access to media content.
- f. Make original versions of publications as accessible as possible to reduce the need to produce many accessible formats, which can include simple language; incorporate an FAQ (“Frequently Asked Questions”) section demonstrating information through examples; and avoid the use of jargon, acronyms, and technical language.
- g. Use image descriptions, alternative text, and alternative access to media content.
- h. Adhere to accessible design principles for all visualizations, designs, media, marketing, etc., with considerations for individuals with color-blindness.
- i. Hire and/or consult with developers, relevant content creators, persons with disabilities themselves, vendors, and/or disability experts knowledgeable in

### BOX 15. Summary of WCAG AA standard

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA standard is a set of guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to ensure that web content is accessible to people with disabilities.

The WCAG AA standard includes guidelines for four main principles of accessibility: perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust. These principles are further broken down into specific guidelines and success criteria that web developers can use to ensure their content is accessible.

Some examples of guidelines in the WCAG AA standard include:

- Providing alternative text for images and other non-text content;
- Ensuring that all functionality is available using only a keyboard;
- Providing clear and consistent navigation throughout the website;
- Ensuring that content is easy to understand and written in plain language;
- Providing captions and transcripts for audio and video content.



the standards and guidelines of inclusive publishing.<sup>91</sup>

- j. Include page numbers, separate the presentation from the content, and provide complete navigation.
- k. Use accessibility metadata.<sup>92</sup>
- l. Adhere to accessible design principles for all visualizations, designs, media, marketing, etc.<sup>93</sup>

# ENDNOTES

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- 1 CIF recognizes the social model of disability in the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), which defines disability as the interaction of an impairment (physical, mental, cognitive, or sensory) with external barriers that limit the effective participation in society. Disability is not solely determined by a health condition. OHCHR, “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD),” Human Rights Instruments, May, 2008, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities>.
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# THE CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS

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The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) was established in 2008 to mobilize resources and trigger investments for low carbon, climate resilient development in select middle and low income countries. 14 contributor countries have pledged over US\$11 billion to the funds. To date CIF committed capital has generated an additional US\$62 billion in co-financing for mitigation and adaptation interventions at an unprecedented scale in 72 recipient countries. CIF's large-scale, low-cost, long-term financing lowers the risk and cost of climate financing. It tests new business models, builds track records in unproven markets, and boosts investor confidence to unlock additional sources of finance. The CIF is one of the largest active climate finance mechanisms in the world.



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