

REDAA GEDSI strategy

Strengthening gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) practice across the REDAA programme

REVERSING ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION
REDAA
IN AFRICA AND ASIA

About the report
This strategy sets out four approaches for advancing ambition, learning and evidence on gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) across the Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia (REDAA) programme.

About the REDAA programme
REDAA supports locally led research and action for nature restoration and climate resilience in sub-Saharan Africa, and South and Southeast Asia.

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Cover photo: Farmers at work in Nagpur, Maharashtra, India. Photo by EqualStock on Unsplash

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Introduction

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) is integral to the Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia (REDAA) programme strategy (2024), and as such all REDAA-supported initiatives have committed to address gender equality and/or social inclusion within their locally led nature restoration initiatives.

REDAA's commitment is grounded in two foundational scoping papers commissioned at the outset of the programme: 'Trade-offs between poverty alleviation and environmental restoration' (Enns 2022) and 'Intersectional inequalities to consider in action to address environmental degradation' (Elmhirst 2022). Together these papers make clear that environmental initiatives, even with the best of intentions, can have negative impacts on the most marginalised where they fail to recognise and respond to integrate equity considerations.

The REDAA GEDSI strategy sets out four approaches for advancing GEDSI ambition, learning and evidence, as well as our approach to monitoring and evaluating our impact. The strategy recognises that all REDAA-supported initiatives are focused on improving the lives of those most marginalised. However, there is a lot to do, collectively, to improve systematic integration of GEDSI and its translation into practice, as well as to learn about what works (and what doesn't) and capture evidence of the difference it makes for nature restoration. The strategy also introduces disability as an explicit dimension of REDAA's approach, ensuring that the inclusion and integration of people with disabilities is intentional.

REDAA employs the following continuum to guide understanding of GEDSI integration, which is adapted from UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) guidance (FCDO 2025).

Figure 1. FCDO's GEDSI scale



Adapted from FCDO (2025), *UK International Climate Finance guidance note for delivery partners: integration of gender equality, disability and social inclusion*

REDAA's GEDSI strategy focuses on the empowering and transformative end of the GEDSI continuum. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Strengthen the systematic integration of GEDSI into the delivery and monitoring of REDAA initiatives, and raise collective ambition on GEDSI across the REDAA programme
- Build confidence and shared understanding of what transformative GEDSI practice looks like in restoration contexts, and
- Generate and communicate evidence of the difference that meaningful GEDSI integration makes to locally led restoration for nature, climate and people.

Approach

1. Learning together to strengthen GEDSI

Learning is central to REDAA's approach to strengthening GEDSI. Through the REDAA Community, initiatives will have opportunities to share experiences, reflect on challenges and learn from one another to build practical skills and a shared understanding of what transformative GEDSI practice looks like in different restoration contexts. REDAA will create spaces for online and in-person peer exchange around real-world experiences, recognising that effective approaches are highly context specific.

By strengthening confidence, fostering collective problem solving and sharing evidence of what works in different contexts, REDAA aims to strengthen GEDSI integration across the programme.

Strengthening transformative GEDSI practice at the REDAA Community event 2026

The 2026 Community event in Arusha (Tanzania) brought together 55 participants from REDAA-funded initiatives across Africa and Asia. As part of this event, REDAA facilitated two dedicated sessions on the theme of demystifying transformative GEDSI. Participants were introduced to the Reach, Benefit, Empower and Transform (RBET) framework, and interactive sessions encouraged participants to understand actions within each dimension of this framework. The sessions encouraged attendees to share tangible examples of GEDSI practice across the framework and engage in honest discussion about the difficult issues that often limit progress. By the end of the workshop, each initiative had developed practical commitments to strengthen GEDSI within their work. Some 70% of participants noted that these sessions, including training on the RBET framework, provided ideas or approaches they expected to apply within their REDAA initiatives moving forward.

2. Entry points for improving GEDSI

REDAA recognises that meaningful progress on GEDSI is often achieved through identifying entry points within existing work. These are often small, practical actions that cumulatively can strengthen practice, shift ways of working and create the conditions for more ambitious and transformative change over time. Every initiative, regardless of its starting point, has opportunities to strengthen GEDSI practice. REDAA will encourage initiatives to identify simple, additional and impactful actions across research and evidence generation, restoration action, and communications and advocacy.

Actions might include adapting engagement approaches to reach additional underrepresented groups (such as people with disabilities), or providing opportunities in advocacy processes for local voices. At a REDAA Community learning event, REDAA project leaders identified possible entry points across evidence generation, restoration action and communications and advocacy (see Table 1 in Booker 2024). For initiatives that have already closed, small amounts of REDAA funding for additional impact will be available for activities that strengthen the legacy of project work. This might include, for example, producing a short briefing that draws out GEDSI outcomes and learning from the initiative, or developing practical GEDSI recommendations for future research, policy or restoration practice.

3. Targeting investment at transformative GEDSI

REDAA will identify and provide additional impact investment to REDAA-funded initiatives that are well positioned to achieve transformative GEDSI outcomes. This additional funding will provide a mechanism to resource strategic activities that would otherwise be beyond the scope of existing project budgets.

REDAA will target additional actions that address the underlying drivers of gender inequality, disability exclusion and social inequity, such as discriminatory social norms, unequal decision-making power, inequitable access to resources or exclusionary governance structures. This could include, for example:

- Advocacy for securing legally recognised rights to land and natural resources for marginalised groups
- Actions to strengthen the collective influence and decision-making power of women, people with disabilities or Indigenous Peoples within management committees and multi-stakeholder platforms, or
- Supporting community-led processes that challenge discriminatory social norms and practices between people of different identities.

In addition, REDAA will identify opportunities for improved GEDSI practice and outcomes through impact funding provided to 'scale out, up and deep'. (As the REDAA Impact Strategy explains, REDAA aims to work in three dimensions of bigger scale: 'First, scaling out by sustaining the gains made by projects beyond their lifespans, and by spreading and replicating them; second, scaling up by improving local, national and international policies and practices; third, scaling deep by precipitating lasting transformational change in behaviours and institutions.')

REDAA will also identify opportunities for funding engagement for strategic action at key international policy arenas.

4. Promoting the evidence to understand why GEDSI matters

REDAA will generate and promote GEDSI evidence and learning that demonstrates why integration of GEDSI matters for effective, equitable and inclusive restoration. Through case studies, impact stories, briefings and other knowledge products, REDAA will strengthen learning within and beyond the programme, thereby contributing to the wider evidence base on inclusive, locally led restoration.

Monitoring and evaluation

REDAA will monitor and evaluate our approach through existing programme learning processes. Figure 2, below, gives examples of the programme's GEDSI indicators. REDAA also collects and reports on other logframe indicators using disaggregated data — for example, the number of products that included women authors and early career individuals. Initiatives receiving additional REDAA funding to strengthen the transformative power of their GEDSI work will also be required to monitor, evidence and report on the difference this funding makes.

Figure 2. REDAA GEDSI indicators

REDAA outcome indicator:

- Number of instances of REDAA-supported interventions generating improvements in GEDSI that contribute to achieving the programme outcome, through:
  - Empowerment of marginalised groups of people
  - Removal of unequal power relations between different groups of people in the pursuit of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all, and
  - Improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society, and improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.

REDAA output indicators:

- Number of evidence products, actionable information products, technical approaches, tools and applications, and policy statements reflecting and integrating GEDSI considerations in a meaningful way, including disability disaggregation.
- Number of GEDSI-focused activities implemented and outputs produced by the REDAA Scientific Management Unit.
- Number of organisations and groups from which staff and individuals participated in activities designed to enhance their capability for achieving GEDSI.