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Embedding GEDSI in Infrastructure Planning

Solomon Islands steps towards inclusive climate-resilient development

November 2025



Aerial view of Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Context

To access and manage international climate finance effectively, the Solomon Islands must demonstrate that inclusive and climate-resilient systems are embedded across national infrastructure investments. Accreditation under the Green Climate Fund (GCF) – a key step toward mobilising large-scale climate finance – requires the Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID) and the National Transport Fund (NTF) to show that gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) safeguards are formally integrated into institutional policies, processes and governance arrangements.

Recognising this requirement, the NTF requested support from the Climate Finance Capacity Support Programme (CFCSP) to engage a Pacific-based GEDSI specialist to develop an institutional GEDSI policy that would meet GCF accreditation standards and strengthen the NTF's readiness to access climate finance.

Beyond the accreditation goal, this work created valuable opportunities to embed inclusion across infrastructure systems and decision-making. It helped raise awareness within MID and the NTF of how GEDSI considerations contribute to equitable, sustainable and climate-resilient transport planning. It also provided a foundation for broader institutional change – linking inclusive practices to national planning, budgeting and infrastructure delivery systems.

What Was Delivered?

The CFCSP engaged a Pacific-based Gender Specialist to support the completion of the MID GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2028 (the GEDSI Strategy). Through in-depth analysis, consultations and participatory workshops, MID divisions, the NTF Secretariat and local stakeholders collectively shaped the GEDSI Strategy to ensure it reflected the realities, priorities and challenges across the national infrastructure sector.

The development of the GEDSI Strategy was guided by a comprehensive GEDSI Analysis Report, which drew on a literature review, consultations with 52 individuals across 9 agencies and a ministry-wide workshop. The analysis identified persistent barriers to inclusion, including limited representation of women in leadership roles, weak enforcement of inclusive building codes, high levels of gender-based violence and inadequate accessibility within transport systems. It also highlighted practical entry points to embed GEDSI principles throughout infrastructure planning, delivery and monitoring processes.

The resulting GEDSI Strategy, which replaces the earlier 2023 framework, provides a clear institutional roadmap for inclusive infrastructure development. It defines responsibilities, timelines and mechanisms for implementation, setting a long-term direction for integrating GEDSI across the Ministry's policies, programmes and systems.

The GEDSI Strategy is underpinned by 5 guiding principles:

- ⦿ Human rights-based approaches that recognise all citizens have equal rights to services and protection, including from climate change impacts.
- ⦿ Inclusive stakeholder engagement, ensuring women, youth, people with disabilities and underrepresented groups shape planning and monitoring.
- ⦿ Partnerships with government, civil society and donors to deliver safe, accessible and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- ⦿ Evidence-based design, requiring sex, age, area and disability data to inform project design and monitoring.
- ⦿ Internal modelling of equity and inclusion, with the Ministry embedding GEDSI into corporate policies, standard operating procedures and staffing arrangements.

The GEDSI Strategy is supported by a complementary GEDSI Training Plan, which outlines structured learning modules to build awareness, understanding and practical skills among MID and NTF staff, as well as contractors. Together, these tools aim to make GEDSI an integral part of everyday operational practice – moving beyond compliance toward meaningful inclusion in all aspects of infrastructure planning and delivery.

Importantly, the GEDSI Strategy strengthens the Solomon Islands' readiness for climate finance accreditation. By formalising policies, responsibilities and capacity building measures, the MID and NTF can demonstrate alignment with GCF environmental and social safeguards. This progress not only supports the NTF's GCF accreditation process, but also lays a foundation for inclusive, resilient and finance-ready infrastructure systems.

The GEDSI Strategy has been endorsed by the Permanent Secretary of MID and submitted to the GCF Secretariat for review and consideration at the October 2025 GCF Board meeting.

Early Results and Expected Positive Change

The GEDSI Strategy is being rolled-out across MID, aligned with the upcoming Corporate Plan (2026–2030) to embed accountability and sustain progress. The roll-out is focused on:

 Mainstreaming GEDSI in policies, plans and budgets.	 GEDSI-responsive infrastructure design and delivery.	 Communication and engagement with communities.
 Collaboration and partnerships.	 Monitoring, evaluation, research and learning.	 Human and financial capacity.

Initial actions to implement the GEDSI Strategy are underway. GEDSI orientation sessions have been delivered, and mandatory training has become a standard component of induction for all staff and contractors. Divisional work plans now include specific GEDSI responsibilities, aligned with broader corporate planning processes, to ensure consistent implementation across the Ministry. Preparations are also progressing to appoint a dedicated GEDSI Officer and expand the network of divisional focal points to strengthen coordination and accountability.

GEDSI requirements have been embedded into the Safeguards Procedure Manual, operational templates and terms of reference, ensuring that inclusion principles are systematically applied across all infrastructure projects. Partnerships with the Solomon Islands National Council of Women and the Association of Persons with Disabilities have also been strengthened to formalise community participation in audits and monitoring activities.

Together, these actions not only bring the NTF closer to meeting GCF accreditation standards but also demonstrate how capacity support activities designed for climate finance readiness can generate wide-ranging benefits – embedding inclusive practice, improving governance and fostering more equitable, climate-resilient infrastructure systems across the Solomon Islands.

The GEDSI Strategy represents a key milestone in the Solomon Islands' pathway toward Direct Access Entity (DAE) accreditation under the GCF. Accreditation will unlock opportunities for the country to directly access and manage climate finance. However, the enduring impact will depend on consistent implementation of the Strategy. Embedding GEDSI principles across planning, delivery and monitoring will help ensure that future infrastructure investments promote resilience, equity and opportunity for all.

Early progress signals broader systems strengthening within MID. The integration of GEDSI roles into divisional structures, planned human resource reforms and initiatives to strengthen women's leadership are fostering gradual cultural change across the institution. Over time, these shifts are expected to make infrastructure systems more inclusive and responsive – improving access, safety and opportunity, particularly for women, children and people with disabilities.

Why This Matters

The ministerial endorsement of the GEDSI Strategy marks a significant step forward for MID and the Solomon Islands Government in strengthening national systems for inclusive and climate-resilient infrastructure. As the country advances toward DAE accreditation under the GCF, the Strategy provides a structured mechanism to embed GEDSI into the Ministry's policies, planning, budgeting and delivery systems.

At its core, the GEDSI Strategy is a systems-strengthening tool. It establishes the institutional architecture, accountability mechanisms and capacity building pathways needed to make inclusion a consistent feature of infrastructure governance and delivery. Its 5 guiding principles position infrastructure as a vehicle for equity, safety and empowerment – acknowledging climate impacts are not experienced equally and must be addressed through deliberate, systemic responses.

By linking GEDSI integration with safeguards, data systems and participatory approaches, the Strategy helps MID and the NTF demonstrate the institutional maturity required by international climate finance partners. Strengthened systems – covering policy, training, data management and stakeholder engagement – enhance the country's readiness for direct access to climate finance and ensure that funding can be used effectively and equitably.

Ongoing systems strengthening will focus on improving data collection and use for evidence-based planning, revising HR policies to enable inclusive recruitment and leadership, and embedding continuous learning through mechanisms such as a women's leadership network within MID. Partnerships with civil society and representative organisations will reinforce these systems by ensuring transparency, accountability and feedback from communities.

The Climate Finance Capacity Support Programme works with Pacific countries to scale-up delivery of their climate change priorities through increasing their access to personnel and other support that can assist them to plan, access, deliver and report on climate finance. Funded by New Zealand, the programme operates in 15 Pacific countries and territories and is responsive to the unique needs and priorities of these countries.