



Turning the Tides of Inclusion

A Toolkit for Gender Equality in Ocean Sectors

April 2024



The Commonwealth
Blue Charter

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Published by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

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Foreword

Gender equity is essential for a sustainable future on land and ocean. The Commonwealth, with its extraordinary diversity, is perfectly placed to lead the effort to centralise gender equality in ocean protect and deliver lasting change.

Turning the Tides of Inclusion: A Toolkit for Gender Equality in Ocean Sectors is a pragmatic step towards more inclusive and equitable ocean sectors. Covering more than 70 per cent of the Earth, the ocean is vital for billions of people, providing sustenance, livelihood, and cultural and spiritual identity. This toolkit, created through the Commonwealth Blue Charter Programme and the Gender section of the Commonwealth Secretariat, demonstrates our commitment to gender equality for the ocean.



The toolkit puts forward gender-responsive practices in marine conservation, fisheries, maritime transportation and tourism, thereby empowering women and gender minorities and unlocking the full potential of sustainable blue economies. It offers practical guidance, based on research and stakeholder consultations, intended for policy-makers, organisations and individuals dedicated to advancing gender equity in ocean sectors.

With determination, collaboration and a focus on inclusivity, we can shift the paradigm and build a future where all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal opportunity to contribute to and benefit from sustainable ocean opportunities.

Vital Commonwealth initiatives reflect a deepening commitment to gender integration, including the Commonwealth Says NO MORE campaign against domestic and sexual violence, gender masterclasses at COP28 to incorporate gender considerations in climate finance, and the endorsement of a roadmap to fast-track gender equality.

I hope this toolkit serves as both a practical resource and a call to action, helping Commonwealth members and the wider world to prioritise gender equity in ocean-related activities. Together, we can ensure a thriving, inclusive and equitable ocean future.

The Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland KC
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth

Acknowledgments

This toolkit has been developed by the Commonwealth Blue Charter Programme and Gender section of the Commonwealth Secretariat. A review of international agreements relating to the ocean and gender and a series of consultations with various stakeholders in ocean sectors were used to inform this toolkit.

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We extend our gratitude to Edem Mahu, Rebecca Daniel, Luzanne Edwards, Emily Penn, Renis Auma, Adi Alani Tuivucilevu and Yvette Kerslake for generously sharing their time and expertise during our expert interviews.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BBNJ	Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (not yet in force)
CBC	Commonwealth Blue Charter
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCFAH	Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CLEAR	Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (of Canada)
COP	Conference of the Parties
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBV	gender-based violence
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	non-governmental organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STEM	science, technology, engineering, maths (subjects)
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

Glossary of Gender Mainstreaming Terms

Terms	Meaning
Gender	The socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women, girls and boys, and non-binary persons. Gender tends to be assigned based on biological characteristics, but gender is not biologically constructed. It is a social construct that is contextually bound – it can, and does, change throughout history and across cultural contexts.
Gender equality	Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women, men, girls, boys and individuals with non-binary gender identity. Gender equality is the ultimate goal sought by a gender-responsive approach.
Gender equity	Fairness or justice in the way people are treated, with consideration of historical and socially determined disadvantages. Gender equity leads to gender equality.
Gender mainstreaming	The process of assessing the implications for persons of all gender identities of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and strategies of persons of all gender identities an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that persons of all gender identities can benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.
Gender-responsive approaches	Approaches that examine and actively address gender norms, roles and inequalities. Gender-responsive approaches go beyond sensitivity to gender differences – they actively seek to promote gender equality.
Intersectionality	The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap or intersect. An intersectional approach recognises the differences among people of the same gender that must be understood for gender equality.

Executive Summary

The Commonwealth Blue Charter (CBC) is an agreement by all 56 Commonwealth member countries to actively co-operate to not only solve ocean-related challenges, but to also meet international commitments for sustainable ocean action. The text of the CBC¹ underscores that the 16 Principles of the Charter of the Commonwealth must be applied when meeting ocean-related commitments, including gender equality.

Additionally, under its principles of co-operation and knowledge sharing, the CBC recognises that developing strong, sustainable and innovative blue economies that promote sustainable development and an enabling environment that is fair, equitable and inclusive of men and women in marine and maritime industries is a common goal and challenge across the Commonwealth.

This toolkit considers the challenges and opportunities for gender equity in ocean sectors and provides suggestions on how Commonwealth governments can mainstream gender through ocean policies, advocacy and science. It presents 10 recommendations to guide gender mainstreaming in ocean sectors.

The recommendations

1. Establish a full-time gender officer position to ensure sustained focus on gender mainstreaming efforts.
2. Implement mandatory gender trainings to foster awareness and commitment to gender equality principles.
3. Enhance leadership representation of underrepresented women in influential climate decision-making forums.
4. Implement inclusive workplace policies to support gender equality and work-life balance.
5. Collaborate with men to address gender dimensions in ocean science and climate adaptation.
6. Promote STEM education for women and girls to cultivate future leaders in ocean sectors.
7. Collect gender-disaggregated data to inform policies addressing gender disparities effectively.
8. Provide financial support programmes to promote gender equality and empower women in non-traditional marine roles.
9. Establish mentorship programmes for women's career development in ocean sectors.
10. Develop fairer job descriptions and promotion requirements considering women's caregiving responsibilities.

Outline

1. Introduction

Section 1 introduces the concept of gender equity in the ocean and the purpose and approach of this toolkit. It provides guidance on the toolkit's target audience as well as how it can be used to mainstream gender in existing or upcoming ocean initiatives.

2. An overview of gender equity in ocean sectors

Section 2 provides an overview of the intersection of gender and ocean sectors through an assessment of international ocean agreements.

3. Integrating a gender-responsive approach in ocean sectors and industries

Section 3 takes a deep dive into the key industries that make up ocean sectors, such as marine conservation and restoration, ocean science, fisheries, maritime transport and tourism, and examines the gender-related challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. This section also considers three cross-cutting themes: youth, indigenous people and climate change.

4. Mainstreaming gender equality in ocean sectors

Section 4 looks at how gender equality can be mainstreamed across ocean-related policies, projects and initiatives in the Commonwealth. Considerations when mainstreaming gender in ocean sectors, as well as a checklist to assist in the integration of gender considerations into policies and projects within ocean sectors, are included.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Section 5 provides 10 recommendations emanating from the research and expert interviews that informed this toolkit, as well as a summary of the main points addressed throughout.



1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Covering more than 70 per cent of the Earth's surface,² the global ocean supports rich biodiversity, food, climate regulation, economic stability, transportation and scientific research. People are engaged in all elements and areas of ocean sectors, from fisheries and tourism to trade and maritime transportation. However, significant gender disparities exist throughout these industries, ultimately resulting in the full potentials of all genders not being achieved.

Over the years, there have been increased calls for gender equity, equality and inclusivity across ocean sectors. However, where various governments, organisations and other stakeholders are aware and conscious of the importance of gender equity, equality and inclusivity in principle, many are often unsure of how this can be implemented in practice.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has been at the forefront of championing women's rights and gender equality. Its involvement dates to the 1976–1985 UN Decade for Women, and has intensified with a specific emphasis on gender mainstreaming since the 4th UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Gender mainstreaming, the strategy and process used to meaningfully consider and integrate gender considerations and perspectives into policies, programmes and projects, represents

a strategic and sustainable pathway towards harnessing the full potential of our ocean and its users.

This toolkit explores the role that gender plays in ocean-related activities and provides a compass to guide gender mainstreaming efforts. It takes a deep dive into the impact of gender equity, highlighting that gender mainstreaming is indispensable, benefiting the sustainable development of our entire planet.

1.2 The purpose and approach of this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to provide clear guidance on meaningfully integrating gender perspectives into ocean policies and practices by providing practical guidance and best practices. Accordingly, this toolkit should serve as a valuable resource for:

- policy-makers
- organisations (non-governmental organisations [NGOs], intergovernmental organisations [IGOs], community-based groups and others)
- individuals advocating for gender equity in ocean sectors.

By integrating gender considerations into ocean policies, practices and initiatives, we acknowledge the unique contributions and challenges faced by persons of all gender identities, fostering more inclusive and equitable workplaces. This results in more effective resource management, resilient coastal communities and, ultimately, a healthier and more sustainable ocean ecosystem, benefitting both current and future generations. Gender mainstreaming is a cornerstone of responsible and effective ocean governance in an increasingly inclusive, interconnected and interdependent world.

While this toolkit aims to present a roadmap for gender mainstreaming practices in ocean sectors, it has some limitations. This document does not purport to provide a complete exploration of the concept; rather it aims to add specific guidance to an ongoing conversation regarding experiences, challenges and opportunities. The recommendations are derived predominantly from the consultations held with women across various ocean-related sectors.

Furthermore, there is a scarcity of qualitative and quantitative gender-disaggregated data for ocean-related industries. This is a limitation of the toolkit, as the information regarding how roles are distributed and resources accessed is inadequate and varies significantly across sectors. Moreover, available data on persons who identify as non-binary are extremely limited.



2. An Overview of Gender Equity in Ocean Sectors

2.1 Understanding gender equity in ocean sectors

- **WHAT is the problem?**

There is a lack of gender equity and inclusivity throughout ocean sectors. Gender disparities exist in various areas, such as access to resources, decision-making roles, inability to participate at the highest-level of marine activities, unfair remuneration and limited opportunities for recognition. This results in inadequate opportunities, poor representation in leadership and decision-making roles, and systemic barriers to further advancement and growth in ocean-related industries. See Section 3 for a detailed review of the main challenges across key ocean industries.

- **WHO is experiencing the problem?**

The challenges associated with gender inequity in ocean sectors are primarily experienced by women, gender minorities and marginalised communities. Individuals often face and experience systemic barriers, gender stereotypes, discrimination, and unfair and unequal treatment that hinders their ability to fully participate.

- **WHERE is the problem occurring?**

Gender inequity manifests across various levels and contexts, impacting regions, countries and communities worldwide. Within ocean sectors, this spans across various industries including marine conservation and restoration, ocean science, fisheries, maritime transport and tourism.

- **WHEN did the problem start?**

The lack of gender equity and inclusivity in ocean sectors has been present for many decades, if not centuries. However, it has gained more traction in recent years as efforts to promote gender equality have intensified. While the exact origins of the problem are difficult to pinpoint, it stems from historical biases, cultural norms and systemic barriers that have traditionally excluded women from equally participating in ocean sectors.

- **WHY is this problem occurring?**

There is no single reason or root cause for why gender inequity occurs. Instead, a complex interplay of factors contributes to its existence, which include patriarchal norms, cultural practices, stereotypes and systemic

discrimination. Gender disparities are further perpetuated by poor access to education and capacity-building opportunities, resources, and lack of career opportunities. When women and gender minorities are not well represented in leadership positions, their limited ability to meaningfully influence laws and policies further exacerbates the problem.

Having understood the various dimensions of gender equity in ocean sectors, it is helpful to consider what international frameworks exist to guide states' obligations towards ocean sustainability and gender.

2.2 Existing international ocean commitments that highlight gender

Efforts towards ocean sustainability are guided by a variety of agreements, conventions and initiatives, which recognise the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)³ as the overarching legal 'constitution' of the ocean, beneath which these other agreements and commitments reside. They include, inter alia, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – particularly SDG14, 'Life Below Water' – as well as regional agreements and national policies on marine conservation, the management of fisheries and pollution control. A comprehensive overview of existing international agreements that highlight the ocean and gender, as well as Commonwealth commitments and other regional agreements, can be found in Annex II.

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of women and girls and condemn discrimination against women in all forms.⁴ This obligation extends to how the ocean is managed.⁵ There are four central themes and priorities emanating from international agreements that are useful in guiding the appropriate approach to be taken when mainstreaming gender in ocean sectors:

1. calling for the creation and implementation of policies and laws that are gender responsive and promote gender equality;⁶
2. recognising the importance of capacity building and education efforts to allow women and other marginalised groups to engage in and derive benefits from ocean-

related activities such as training sessions, educational grants and opportunities for mentorship;⁷

3. calling on improved gender-disaggregated data collection to provide a better understanding of the varying roles, constitutions and challenges faced by men and women involved in ocean-related work;⁸ and
4. calling for increased participation of women in governance and decision-making roles across all spectrums of ocean leadership, such as governance, research, industry and civil society organisations.⁹

2.3 Gender issues

Gender issues include the following.

- **Ignorance of gender stereotypes:** Gender stereotypes exist that perpetuate the notion that activities such as fishing and the merchant marine are more suited to men. These result in women and other gender minorities receiving limited opportunities.
- **Gender pay/wage gap:** Disparities arise in the pay women receive in comparison to their male counterparts. This is reflective of broader issues in societies relating to wage discrimination based on one's gender. For example, the World Economic Forum's 2023 *Global Gender Gap Report* – an overall finding of which was that the global gender gap score across all 146 countries it covered was '68.4 per cent closed', meaning that significant progress remains to be made towards gender parity – singled out the 'Economic Participation and Opportunity' gap as having widened between 2022 and 2023.¹⁰
- **Safety and 'comfort' at sea:** Concerns regarding physical safety, privacy and access to proper facilities while at sea remain an issue for women and gender minorities. See Renis Auma Ojwala's account in Case Study 1 regarding inadequate bathroom facilities on a research vessel.
- **Care responsibilities:** Women's ability to pursue careers in ocean sectors or participate actively in maritime activities is stifled by their disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities. They are often

Case Study 1. Breaking waves: Renis Auma Ojwala's journey towards gender equality in ocean sectors

This case study features Renis Auma Ojwala, a Kenyan research scientist, and her journey in marine science and gender advocacy, addressing key challenges and envisioning a future of inclusivity for sustainable ocean governance.

Renis, a passionate Kenyan research scientist, is dedicated to conservation work in Kenya, focusing on marine biodiversity and sustainable fisheries management. She has been involved in conducting beach patrols in the mornings and evenings to locate and protect sea turtle nests, as well as assessing fish stocks through length and weight measurements.

Renis is deeply committed to reducing the overdependency of persons of all gender identities on fisheries resources by providing alternative livelihoods. She has been actively involved in the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Kenya's women's empowerment programme, initially designed for women and later expanded to include persons of all gender identities. This programme encourages weekly contributions, enabling participants to borrow funds to avoid overfishing and ensure sustainable resource management.



Perspectives on gender equality

Renis defines gender equality as the provision of equal opportunities for both men and women. She emphasises its importance in acknowledging the significant contributions of women, who have often been overlooked in scientific arenas and reports despite their vital roles in resource management and conservation efforts. She believes that achieving gender equality requires recognising and valuing the different perspectives and contributions of both men and women in ocean-related activities. Renis highlights the diverse roles and knowledge that women bring to the sector, emphasising the need for inclusive decision-making processes to ensure holistic approaches to ocean health and sustainability.

Challenges and barriers

Renis identifies several challenges and barriers to achieving gender equality in ocean sectors, including resistance from some male colleagues during data collection, policies that favour men in hiring and promotion requirements, lack of support and recognition for women, and instances of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. She emphasises the importance of addressing resistance through mandatory training and ensuring policies are inclusive and supportive of women's needs, such as flexible work arrangements and childcare facilities.

Gender mainstreaming and safety measures

Renis stresses the need for reporting procedures and safe spaces to address gender-based violence and harassment in ocean sectors. She advocates for the appointment of gender focal points and committees to oversee gender mainstreaming efforts and calls for greater representation of women in decision-making positions.

Envisioning the future

Renis envisions a future of gender inclusivity in ocean sectors, where all genders are actively engaged in decision-making processes and resource management. She emphasises the importance of creative and innovative solutions to achieving a sustainable ocean and governance.

Personal and professional goals

Despite facing challenges in her own career journey, Renis remains determined to promote gender equality in ocean sectors. Her goals include conducting research, advocating for equal opportunities for everyone, and fostering an environment where all genders can thrive and contribute meaningfully to ocean conservation and management efforts.

Renis' dedication and advocacy serve as an inspiring example of gender inclusion in ocean sectors and the transformative impact it can have on achieving a sustainable ocean for future generations.

unable to compete with male counterparts for promotion opportunities. See Edem Mahu's account in Case Study 5 on balancing motherhood and a career in oceanography.

- Access to and enrolment in quality education in STEM and other types of training and capacity building:** While graduates from STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) programmes generally command higher salaries compared to non-STEM graduates, there is a notable disparity in the likelihood of women in universities and colleges choosing STEM fields when compared to their male counterparts. In Canada, women are 29.8 per cent less likely to enrol in tertiary STEM programmes after graduation when compared to men.¹¹ Moreover, where women do pursue tertiary STEM studies, a 'leaky pipeline' occurs – despite being qualified, these women do not become researchers. Furthermore, despite comprising 33.3 per cent of all researchers, women make up only 12 per cent of members in national science academies.¹²
- Access to finance and other resources:** Enterprises and initiatives in ocean sectors owned by women tend to encounter greater difficulty in accessing financing, funding and other necessary resources to develop their businesses sustainably. Furthermore, in comparison to male counterparts, women researchers typically receive smaller research grants.¹³
- Gender-based violence (GBV), harassment and bullying:** Women and gender minorities are at risk of experiencing GBV, harassment and bullying in the workplace and other ocean-related spaces. This contributes to a hostile working environment and significant psychological distress. A study in Fiji revealed that one in five women interviewed had been sexually harassed in the workplace.¹⁴
- Gender disparity in decision-making processes:** Women are often underrepresented in leadership roles and decision-making processes related to ocean sectors, including participation and communication engagement in local communities. This limits their ability to meaningfully participate in these processes, influence decisions and gain recognition for their perspectives and expertise. As of 2020, when compared to men, women ocean scientists accounted for between 29 and 53 per cent of the total participants at conferences.¹⁵ Although women represent nearly half or more than half of conference participants in some cases, their minority presence in many instances reflects persistent gender disparities in ocean science.
- Lack of gender disaggregated data:** The overall lack of gender disaggregated data significantly challenges ocean sectors' ability to understand and address gender inequity, identify specific challenges and formulate appropriate solutions.



3. Integrating a Gender-Responsive Approach in Ocean Sectors and Industries

3.1 Assessing gender-related issues within ocean sectors and industries

Worldwide, persons of all gender identities have each approached the use and management of the ocean and its resources in different ways. They possess specific knowledge and skills, and have different needs. For decades, the important roles that women play in a plethora of ocean-related industries have been undervalued and gone virtually unnoticed. The challenges, opportunities and examples below address the state of gender equity and gender mainstreaming in marine conservation and restoration, ocean science, fisheries (including coastal fisheries and aquaculture), maritime transportation and tourism.

Marine conservation and restoration

Challenges

Biodiversity across the globe is experiencing an alarming decline, posing significant challenges to ecosystems and species survival. Moreover, human activities and climate change continue to have negative effects on marine ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs, which are crucial for biodiversity and resilience to natural disasters such as storms, hurricanes and tsunamis. According to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), between 25 and 50 per cent of coral reefs have been destroyed globally and an estimated 60 per cent are at risk.¹⁶ Women's active participation in conservation and restoration efforts can be hindered by various barriers to accessing training and involvement in fieldwork, where women often face stereotypes.

Case Study 2. An accessible ocean for all: Emily Penn, a driving force raising awareness of plastics pollution

This case study outlines the multifaceted journey of Emily Penn from the United Kingdom. As founder and director of eXXpedition, Emily raises awareness of plastics pollution and champions gender equality in ocean sectors.

Emily's journey of passion and advocacy

Emily is a formidable force in the ocean space, seamlessly balancing her roles as an ocean advocate, skipper and artist. A graduate of Cambridge University with a degree in architecture, Emily's journey has been shaped by diverse experiences both on land and at sea.



From managing community-led waste cleanups on remote Tongan islands to trawling for microplastics in the Arctic Northwest Passage, Emily's experiences have shaped her understanding of the intricate relationship between plastics, toxins and female health. She is the driving force behind eXXpedition, a series of all-female voyages aimed at raising awareness of plastics pollution and its impact on women's well-being.

Championing gender equality

Through eXXpedition, Emily aims to provide positive female role models and challenge traditional gender norms. She believes that empowering women is key to addressing the significant challenge facing ocean sectors, from underrepresentation to household decision-making on plastics consumption.

Emily acknowledges that there are inherent dangers and risks faced by women working at sea, from unforgiving environments to security threats such as piracy. To mitigate some of these dangers and challenges, she emphasises the importance of proper planning, safety protocols and shared parental leave policies to support women in pursuing ocean-related careers.

Embedding gender

Emily stresses 'We are not superheroes – we are everyday women'. Therefore, a collective effort is needed to ensure that gender mainstreaming efforts go beyond surface-level initiatives and are deeply embedded in policies, practices and cultures. She advocates for government leadership in promoting gender diversity, highlighting the importance of women's representation at senior levels in both the public and private sectors.

Drawing from her experiences in diverse cultural contexts like Tonga, Emily stresses the importance of acknowledging cultural and regional considerations in promoting gender inclusivity. She advocates for attire that is comfortable, fit for the sea and considerate of cultural and regional contexts in order to improve access to the ocean.

Envisioning a more inclusive future

Emily envisions a future in which empowered women have equal access to opportunities in ocean sectors, free from gender-based stereotypes and barriers. She emphasises the importance of love and understanding for the ocean, highlighting the need for universal access to its wonders.

Opportunities

There are emerging opportunities to support the efforts of women and marginalised groups in conservation projects at all levels and to actively promote gender equity. For instance, in mangrove conservation, persons of all gender identities interact with mangroves differently and derive benefits from them differently.¹⁷ They should therefore all be involved in decision-making processes.

Examples

In Belize, women are leading the way on coral restoration. Fragments of Hope is a community-based organisation led by women that focuses primarily on coral reef restoration and advocacy for associated habitats being sustainably managed.¹⁸ Half of Fragment of Hope's trained and certified diving instructors are women. These women have been empowered to preserve this critical marine ecosystem as an estimated 90,000 corals have been relocated from nurseries to natural habitats.¹⁹

The Guyana Mangrove Restoration Project empowered women to take the lead in the restoration, protection and management of mangroves.²⁰ Women were trained to grow mangrove seedlings and were involved in planting them on the foreshore to restore mangrove forests.

Along Kenya's southeast coast, the world's first community-led project, 'Mikoko Pamoja', is run with the aim of funding mangrove conservation by selling carbon credits.²¹ Women involved in this project have been highlighted for effectively supporting ecotourism efforts and raising funds for schools in the community. There have been various positive spillover effects such as improved healthcare and access to a reliable supply of water.

Ocean science

Challenges

Ocean science, while offering exciting opportunities for scientific exploration and discovery, also presents unique challenges for women, often resulting in gender disparities within the field. Despite some progress, women remain outnumbered in this industry, with only 38.6 per cent of all ocean scientists being women.²² Additionally, women are often underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles within

marine conservation initiatives and face challenges accessing education and training in conservation science.

Opportunities

Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from individuals, institutions and policy-makers to promote gender equity, foster inclusive work environments, and provide support systems that enable women to thrive in ocean science. Fisheries and Oceans Canada produced a report in 2020 that provided six recommendations to 'support gender equity in ocean science'.²³ They were: guaranteeing equity in decision-making; the collection of gender disaggregated data; providing mentorship and leadership opportunities; the co-creation of science management plans; the facilitation of capacity enhancement and exchange; and supporting gender allies.²⁴

Examples

Memorial University Canada's Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR), which specialises in marine plastics and plastics pollution, is leading on equity by integrating equitable research practices at the community level and incorporating equity in innovative ocean science instrumentation in its research.²⁵ Applying CLEAR's core values of addressing the unevenness in STEM has resulted in sustainable monitoring programmes for years to come.

In South Africa, the Advancing Womxn Initiative (AWI) was launched at the University of Cape Town (UCT) with the aim of creating 'a generation of black womxn²⁶ leaders in oceanography who become role models and mentors for future generations'.²⁷ Through financial, professional and personal support, fellows in the programme are thriving and it has sparked a shift in UCT's Oceanography Department.

Fisheries

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), an estimated 58.5 million people were employed in fisheries and aquaculture in 2020, with 35 per cent in aquaculture and 65 per cent representing the fisheries industry.²⁸ As women make up half of the overall workforce in fisheries and aquaculture, the gendered dimensions of these key industries are examined below.

Case Study 3. Seas of opportunity: How Adi Alani Tuivucilevu is empowering women in fisheries in Fiji



This case study outlines Adi Alani Tuivucilevu's impactful journey as a marine biologist and Network Co-ordinator for the Women in Fisheries Network – Fiji (WiFN-Fiji), advocating for women's empowerment in coastal communities, challenging norms in decision-making and emphasising the vital role of the media in reshaping narratives around women in ocean sectors.

In the Pacific region, where the ocean is not just a resource but a way of life, remarkable women like Adi Alani Tuivucilevu are making waves of change. As a marine biologist and the Network Co-ordinator for the Women in Fisheries Network – Fiji (WiFN-Fiji), Adi Alani has dedicated her career to realising women's empowerment within the fisheries sector, particularly in rural and maritime communities across Fiji.

A grassroots approach to empowerment

Adi Alani's journey began as a marine researcher, working closely with coastal communities to understand their needs and challenges. Over time, she recognised the significant role women played in these communities as primary users of coastal resources, yet their voices were often marginalised in decision-making processes. This realisation fuelled her passion to advocate for the meaningful participation of women in fisheries management and decision-making.

At WiFN-Fiji, Adi Alani spearheads initiatives aimed at amplifying women's voices and addressing the systemic barriers they face. One of the organisation's key strategies involves engaging directly with women in coastal communities to understand their perspectives and needs. Through this grassroots approach, WiFN-Fiji ensures that women's roles in the care economy and their challenges in accessing markets for their products are central to its programming.

One significant milestone in Adi Alani's career was her participation in the US–Pacific Institute for Rising Leaders Fellowship Program at Johns Hopkins University, where she honed her leadership skills and gained invaluable insights into evidence-based programming. Armed with newfound knowledge and innovative approaches, Adi Alani elevated WiFN-Fiji to new heights, garnering recognition as the premier non-governmental organisation advocating for women in fisheries in Fiji.

Challenging norms in decision-making

Adi Alani stresses that achieving gender equality in ocean sectors remains an ongoing challenge. In Fiji, women are the main users of the coastline, depending on the ocean to feed their families and generate income through fishing. Despite their central role, management committees overseeing oceanic resources largely exclude women from decision-making processes, reflecting deep-rooted traditional societal inequalities.



In contrast, women, the primary users, are side-lined from decision-making, perpetuating inequities.

Adi Alani's message to policy-makers, organisations and individuals is clear: recognising and supporting women's contributions in ocean sectors is crucial for sustainable development. Investing in women unlocks invaluable knowledge, resilience and innovation, benefiting communities and the Pacific region as a whole. Genuine gender equality entails more than mere tokenism; it requires men and women to work collaboratively, ensuring women are not only represented but also heard.

The role of the media

Adi Alani's message concludes by underscoring the media's pivotal role in reshaping narratives surrounding women in ocean sectors. Conventional portrayals often depict women as weak and vulnerable, perpetuating misconceptions. To effect change, the narrative must shift to recognise women as frontliners, key economic players, climate warriors and agents of change.

Coastal fisheries

Challenges

FAO research has found one in two seafood workers in the world are women.²⁹ However, men have traditionally been responsible for harvesting fish whereas women play critical roles in post-harvest activities such as the processing and marketing the fish.³⁰ These latter are often the lowest-paying roles. Women are often unable to participate in other roles due to childcare responsibilities and lack of access to fishing gear. Additionally, in comparison to their male counterparts, women face difficulties in accessing loans and other financial resources.

Opportunities

To empower women in coastal fisheries, they must be able to access resources such as loans, fishing gear and training programmes tailored to their needs. Additionally, women's contributions must be acknowledged in fisheries governance.

Example

The Women in Fisheries Network, an NGO which works in partnership with government ministries and national and regional agencies, promotes gender equity in the fisheries sector.³¹ Through

WiFN-Fiji focuses on challenging these norms by advocating for women's inclusion in management plans and governance structures, employing a gender lens. Adi Alani emphasises the importance of consulting women on strategies and enabling their participation in decision-making. The absence of women's input is costly. The men that sit on these boards are often unfamiliar with oceanic resources and lack the necessary understanding to protect them. In

training and skill-building initiatives, the project aims to empower women to participate more actively in decision-making processes related to the protection, use and management of fisheries resources. By enhancing women's involvement and improving data collection on women's participation in the industry, the project contributes to greater gender equality and resilience in Fiji's fisheries sector.

Aware of the importance of safety at sea, the FAO donated marine safety grab bags to fisherwomen in Silana, a coastal community in Fiji. Recognising that the coastal fisheries is a dangerous industry, each bag contained: 'a personal locator beacon, a strobe light, a signalling mirror and whistle, a rescue laser and sea rescue streamer, a handheld marine VHF radio, a sea anchor, three manually inflatable life jackets, a directional compass, a first aid kit and two thermal emergency blankets'.³²

In the Caribbean region, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), through Global Affairs Canada, led the Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Fisheries in the Caribbean project. Here, the aim was improving sustainable fisheries for women, girls and other vulnerable groups in the Caribbean to advance gender issues and decent work and promote youth involvement in sustainable

development.³³ Though constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic, at the end of the programme there was a 25 per cent increase in women members in the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) compared to 2017 levels, and 75 per cent of Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) member states identified gender focal points.³⁴

Aquaculture

Challenges

Women often have limited access to land and resources for aquaculture. They may also face challenges accessing extension services and technical training. A study in Rwanda reported that a high level of illiteracy among women, lack of land ownership, absence of adequate data and lack of gender-sensitive government programmes were constraints and challenges experienced by women in aquaculture.³⁵

Opportunities

First, initiatives to facilitate women's access to land and resources are necessary. These may include law and policy reforms, better land tenure rights, and mechanisms for support being integrated into communities. Additionally, more women should be enabled to participate in technical training, capacity-building sessions and opportunities for mentorship to hone the skills needed to successfully operate and grow their aquaculture operations.

Example

Following the completion of the Aquaculture for Income and Nutrition (AIN) Project in Bangladesh, led by WorldFish Bangladesh and South Asia, 800,000 households were supported including 55 per cent women.³⁶ The project's final report highlights that during sessions for skills development, 75 per cent of training was dedicated to aquaculture technology and the remaining time dedicated to nutrition and gender awareness.

Maritime transportation

Challenges

Seafaring roles within the maritime sector are largely occupied by men, creating limited opportunities for women to pursue careers at sea. Globally, women hold 95 per cent of all administrative roles in the maritime sector, whereas

only 5 per cent of maritime executive leadership team positions are occupied by women.³⁷ Gender stereotypes and cultural norms often perpetuate the exclusion of women from seafaring professions. Women in administrative and support roles onshore, meanwhile, may encounter gender-based discrimination and unequal treatment in the workplace. This systemic bias restricts women's access to leadership roles and career advancement opportunities within the maritime industry.

Opportunities

Promoting gender diversity at sea and onshore will create a more inclusive and equitable work environment in the maritime industry. Systemic changes should be made through implementing gender policies and hiring a gender officer to address persisting discriminatory practices. Furthermore, the International Labour Organization (ILO) offers guidance and tools for preventing and addressing violence and harassment in the workplace.³⁸

Example

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) spearheads the SheEO leadership scheme, sponsoring women from developing nations to participate in capacity building and training on various aspects of the maritime industry.³⁹ The initiative aims to empower women with leadership skills and confidence to actively engage in decision-making within the shipping sector. The first two sessions of the course, each of which comprised 8 weeks with a weekly commitment for cohorts of 3–4 hours, were conducted in 2022. The third session commenced in March 2023.

Tourism

Challenges

Globally, women in tourism earn 15 per cent less than their male counterparts. Although women constitute 54 per cent of tourism staff, they hold only 23 per cent of tourism ministerial positions, highlighting the existing gender gap.⁴⁰

Women in the tourism sector often find themselves relegated to precarious and lower-paying positions, such as housekeeping and waitstaff roles. GBV and harassment are prevalent issues, creating hostile work environments and undermining the well-being of women in the industry.

Opportunities

Strict reporting measures can be implemented to address GBV and harassment to guarantee the safety and well-being of women working in the tourism industry.⁴¹ Moreover, gender-disaggregated data can be collected to fill existing knowledge gaps. For instance, South Africa stands out as one of the few countries that gathers sex-disaggregated data on employment across the various sectors of the tourism industry. Within South Africa's tourism industry, women comprise 60.47 per cent of workers in tourist accommodation and 33.95 per cent of employees in travel agencies.⁴² With these data, South Africa is better able to understand the unique issues affecting women. For instance, women in tourism face challenges in attaining professional-level positions, resulting in lower wages and fewer advancement opportunities compared to men.

Examples

In Sri Lanka, the Institute for Gender and Development Studies developed the Women in Tourism Project to create opportunities for Sri Lankan women to gain better incomes in the tourism industry. The project hosts short courses on responsible tourism practices and local community participation and capacity-building sessions on diversity inclusion to promote respect for diversity in the industry.

3.2 Assessing gender-related issues across other cross-cutting themes in ocean sectors

Youth

Challenges

Young women often encounter gender-based discrimination, which manifests in unequal treatment, biased perceptions, and limited access to resources and opportunities compared to male counterparts. Additionally, intersectional discrimination further exacerbates the challenges faced by young women, particularly those from marginalised communities, including racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Moreover, the lack of representation of young women in leadership roles and decision-making processes within ocean



sectors perpetuates inequalities and limits their ability to influence policies and initiatives that affect their lives and communities.

Opportunities

Providing young women with access to quality education, training programmes and mentorship opportunities can empower them with the knowledge and skills needed to overcome barriers and pursue fulfilling careers in ocean sectors. Organisations and institutions in ocean sectors should also take meaningful steps to promote equity and inclusivity to create environments where young women can thrive, contribute their unique perspectives and participate fully in decision-making processes. Furthermore, investing in youth-led initiatives and grassroots organisations led by young women enables them to address pressing ocean-related challenges, drive innovation and advocate for meaningful change at the local, national and global levels.

Examples

The Commonwealth Secretariat and member countries are committed to young people. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2022, leaders proclaimed 2023 as the Commonwealth Year of Youth – a dedicated period aimed at fostering youth-led endeavours for sustainable and inclusive development. During the 2023 Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in

Case Study 4. Breaking barriers: Luzanne Edwards' perspective as a young women working in a male-dominated field

This case study outlines Luzanne Edwards' remarkable journey as a young civil engineer in St Vincent and the Grenadines, highlighting her perseverance in this male-dominated field, the importance of comfortable work environments and the multifaceted nature of gender mainstreaming.

In the heart of St Vincent and the Grenadines, Luzanne Edwards is a tenacious 26-year-old civil engineer, and a trailblazer in a male-dominated field, breaking down barriers, one step at a time. As the engineer on various ocean-related projects, Luzanne's journey shines a spotlight on the intricate intersection of age, gender and perseverance in the world of civil engineering.



Overcoming hurdles

Respected not only for her passion but her undeniable expertise, Luzanne knows only too well the hurdles she has had to overcome. Her age, often viewed as a hurdle, is a testament to her strength, not a limitation. In a field where traditional norms still linger, she has felt the weight of judgment and, in some instances, the expectation to fit into a more masculine mould and role.

In these instances, Luzanne has realised that the delicate balancing act of being a young woman and an engineer requires nuance, working shoulder to shoulder with her male counterparts. In her opinion, this is a subtle yet powerful way to confront the glaring complexities that intersectionality brings to the forefront.

The importance of comfortable work environments



Presently, as the project engineer on the Sandy Bay Defence Resilience Project, she acknowledges that any initial doubts were dispelled once her team members observed her skills and abilities. Luzanne appreciates working in an environment where she is not singled out because of her gender; she feels integrated into the team, a rarity in many male-dominated fields.

She highlights, however, that despite a good gender balance in her company, within the community, women are frequently expected to conform to outdated gender roles, a notion she feels young women may inadvertently adopt. Without adequate guidance, women may limit themselves to roles that do not reflect their interests.

Reflecting on her journey, Luzanne recalls her first role as a site technician at age 21 where, despite limited experience, she was supported by her seniors. She also points out the presence of numerous women in leadership roles within her company, serving as inspirations for her career. Despite this, Luzanne acknowledges the discomfort some women face due to unwanted advances on construction sites and calls for stronger policies to combat harassment.

Luzanne's experiences invite us to consider the multifaceted nature of gender mainstreaming. Mainstreaming gender is not a 'one-size-fits-all' endeavour. It is a commitment to dismantling preconceived notions, providing opportunities and fostering a culture where every individual, regardless of age, gender or background, can contribute their unique perspectives to shape ocean sectors.

Luzanne's advice to young women in similar environments is to remain dedicated and resilient, and to focus on their passion.

London, it was agreed to extend the Year of Youth until the upcoming CHOGM, scheduled to convene in Apia, Samoa, in October 2024.⁴³

In collaboration with the Commonwealth Youth Climate Network (CYCN),⁴⁴ the CBC established the inaugural Ocean Youth Working Group within the Commonwealth. The aim is to heighten awareness of ocean-climate issues at the grassroots level and establish partnerships with governmental programmes and youth-led initiatives. The working group boasts a strong representation of young women.

Indigenous people

Challenges

Indigenous people play a crucial role in ocean sectors, drawing on traditional knowledge and practices to sustainably manage marine resources. However, they often face unique challenges and hardships that stem from historical marginalisation, colonial legacies and ongoing systemic inequalities. Indigenous women experience marginalisation and discrimination based on their gender and indigenous identity. They are often excluded from decision-making processes, face unequal access to resources and receive limited recognition of their rights in marine governance. Moreover, environmental degradation and climate change disproportionately impact indigenous communities, leading to loss of traditional territories, displacement and disruption of cultural practices essential for sustainable ocean stewardship. Indigenous women also encounter limited economic opportunities in ocean sectors, facing

barriers to entrepreneurship, access to finance and participation in value chains. This results in economic dependency and poverty.

Opportunities

Investing in education, training and capacity-building programmes tailored to the needs of indigenous women can enhance their leadership skills, strengthen their voice in decision-making processes and promote the preservation of traditional knowledge and practices. The rights of indigenous peoples, including women, to ancestral lands and marine territories must be upheld. Furthermore, building partnerships and collaborations between indigenous communities, governments, NGOs and academia promotes inclusive approaches to ocean governance and management.

Example

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) serves as a national indigenous organisation, advocating for the political representation of indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse individuals across Canada.⁴⁵ Its mission is to enhance the capacity of indigenous women to actively participate in conversations concerning marine safety, and to advocate for increased involvement of indigenous women in dialogues concerning the conservation of Canada's ocean and waterways.

The Sea Women of Melanesia (SWOM) Program provides indigenous women with training in conservation theory, scuba diving and marine biology survey techniques, enabling them to advocate for marine reserves and identify

suitable areas for protected zones.⁴⁶ Combining science, gender equity and sustainability, SWOM collaborates with traditional landowners to establish marine reserves, enhancing fisheries and biodiversity while also delivering humanitarian aid to improve the quality of life in partner villages.

Climate change

Challenges

Women and girls living in coastal areas make up 80 per cent of people already displaced by climate-related events.⁴⁷ Research suggests that not only are women (and children) more affected by climate change, but women have smaller carbon footprints⁴⁸ than men, have more responsible attitudes⁴⁹ towards climate change and have a greater interest⁵⁰ in protecting the environment. Further studies show that organisations with more female executives and board members perform better in terms of environmental impact⁵¹ and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Women often face direct effects from climate change, such as poor access to healthcare and loss of income, as well as indirect effects such as increased caregiving roles, more GBV, fewer opportunities for income generation, disruption of girls' education, and limited ability to influence decision-making processes and national policies.

Opportunities

By providing access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities, women can better withstand and adapt to climate change impacts. Additionally, promoting gender-inclusive decision-making processes at the national and local levels enables women to contribute their perspectives and insights into climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Example

The Commonwealth Secretariat, through the Commonwealth Climate Change Programme, is committed to strengthening the resilience of member countries to tackle climate change and adapt to its worst impacts. The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) assists small and vulnerable member countries with unlocking and accessing climate finance.⁵² Recognising that gender and health are inextricably linked, the CCFAH has boosted its capacity by integrating health and gender finance advisers to better assist member countries with accessing funding.⁵³ The Secretariat has also produced a best practice guide on integrating gender in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which includes questions for stakeholders to consider, a progress check and a theoretical timeline of actions to assist in mainstreaming gender in NDCs.⁵⁴



4. Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Ocean Sectors

4.1 Considerations when mainstreaming gender in ocean sectors

Aspects to take into considerations when mainstreaming gender in ocean sectors include the following.

1. **Gender roles and norms:** Ensure gender is mainstreamed throughout the policy/project by understanding and challenging traditional gender roles and norms within ocean sectors and in the local context. This includes acknowledging and addressing stereotypes and biases that may limit opportunities for women and other marginalised groups, as well as understanding the disproportionate care and familial roles men and women hold, and putting in place policies and campaigns that recognise, reduce and redistribute care work equally between persons of all gender identities.
2. **Access to finance and other resources:** Ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for persons of all gender identities in ocean sectors, including access to loans and other financial resources tailored to women's needs, and access to fishing gear, training and markets.
3. **Regulatory frameworks:** Implement policies and regulations that promote gender equality and eliminate barriers to women's participation in ocean-related activities, including laws that ensure equal access to fishing rights and maritime resources.
4. **Safety and harassment:** Understand and address safety concerns and prevent gender-based violence and harassment that women may face while working in ocean sectors. When approaching safety concerns, it is necessary to create a safe space to listen to women's concerns, so gaining a substantive understanding of these issues rather than prescribing and making assumptions about what these may be.
5. **Leadership and decision-making:** Promote the active participation of women in leadership and decision-making roles related to ocean activities and policy development. This involves considering challenges to active participation, such as care responsibilities, appropriate times and venues, and other accessibility needs.
6. **Training and capacity building:** Provide education, training programmes and networking opportunities to enhance the skills and knowledge of persons of all gender identities in ocean sectors, helping them

Case Study 5. The sea, the lab and raising a family: Edem Mahu's determination and pursuit of excellence as she balances motherhood and a career in oceanography

This case study features Dr Edem Mahu, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Ghana, showcasing her resilience in oceanography, the challenges of balancing a career and motherhood, and her advocacy for gender equality in the field.

Brief overview of Edem's role and experience

Dr Edem Mahu, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Ghana, exemplifies resilience and dedication in the ocean sciences field. Edem's journey began at university, where she pursued oceanography – a field that, in West Africa, remained relatively unexplored and unpopular. The decision to study oceanography provoked resistance from her family, who had different aspirations for her. This is a common challenge many women encounter in breaking traditional career norms. Within the developing field of oceanography in Africa, Edem's experiences, though psychologically draining, stand as a testament to her unwavering determination.



Edem's professional path was further complicated by the need to develop a 'tough skin' to withstand potential gender bias and bullying by male counterparts. Student advice and supervision support added to her responsibilities, but inspired her to boldness and strength to navigate these challenges. Her dedication was apparent as she delayed childbearing and raising a family to establish herself in her career.

In her pursuit of excellence, Edem recognised the disparity in facilities between her home country and the United States. The lack of adequate resources and support back home spurred tireless efforts to establish her own lab, which included grant writing and proposal development, tasks that she managed alongside her other roles. To overcome these hurdles, Edem emphasises the importance of having some supportive male colleagues and a partner who encouraged her aspirations.

Edem's journey includes winning grants, mentoring and collaboration with networks, culminating in impactful research contributions. Her experiences and achievements highlight the crucial role of gender mainstreaming in fostering inclusivity in the ocean sciences.

Edem's definition of gender equality

For Edem, gender equality means achieving a balanced representation of genders and implementing policies that consider the unique needs of each. It extends beyond research to encompass gender balance in decision-making processes, particularly in ocean policy discussions. Recognising the emotional and physical impacts of gender-specific challenges, Edem emphasises the importance of creating a space where persons of all gender identities have a voice and can contribute to these discussions.

Significant challenges and barriers

Edem identifies several significant challenges and barriers in her field. These include:

- balancing career and care responsibilities, particularly for women, who often face inadequate systems to manage these dual roles
- the demanding nature of oceanography, which requires extended periods at sea, and how this impacts women with familial responsibilities
- persons of all gender identities' performance being evaluated using the same standards, often without acknowledging the specific challenges that women face
- challenges during pregnancy and early motherhood, especially when this conflicts with sea missions
- equal access to opportunities for women, who often struggle to compete on an equal footing with male counterparts.

Addressing the challenges and barriers

Edem suggests addressing these challenges through the following means:

- implementing policies that consider the unique needs of women and create workplaces that accommodate their time constraints
- incorporating specific provisions for women in promotion policies to acknowledge and address their distinct challenges
- establishing support systems, including childcare facilities, to alleviate the burdens women face in balancing a career and caregiving
- creating provisions for women to travel with their children when attending conferences, especially for breastfeeding mothers, to ensure they do not miss opportunities due to familial responsibilities.



thrive in their roles. It is also important that all members of staff are trained in gender mainstreaming.

7. **Health and well-being:** Address the healthcare and well-being needs of women and their families in ocean sectors, including access to family planning and reproductive health services.
8. **Participation and community engagement:** Engage with local communities, including women, in meaningful ways to ensure their needs and perspectives are considered in the development of ocean-related policies and projects.

4.2 Gender mainstreaming checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to assist in the integration of gender considerations into policies and projects within ocean sectors. When marking 'yes', please provide additional details to explain your affirmative response. In the event of a 'no' response, consider the comments section as an avenue for thoughtful reflection on future actions and an ongoing commitment to incorporating these inclusive aspects into your policies and projects.

Date:		Entity:		
Project manager:		Project name:		
Stage	Consideration	Questions	Answers (Yes/No)	Comments
Project planning	Project manager and team assignment	Has the project manager and leadership team been trained on gender mainstreaming, including how to carry out a gender analysis and how to formulate gender-responsive indicators and goals?		
	Gender analysis	Has a preliminary analysis been done to identify and understand the underlying causes of inequalities between men and women?		
	Gender-responsive Goals	Have gender-specific objectives and targets been integrated into the policy or project to address gender disparities and promote gender equality?		
Data gathering and analysis	Gender analysis	Have gender-disaggregated data and information been collected and analysed to understand the specific needs and roles of persons of all gender identities in ocean sectors?		
	Community engagement	Are strategies in place to engage with local communities, including indigenous women and young women, in a meaningful way to ensure that their needs and perspectives are considered?		
Decision-making	Stakeholder involvement	Have all relevant stakeholders, including women and marginalised groups, been consulted and involved in the planning and decision-making process?		
		Is there a need to provide a crèche to enable women to participate in consultations and decision-making?		
		Is the venue and time convenient for all?		
	Is there a need for sign language/interpretation services?			
		Does the policy or project recognise and respect the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, particularly the role of women in ocean stewardship?		
		Are there legal, cultural religious or other constraints on women's potential participation in the project? Have strategies been formulated to address these factors?		
	Representation and decision-making	Is there a mechanism to promote the active participation of women in decision-making processes related to ocean sectors, including in leadership roles?		

Stage (CTD)	Consideration	Questions	Answers (Yes/No)	Comments
Implementation	Capacity building and education	Does the policy or project include provisions for training and capacity building for women and other underrepresented groups in ocean sectors?		
		Is there a plan for raising awareness about the importance of gender equity in ocean sectors among all stakeholders?		
		Are all staff trained in gender mainstreaming? If not, are there plans to provide training?		
	Equal access to resources	If the policy/project involves resource allocation, is there a plan to ensure equitable access to resources, including for both fisheries and aquaculture, and livelihood opportunities for women and marginalised groups?		
	Gender budgeting	Is there a clear and sufficient allocation of resources in the budget to implement gender-responsive initiatives within the policy or project?		
	Partnerships	Are there partnerships with organisations, institutions and agencies that have expertise in gender equity and can provide support in achieving the objectives?		
	Communication materials and documentation	Have the project documentation and communication materials been presented in a gender-sensitive manner? Do they represent persons of all gender identities equitably and without stereotyping?		
Post-implementation	Monitoring and evaluation	Are baseline surveys carried out to include gender-related questions? Will this be tracked throughout the monitoring and evaluation system?		
		Have indicators been formulated in a way to measure progress in achieving benefits for persons of all gender identities?		
	Regular review and adaptation	Is there a commitment to periodic reviews and updates to ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of the gender-mainstreaming approach in ocean sectors?		

Case Study 6. Navigating equality: Rebecca Daniel's trailblazing ocean advocacy

This case study highlights Rebecca Daniel from the United Kingdom and her upward trajectory in ocean sectors, from her childhood passion for marine life to becoming the Director of The Marine Diaries. A staunch advocate for gender equality, safety and diversity, Rebecca envisions a future of inclusivity and greater female leadership in ocean conservation.

Rebecca's journey

Rebecca's journey into ocean sectors commenced with a childhood passion for marine life. At the tender age of 10, she acquired her scuba diving certification, igniting a lifelong fascination with the sea. Her academic pursuits lead her to achieve a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences and a Master of Science in Tropical Marine Biology, laying the groundwork for her illustrious career.



Her early endeavours, including volunteering with Wildlife Sense Kefalonia and interning with esteemed organisations like the Ocean and Climate Platform in Paris, formed the basis of her love of marine conservation and advocacy.

As the Director of The Marine Diaries – a marine conservation non-profit that uses storytelling and digital media to communicate ocean science and connect people with the ocean – Rebecca leverages her leadership and storytelling to advocate for inclusivity and equity.

Overcoming barriers and championing gender equality

Despite the influx of enthusiastic young women into ocean sectors, Rebecca acknowledges that gender disparities remain, particularly in senior leadership roles. A lack of support, mentorship and structured pathways for young women impede their progress.

To Rebecca, gender equality is more than just a goal or aspiration; it is necessary to address the intricate challenges confronting our ocean. Through The Marine Diaries Rebecca is committed to amplifying diverse voices within the sector.

Safety and security concerns frequently dissuade women from pursuing careers at sea or in remote coastal locales. Rebecca advocates for holistic measures, such as educating men around consent and harassment, creating and enforcing gender-inclusivity guidelines, and the appointment of welfare officers, to effectively tackle these challenges.

She maintains that gender equality is not only essential for social justice, but also necessary for effective conservation endeavours. Rebecca recognises that issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss and the myriad other issues affecting our ocean are complex. Therefore, diverse perspectives, backgrounds and approaches are needed to solve them.

Due to limited female support networks, intense competition for jobs and opportunities and other systemic issues, there is an environment of competitiveness and scarcity among many women. Consequently, there are few women actively supporting the younger generation. Through her work, Rebecca underscores the importance of creating environments that are inclusive and provides career development and mentorship opportunities to encourage women across all career levels.

Looking towards the future

For gender mainstreaming endeavours to be successful, Rebecca highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity and policies that are proactive. Moreover, a sense of equality, diversity and inclusion must be fostered across government, businesses and organisations. She advocates for gender-bias training, meaningfully recognising women's contributions, and creating platforms for shared experiences and support.

Rebecca imagines a future where gender inclusivity is the norm across all levels of ocean sectors – from entry level to senior positions.

She envisions a 'sisterhood' of female ocean leaders and advocates, who amplify each other's voices, share learnings and opportunities, and propel each other forward. In Rebecca Daniel's journey, we find inspiration and leadership, guiding the path towards a more equitable and sustainable ocean sector.





5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Addressing gender disparities and promoting gender equity within ocean sectors and climate action initiatives is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable outcomes. The following actions are recommended.

1. **Full-time gender officer:** Establish a gender officer position within organisations to ensure sustained focus and commitment to gender mainstreaming efforts.
2. **Mandatory gender trainings:** Implement mandatory gender trainings for staff to foster awareness, understanding and commitment to gender equality principles throughout the organisation.
3. **Enhanced leadership representation:** Enhance the representation and participation of underrepresented women, particularly from marginalised regions, in influential climate decision-making forums such as COPs. This ensures diverse and inclusive perspectives in ocean-climate policy development.
4. **Inclusive workplace policies:** Implement inclusive workplace policies that accommodate diverse needs, such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave and childcare support, to create an environment conducive to gender equality and work-life balance for all employees.
5. **Collaborative approaches with men:** Recognise the importance of men in advancing gender equity and adopt collaborative approaches to address gender dimensions within ocean science and climate adaptation.
6. **Capacity building in STEM education:** Promote local STEM education initiatives for women and girls to facilitate access to quality education in ocean sectors, fostering the development of future leaders and professionals.
7. **Gender-disaggregated data:** Establish the systematic collection and utilisation of gender-specific data in monitoring and reporting to inform policies and interventions that address gender disparities effectively.
8. **Financial support programmes:** Financially support programmes specifically targeting women engaged in non-traditional marine/maritime roles to promote gender equality and empower women in the sector, thereby fostering economic independence and resilience.
9. **Mentorship programmes:** Establish mentorship programmes to provide guidance, support and career development opportunities for women in ocean sectors.
10. **Fairer job descriptions and promotion requirements:** Develop fairer job descriptions and promotion requirements that consider women's caregiving responsibilities, ensuring equal opportunities for career progression and advancement.

Further Resources

Commonwealth Secretariat policies, guides, case studies and reports

- Commonwealth Secretariat (2022), *Gender Integration in NDCs: A Commonwealth Best Practice Guide*.
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- World Tourism Organization (2019), *Global Report on Women in Tourism*, 2nd ed.

Texts, journals and articles

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Annex I. Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Groups

The Commonwealth Blue Charter works through a set of Action Groups, each devoted to a particular ocean issue. Action Groups are driven by member countries, led by 'Champion' countries. To date, 16 countries have stepped forward to be Champions on 10 topics. Action Groups will unlock the power of 56 nations and guide the development of tools and training.

The 10 Action Groups and topics are as follows.

- **Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance** – The United Kingdom and Vanuatu are working together to lead this Action Group on tackling marine plastics pollution – the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance (CCOA).
- **Coral Reef Protection and Restoration** – Australia, Belize and Mauritius are co-championing the Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Coral Reef Protection and Restoration.
- **Mangrove Ecosystems and Livelihoods** – Sri Lanka has stepped forward to be a Commonwealth Blue Charter Champion and lead an Action Group on Mangrove Ecosystems and Livelihoods.
- **Marine Protected Areas** – Barbados and Seychelles have stepped forward to champion the Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Marine Protected Areas.
- **Ocean Acidification** – New Zealand will champion the Ocean Acidification Action Group, improving the capacity of countries to address the issue, particularly in small island developing states.
- **Ocean and Climate Change** – Fiji has stepped forward to champion the Ocean and Climate Change Action Group.
- **Ocean Observation** – Canada has stepped forward to lead the Ocean Observation Action Group.
- **Sustainable Aquaculture** – Cyprus has stepped forward as the Commonwealth Blue Charter Champion on Sustainable Aquaculture.
- **Sustainable Blue Economy** – Antigua and Barbuda and Kenya are championing an Action Group on developing an integrated approach to the Blue Economy.
- **Sustainable Coastal Fisheries** – Maldives and Kiribati co-champion the Action Group on Sustainable Coastal Fisheries.

Annex II. International Agreements

Global agreements relating to the ocean

Agreement	Article
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)	While UNCLOS does not specifically speak to gender, its preamble references a belief that: 'The codification and progressive development of the law of the sea achieved in this Convention will contribute to the strengthening of peace, security, co-operation and friendly relations among all nations in conformity with the principles of justice and equal rights and will promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples of the world , in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations as set forth in the Charter.'
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Gender Plan of Action ⁵⁵ – Annex I. Purpose – the purpose of the Gender Plan of Action is to support and promote the gender-responsive implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The plan will also support a gender-responsive approach to applying the implementation mechanisms associated with the framework.
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	<p>Paris Agreement</p> <p>Preamble –</p> <p>Decision 1/CP.21 recognises that climate change is a shared concern for all humanity. It emphasises that parties should uphold, promote and take into account their individual obligations to human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women when implementing measures to address climate change.</p> <p>The Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)⁵⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preamble – Reaffirms the key role that youth, women and indigenous peoples play in ensuring Action for Climate Empowerment. • 3(d) – Highlights that it shall be guided by a gender and intergenerational approach. • 18 – In implementing the six elements of Action for Climate Empowerment, parties and non-party stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate on education and training programmes focused on climate change at all levels, targeting the involvement of women and youth in particular. • 27(g) – Parties are encouraged to create communities of practice, knowledge and learning that are available and accessible to a wide range of stakeholders, including women, children and youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities. • 28(f) – Parties are encouraged to improve public access to information on climate change at the national and local levels using a range of methods and tools, taking into account the different ways particular communities, groups and individuals, including women and children and youth, may be impacted by climate change. • 29(a) – Seeks public participation and input, including from youth, women, civil society organisations and other groups, in formulating and implementing efforts to address climate change and in relation to preparing national communications, and encourages the involvement and participation of representatives of all stakeholders and major groups in the climate change negotiation process. • 29(b) – Fosters the participation of all stakeholders in ACE implementation and invites them to report thereon. In particular, enhances the active participation of youth, women, civil society organisations and the media.

Agreement	Article
The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework	Target 23 – Ensure gender equality in the implementation of the framework through a gender-responsive approach , where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including by recognising their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity.
The Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) ⁵⁷ <i>Not yet in force</i>	Article 44(3) – Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology should be a country-driven, transparent, effective and iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and gender responsive . It shall build upon, as appropriate, and not duplicate existing programmes and be guided by lessons learned, including those from capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology activities under relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies. Insofar as possible, it shall take into account these activities with a view to maximising efficiency and results.
United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14	Notably, SDG14 on the ocean makes no mention of gender.
ILO Convention No. 190 ⁵⁸	Concerning the Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines 'violence and harassment' as 'a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment'⁵⁹; and • Defines 'gender-based violence and harassment' as 'violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment'.⁶⁰
Maritime Labour Convention, 2006	The Joint ILO–IMO Tripartite Working Group recommended that the ILO Governing Body invite the members of the ILO Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (STC), which meets in April 2025, to consider submitting relevant proposals to amend the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, to ensure that member states and shipping companies define and prohibit shipboard violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault, and adopt relevant policies, measures and programmes to prevent and address these issues.

Global agreements on gender

- UN Declaration on Human Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)
- Commission on the Status of Women, 62nd Session. Agreed conclusions (2018)
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Commonwealth agreements

- Commonwealth Charter
 - Gender equality is a core value of the Commonwealth Charter. Further, Principle 12 refers to gender equality as an essential component of human development, human rights and sustainable development.
- Commonwealth Blue Charter
 - Commitment 17 under 'Co-operation and knowledge sharing' – Recognises that some ocean challenges are common across the Commonwealth, such as: developing strong, sustainable and innovative blue economies that promote sustainable development and an enabling environment that is fair, equitable and **inclusive of men and women** in marine and maritime industries.
 - Commitment 27 under 'A principled approach' – Underscores that the 16 Principles contained within the Commonwealth Charter also apply to meeting ocean-related commitments, notably: human rights, **gender equality**, and dignity.

Regional agreements and policies relating to the ocean and/or gender

Africa

- East African Community Gender Policy
- Southern African Development Community Gender Policy
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): the overall vision of the Policy for Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access is a world where men and women shall enjoy equal access to modern energy services that are easily available, affordable and contribute to high levels of standards of living and economic development
- ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2020–2030
- ECOWAS Humanitarian Policy

Caribbean and Americas

- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States' (OECS) Gender Policy
- Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Regional Gender Equality Strategy (in draft)

Europe

- EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025
- United Kingdom – International women and girls strategy 2023 to 2030

Asia

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) recognises the fundamental link between gender equality and human rights-based approaches, and thus a focus on gender and inclusion, and ensuring that the voices and needs of the poorest is a central tenet of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework 2021–2025

Pacific

- A new song for coastal fisheries: The Noumea strategy (2015)
- Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) roadmap for inshore fisheries management and sustainable development 2015–2024
- SAMOA Pathway (2014) – Outcome of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States
- Pacific Platform for Action on the advancement of women and gender equality (1994, revised 2004 and 2017)
- Pacific Youth Development Framework (2014)
- Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (2012)

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