Scaling Social Protection for Climate Action

Insights from and for Multilateral Climate Funds

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List of Acronyms

AF	Adaptation Fund
ARISE	Accelerating Resilience Investments and Innovations for Sustainable Economies
ASP	Adaptive social protection
BIM	Barbados Implementation Modalities
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
DAE	Direct access entities
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FRLD	Fund for responding to Loss and Damage
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
LLA	Locally led adaptation
LMIC	Low- and middle-income country
MCF	Multilateral climate fund
MDB	Multilateral development bank
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDA	National designated authority
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official development assistance
PPCR	Pilot Program for Climate Resilience
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States dollar
WFP	World Food Programme

Glossary

Adaptive social protection	Adaptive social protection (ASP) is a conceptual framework for social protection that aims to enhance collaboration among social protection, climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction sectors to boost the resilience of vulnerable people by improving their capacity to anticipate, withstand, and adapt to risks, preventing further increases in poverty levels.
Climate action	Climate actions include policies and interventions that address climate change by reducing emissions, help people and ecosystems adapt to its impacts, support communities facing loss and damage, and ensure a just transition to sustainable economies.
Climate adaptation	Climate adaptation encompasses changes within socio-economic and environmental systems aimed at reducing the adverse impacts of climate change and, where possible, harnessing its potential benefits. Adaptation is an essential element of responses to climate change to protect lives, livelihoods and ecosystems.
Climate change	Climate change refers to long-term shifts in the atmosphere such as temperature and rainfall, that are caused directly or indirectly by anthropogenic activity.
Climate finance	Climate finance refers to all funding that supports efforts to mitigate or adapt to climate change, including responding to loss and damage.
Climate mitigation	Climate mitigation encompasses actions taken by humans to lower greenhouse gas emissions or reduce the current concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through sinks such as forests, vegetation or soils.
Designated authorities	National designated authorities (NDAs) are country focal points that liaise between climate funds and governments to ensure that proposals are in line with national climate goals and strategies.
Extreme weather events	An extreme weather event is a rare and unusual weather occurrence for a specific place and time of year. What constitutes 'extreme' can vary depending on the location and may include unusual intensity, happening in an unexpected place, occurring at an unusual time, or affecting a larger area than normal. Extreme weather events are often referred to as sudden-onset events that occur abruptly such as flash floods and storm surges.
Implementing entities	Each multilateral climate fund has accredited implementing entities that can submit proposals to the funds such as government agencies, multilateral development banks, UN bodies, and other international organisations.
Just transition	A framework of principles and practices designed to ensure that people, sectors, and regions are not left behind during the transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies. It seeks to address both mitigation e.g. phasing out carbon-intensive industries and adaptation.

Labour market interventions	Interventions designed to enhance access to employment opportunities and to protect workers against unfair or exploitative working conditions. Within social protection, labour market interventions are mainly complimentary to social assistance and social insurance. Active labour market interventions aim to increase employability and facilitate (re-) entry into productive employment through typical measures such as skills development and vocational training. Passive labour market interventions focus on income protection for workers who have lost employment or cannot work through measures such as unemployment benefits, income support during job loss or temporary inactivity.
Loss and damage	Loss and damage describes the harmful consequences of climate change that persist even after measures for mitigation and adaptation have been taken.
Multilateral climate funds	Multilateral climate funds are specialised funding institutions that gather and distribute resources from multiple donors for climate action, playing a central role in these efforts.
Poverty	Poverty refers to deficits in income and consumption, as well as the deprivation of basic needs such as food and shelter, and essential services like education and healthcare.
Public works programmes	Public works programmes, also called cash-for-work or food-for-work programmes, are interventions that offer temporary, usually low-skill jobs to support poor and unemployed or underemployed individuals. They are a hybrid instrument of both social assistance and labour market interventions.
Slow onset processes	Slow onset processes develop gradually over time due to small changes such as sea level rise and loss of biodiversity, glacial retreat and desertification.
Social assistance	Social assistance programmes are tax or domestically-financed programmes that provide support without requiring prior contributions. They are usually based on income or other categorical criteria. Social assistance instruments include cash and food transfer programmes. They are sometimes referred to as government safety net programmes.
Social insurance	Social insurance encompasses contributory programmes that pool risks across the population to provide support against specific risks such as illness and unemployment. Unlike private insurance, it incorporates solidarity subsidies, allowing for transfers between groups of contributors, such as higher and lower earners, older and younger persons, and higher and lower risks occupations, among others.
Social protection	Social protection refers to government-led policies and programmes that prevent and reduce poverty, vulnerability, and exclusion among the population. It works to reduce risks, protect against shocks, and promote long-term resilience and development.
Vulnerability	In social protection, vulnerability refers to the risk of households falling into or remaining in poverty when exposed to shocks and stresses, while in the climate sector it denotes susceptibility to harm from climate change due to high exposure or limited coping capacity. Additionally, multilateral climate funds (MCFs) may reference vulnerability in relation to specific country groupings, including least developed countries, Small Island Developing States, and African countries.

Executive Summary

Social protection has a crucial role to play in accelerating climate action, but its potential has not yet been fully realised. Climate change impacts are growing rapidly, with people who are already poor and vulnerable impacted disproportionally, creating a cycle where climate risks and socio-economic vulnerabilities reinforce one another. Supporting those impacted by this dual burden is not only an ultimate purpose of climate action, but also a prerequisite for the ambitious policies required for a sustainable and just transition. Social protection systems can play a transformative role in this effort.

The potential of social protection stems from its fundamental role in addressing risks. Social protection systems (1) **prevent** poverty and vulnerability by reducing risks before they materialise, (2) **protect** individuals and households when shocks occur, and (3) **promote** human development and productive opportunities, building resilience and enabling rehabilitation over time. In this way social protection programmes cushion people against immediate hardship while building their adaptive capacities and enabling transformations in societies and economies. In addition, social protection reduces inequalities and enhances social inclusion, which is critical for addressing climate change and facilitating a just transition.

Not only is social protection conceptually aligned with climate action, it is also a proven approach that operates through national systems anchored in legislation. Social protection systems combine a range of instruments, including **social assistance** (such as cash transfers and public works), **social insurance** (such as pensions, health or unemployment insurance), and labour market policies (such as skills development support, active employment programmes, or wage protection). These interventions play an important role across the following areas of climate action:

- **Climate mitigation** – providing support to populations affected by mitigation policies as well as support carbon sequestration through land management and behaviour shifts.
- **Climate adaptation** – building the resilience and capacity of individuals and households to cope with, recover from, and adapt to extreme weather events and slow onset processes by strengthening income security and diversification, and investing in health, food security, education, and skills.
- **Loss and damage** – enabling timely, transparent, and cost-efficient responses to climate-related disasters delivered through national, shock-responsive systems.
- **Just transition** – supporting workers and communities affected by both mitigation and adaptation efforts, such as those impacted by shifts away from carbon-intensive activities as well as by climate vulnerable living conditions.

Unlocking the full potential of social protection for climate action requires deliberate adaptation and investment. Even without intentional design, strong foundational social protection systems support climate goals by protecting people from economic shocks and fostering human development. Yet their role can be significantly enhanced when explicitly adapted for climate change purposes. Multilateral climate funds (MCFs) can support this change through two avenues: (1) Integrating specific social protection elements and instruments into climate programming; and (2) developing and strengthening social protection systems and programmes as a whole to deliver climate action.

MCFs can play a catalytic role in expanding the use of social protection to support and accelerate climate action, with the design of each fund offering entry points:

- **Adaptation Fund (AF):** The AF's framework documents offer support for social protection programming by requiring proposals to provide economic and social benefits, especially for vulnerable communities. Due to its unique mandate of financing concrete adaptation projects with tangible benefits for the most vulnerable communities and social groups, the fund has already successfully integrated social protection components into cross-sectoral adaptation projects and financed project activities such as cash transfers and livelihood support. It is, therefore, well suited to supporting social protection proposals as part of high-quality adaptation in the future.
- **Climate Investment Funds (CIF):** The CIF piloted adaptive social protection successfully through the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) and is now generating valuable lessons that informed the design of the new Accelerating Resilience Investments and Innovations for Sustainable Economies (ARISE) programme. The ARISE design documents recommends implementing partners leverage social protection systems for vulnerability assessments and safeguards, and recognise the high return on investments in social protection instruments, among other things. The launch of the programme is planned in the course of 2026. In addition, new CIF programmes, such as the Industry Decarbonization and Accelerating Coal Transition programmes, offer substantial opportunities for social protection activities related to climate mitigation activities which make up the majority of the overall CIF portfolio.
- **Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD):** Dedicated to assisting particularly vulnerable developing countries, the FRLD has the potential to be an important vehicle for social protection activities in the face and aftermath of extreme weather events and slow onset processes. Now in its start-up phase, the fund will launch a call for proposals at the end of 2025, and the priorities of the participating countries and the future governing frameworks set by the FRLD Board will determine the contribution that the social protection sector can bring to its mission.
- **Global Environment Facility (GEF):** For first time, the GEF explicitly recognises social protection in its draft GEF-9 strategy for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), highlighting it as one of the key approaches in delivering support. This provides a significant opportunity for the fund's programming to support programmes such as cash transfers, public works, and skills training to build resilience, while stressing the link with national systems and income opportunities. While the adoption of the GEF-9 Replenishment Resolution is expected in July 2026, the initial programming discussions at country level have already started.
- **Green Climate Fund (GCF):** The GCF has an adaptation and mitigation mandate and supports a growing number of projects using social protection instruments. The fund's criteria are aligned closely with social protection goals. Recently, the GCF team initiated significant review and preparation work on social protection, among others in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). This work with FAO will provide a strong foundation for future projects for rural populations and in fragile and conflict-affected settings. More broadly, a recent research initiative aims to develop an analytical framework to guide GCF's investment in social protection.

While opportunities to connect social protection to multilateral climate funds are growing, there remains considerable room to create impact. Key recommendations to expand social protection's role in climate action through MCF portfolios include:

- **National social protection actors:** Positioning social protection at the heart of the climate policy landscape. Social protection policies and programmes are often overlooked in climate policy and financing, but social protection ministries and agencies can be key drivers of integration. This includes engaging with national climate authorities and designated authorities, ensuring that priorities are reflected in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and other national climate policies, and collaborating with accredited entities and agencies on proposal development. Readiness and preparatory grants can support coordination efforts and pilot initiatives.
- **Multilateral climate funds:** Embedding social protection in strategies, funding windows, and project design to accelerate social protection contributions to climate action. The integration of social protection into MCF programming can be accelerated by embedding social protection systematically into strategies and results frameworks and expanding funding windows. Additional priorities include fostering learning, evidence exchange, and promoting in-country dialogues that integrate social protection, as well as measuring the impacts of programmes on poverty and inclusion.
- **Development organisations:** International and regional organisations can play a pivotal role by providing technical expertise, funding, and coordination platforms. They can help governments integrate social protection policies and programmes into national climate action, pursue or facilitate accreditation with climate funds, and engage with designated authorities and focal points to embed social protection into national climate strategies while ensuring evidence generation.

1. Introduction

As global warming surpasses the critical 1.5°C threshold (Copernicus Climate Change Service, 2025), the impacts of climate change on the lives and livelihoods of people are becoming central to international climate efforts. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that globally 3.3 to 3.6 billion people are living in areas that are extremely vulnerable to climate change and recognises that those living in regions with high poverty levels are particularly vulnerable to climate risks (IPCC, 2023a; IPCC, 2023b).

People living in or at risk of poverty and exclusion are often disproportionately impacted – directly and indirectly – due to greater vulnerability to climate risks and lower capacity to cope with the impacts on livelihoods and productivity, health and well-being, as well as educational opportunities (Costella et al., 2021; Murthi & Voegele, 2024). Persistent levels of poverty, deprivation and unstable incomes result in limited capacities to prepare for and cope with climate events, which can in turn exacerbate existing inequalities (FAO, 2024a), contributing to a vicious cycle in which climate risks and socio-economic vulnerabilities reinforce one another. In addition, people living in or at risk of poverty are vulnerable to the negative side effects of policies designed to increase the price of carbon-intensive goods and services, such as the removal of fossil fuel subsidies which may result in higher energy costs. Therefore, climate change constitutes an environmental calamity but also poses a profound socio-economic challenge.

This highlights the need for climate finance mechanisms that put people living in or at the risk of poverty at the centre of climate action and to find ways to accelerate the delivery of results for this group. Multilateral climate funds (MCFs), which pool and allocate resources from multiple donors, are central to these efforts (UNFCCC, 2021a). This guidance note focuses on five important global MCFs: the Adaptation Fund (AF), Climate Investment Funds (CIF), Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF). For all these funds, supporting people vulnerable to climate impacts and socio-economic hardship has been an ongoing mission, and integrating social protection into MCF investment portfolios is an important pathway to accelerating positive impacts at scale.

In this guidance note, social protection refers to government-led sets of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting people against income poverty and social exclusion throughout their life cycle through instruments such as cash transfers, public work programmes, social insurance schemes, and complementary labour market interventions. Social protection systems offer an increasingly well-recognised way of delivering inclusive and equitable climate action (Costella et al., 2023; Sengupta & Sivanu, 2024). The IPCC highlights that integrating climate considerations into social protection can enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities and such programmes have demonstrated clear co-benefits for sustainable development goals such as poverty reduction, access to decent work, gender equality, social inclusion, and food security (IPCC, 2023a). There is also an increasing understanding that social protection is essential for enabling a just transition by facilitating inclusive climate change mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage responses (UNFCCC, 2025a; USP2030, 2024; ILO, 2024; World Bank, 2025).

Today, there is a growing recognition within major MCFs of the potential that social protection holds for achieving climate objectives, and momentum to integrate it in their programming. However, there is a notable gap in awareness among social protection stakeholders about how to access climate financing to leverage social protection systems for climate action. Simultaneously, actors managing climate funds frequently have an incomplete understanding of social protection and its potential contributions to climate action. Bridging this gap is crucial at the international level, where funding is allocated and frameworks are developed, but even more important at the national level, where the collaboration of climate and social protection actors will result in actual impact.[1]

The purpose of this guidance note and how to read it

This guidance note is intended to serve both as a knowledge resource and practical guide, providing concrete strategies and illustrative examples of how to link social protection and climate financing provided by leading MCFs. Based on input provided by all of the five MCFs mentioned in this note, it maps out key entry points within fund policies, frameworks, and financing windows, while strengthening the funds' understanding of the role of social protection in climate action.

Given these objectives, the target audience is diverse and includes national policymakers and climate and social protection practitioners, as well as the staff of MCFs and implementing entities. To provide easy access to information for each group of readers, the publication is designed in a modular way. Chapter 2 offers a foundational overview of social protection, aimed at familiarising climate practitioners with its key concepts, typologies, and systems. It also delves deeper into the specific interactions between social protection programmes and climate action, and how they can be operationalised. Chapter 3 gives an introduction to climate finance and multilateral climate funds and is aimed at social protection practitioners. It covers access modalities, relevant policies and guidelines, funding windows and typical project processes for each of the MCFs, and provides examples of projects that have been funded in the past. Chapter 4 reflects on potential next steps for all key stakeholders with a role in advancing the contributions of social protection to climate action. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a brief summary of the guidance document and outlook into the near future.

[1] Methodological note: To inform the development of this knowledge product, key informant interviews were conducted with experts from all five MCFs to ensure comprehensive representation across policy and strategy teams, project approval and programming, monitoring, evaluation, and learning teams, and knowledge management teams. The objective was to identify relevant strategic documents, frameworks, and potential entry points for social protection within the funds, as well as to understand questions and possible reservations regarding social protection held by the MCFs. This was facilitated through semi-structured interviews held between April and September 2025. The interviews were supplemented by a comprehensive desktop review of MCF websites, strategies, guidelines and policies, alongside an in-depth analysis of academic literature and related documentation to provide additional context and support for the findings.

2. Social Protection in the Context of Climate Change

This section introduces core concepts of social protection, including frameworks, functions, typologies, and components. It also explores the intersection of social protection with climate change, focusing on its role in adaptation, mitigation, just transitions, and loss and damage efforts. Examples of social protection programmes that contribute to climate action are presented, followed by insights on how to operationalise the link between social protection and climate action.

Key concepts of social protection

Social protection is defined as a government-led set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting people against poverty and social exclusion throughout their life cycle, with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups, as well as promoting transitions out of poverty (ILO, 2024). This means ensuring adequate protection for all who need it, including children; people of working age in case of illness, and work injury or for those without jobs; persons with disability; and older persons (SPIAC-B, 2019).

Generally, social protection systems fulfil **three essential functions** in the climate context, they:

- **Prevent** poverty and vulnerability by reducing risks before they materialise
- **Protect** individuals and households during and in the aftermath of shocks or crises
- **Promote** human development and productive opportunities that strengthen resilience over the long term

These combined functions not only safeguard wellbeing across the life cycle but also make social protection a strategic foundation for inclusive climate action, helping people prepare for, withstand, and adapt to climate impacts while enabling a just transition.

Box 1. Conceptual frameworks linking social protection and climate change

Beyond this general understanding of social protection, there are additional conceptual frameworks[2] that explicitly address climate change, most notably **shock-responsive social protection** and **adaptive social protection** (Davies et al., 2008; Bowen et al., 2020):

- **Shock-responsive social protection** leverages social protection systems to prepare for and respond to shocks.
- **Adaptive social protection** promotes collaboration among social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction sectors to tackle vulnerability to shocks, recognising that climate change increasingly compounds and adds new socio-economic challenges through its direct impacts as well as the side effects of climate mitigation efforts, and that effective climate action requires addressing these challenges. Adaptive social protection includes shock response measures.

These concepts offer complementary ways to strengthen the resilience of poor and vulnerable people by enhancing their ability to anticipate, withstand, and adapt to covariate risks or shocks that impact large groups simultaneously (e.g. floods), thereby preventing them from slipping into or deeper into poverty (Bowen et al., 2020).

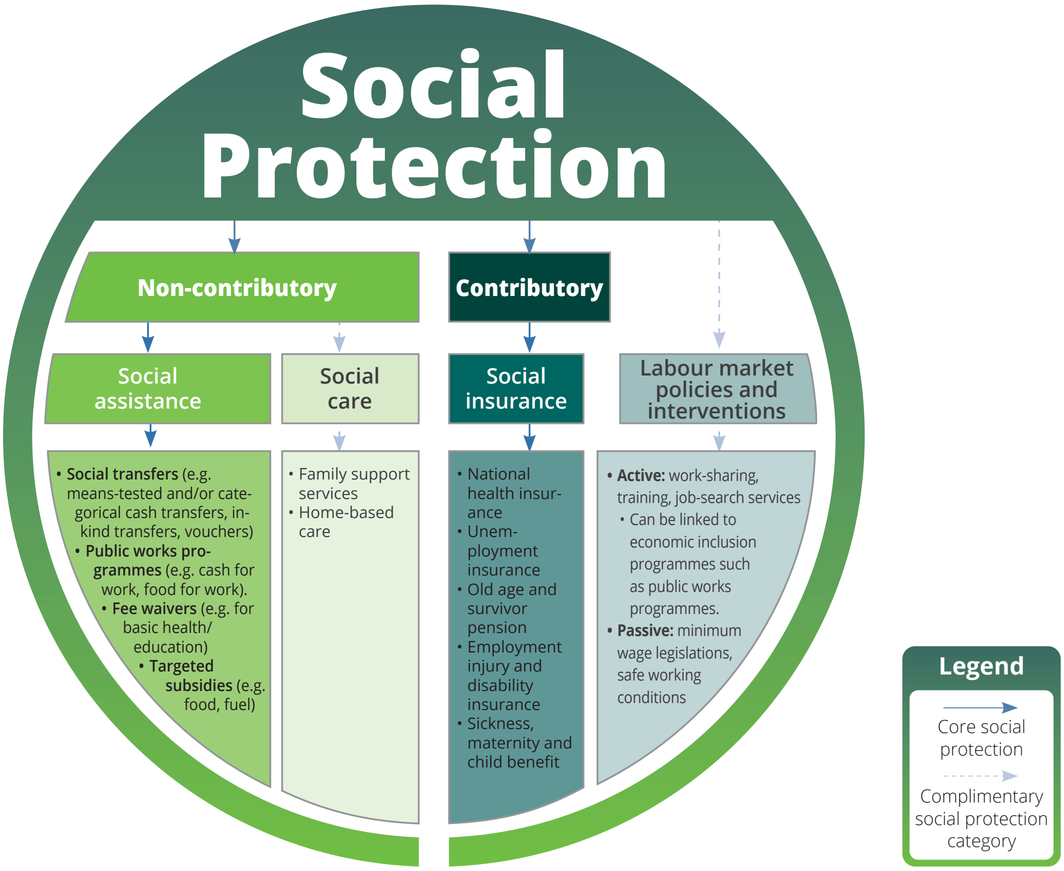

Figure 1. Taxonomy of social protection — Source: Modified from OPM (2017)[3]

[2] Other conceptual frameworks include shock-sensitive social protection, climate-resilient social protection, and climate-responsive social protection, among others.

[3] This typology includes 'social care', referring to non-contribution interventions that provide family support and social work to prevent family separation, promote child protection, and prevent abuse and neglect, particularly among vulnerable groups such as individuals living with disabilities (European Commission, 2019). With respect to adaptation, climate initiatives may target support for unpaid caregivers, specifically aiming to alleviate additional burdens for caregivers brought on by climate events such as droughts, whereas for climate mitigation, climate financing could be allocated to climate-proof childcare centres, old age care homes, and similar facilities. However, such investments remain relatively unresearched and uncommon in practice and, therefore, are not a primary focus in this guidance note.

Social protection systems (sometimes referred to as social security systems) include social assistance and social insurance (ILO, 2024; OPM, 2017) (see Figure 1). While definitions vary across sectors, labour market interventions are considered complementary, as they are often combined with social assistance and social insurance programmes to protect workers and livelihoods (ILO, 2024). In addition, social care is also complementary, as it provides case management opportunities that link health, education, and care systems. Social care programmes are not actively considered within the context of this guidance note due to limited research on its links to climate action. In Figure 1, social care and labour market policies and interventions are connected through dotted lines to indicate that they are complementary components of social protection, supporting and interacting with the core systems of social assistance and social insurance.

Social assistance programmes, or safety net programmes, are typically funded by domestic revenue, designed to reduce vulnerability and prevent individuals or households from falling (deeper) into poverty. Extensive evaluations have shown them to effectively increase both economic diversification and human development outcomes (Bastagli et al., 2016; University of North Carolina, n.d.). Their defining feature is that access is provided without requiring any financial contributions from the recipient. Eligibility is usually determined based on income thresholds, proxy indicators for income, or individual characteristics such as age or disability. Social assistance programmes include cash and in-kind support to access services such as for health or education, fee waivers and (targeted) subsidies. Some social assistance programmes require the recipient to fulfil certain conditions to receive the transfer, such as ensuring school attendance by children or regular visits to health facilities by pregnant women. Public works programmes (often referred to as cash-for-work or food-for-work) provide temporary, typically low-skilled, employment opportunities for poor or unemployed/ underemployed individuals.[4] 'Cash plus' approaches pair financial support through social assistance with complimentary services such as information on healthy parenting practices or skills training such as entrepreneurship training to amplify the impact on wellbeing and long-term resilience.

Social insurance is a contributory mechanism that can provide income security for a range of contingencies including sickness, unemployment, employment injury and disability, old age, the death of a breadwinner (e.g. for surviving dependent spouses or children) and maternity. In many countries, social insurance systems also fund national health insurance schemes.[5] Social insurance usually requires regular contributions from both workers and employers to allow for risk pooling across a wider population.[6] In contrast to other categories of insurance, especially commercial insurance, social insurance has an embedded solidarity element, allowing for transfers between groups of contributors, such as between higher and lower earners, and current workers and pensioners, among other things. Most crop/livestock insurance schemes or property insurances are provided by commercial companies and lack such an embedded solidarity element and are, therefore, not considered part of the social protection system.[7] Yet, in theory, they could be designed in line with social insurance principles, e.g. where supported by public finances through premium subsidies or waivers for vulnerable people unable to afford them.

[4] For this reason, public works are sometimes classified as labour market programmes.

[5] While some countries achieve universal health coverage solely through tax financing, others combine social insurance-based and tax-financed approaches.

[6] These contributions are part of a formal employment contract and thus only cover formally employed workers, although some countries are experimenting with options for how to extend coverage to informally employed workers, gig workers and others.

[7] For the same reason, not all forms of health insurance or pension plans are necessarily social insurance mechanisms.

Labour market policies and interventions are designed to enhance access to employment opportunities and to protect workers against unfair or exploitative working conditions. Passive market interventions typically include policies that promote decent work, such as regulations about maternity benefits, unemployment benefits, and the minimum wage. Active labour market schemes include re-skilling and upskilling programmes, job-matching and training schemes. In the social protection context, active labour market policies are often considered in terms of their complementarity with social assistance and social insurance. For example, a coal worker who loses their job due to a mine closure may receive an unemployment benefit while undergoing re-skilling. This support package enhances their prospects of finding adequate new employment without falling into poverty in the interim. Another important instrument providing scalable solutions where job readiness and opportunities are limited is economic inclusion programmes. These programmes refer to bundles of interventions that typically combine social assistance with complementary measures such as skills training, business capital, coaching, and income support to create jobs for poor and vulnerable people, especially women and youth. In a layered approach, economic inclusion programmes build a ladder out of poverty, while also connecting participants to wage employment where viable opportunities exist. In recent years, many economic inclusion programmes have started to introduce adaptations and innovations to build climate resilience for programme participants.

Box 2. Exclusions: Understanding what social protection does not cover

Many instruments and sectors pursue goals that overlap with those of social protection programmes, and can be linked to support people with lower incomes. However, they remain distinct from social protection in their design and operation. In the climate context in particular, it is important not to conflate social protection programmes with the following:

- **Microfinance and microinsurance** provide market-based financial services, like small loans or insurance coverage. In contrast, social protection is state-provided and rights-based.
- **Locally led adaptation (LLA)** empowers communities to design and implement climate solutions based on local knowledge and priorities. Similar to social protection, it strengthens resilience, however, LLA is bottom-up and place-specific, whereas social protection is government-led and nationally coordinated.
- **Humanitarian action** provides short-term or protracted emergency assistance, often led by international agencies and can be delivered in the form of cash transfers and increasingly through national social protection systems where these are sufficiently robust. While humanitarian assistance is responding temporarily to immediate emergency needs, social protection is typically based on charitable donations, rather than public finances deployed with redistributive objectives. In contrast, social protection is a permanent, government-led system with entitlements anchored in national law, working towards predictable and guaranteed provision.
- **Payments for ecosystem services (PES)** provide financial incentives in exchange for actions that conserve or enhance ecosystems, often targeting the same rural populations as social protection. However, while social protection aims to prevent and reduce poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion, PES initiatives typically operate outside national social protection systems and are not designed to provide sustained income security or long-term support.

There are comprehensive international social protection standards guiding countries in building social protection systems that cover individuals against the various risks encountered throughout a person's lifecycle.[8] Encouragingly, many countries now have large-scale social protection programmes with significant institutional and administrative infrastructure that can be leveraged, including increasingly in low- and middle-income countries. However, while **social protection coverage** has grown substantially over the past decade, gaps still remain, as approximately 2 billion people in low- and middle-income countries are not covered or are inadequately covered (World Bank, 2025). Moreover, the type of social programmes implemented differ across countries, most using a mix of tax-financed social assistance and contributory schemes to reach higher levels of coverage. Increasingly, countries are investing in policies and delivery systems that together establish a coherent national social protection system, through which social protection programmes are provided (see Figure 2).

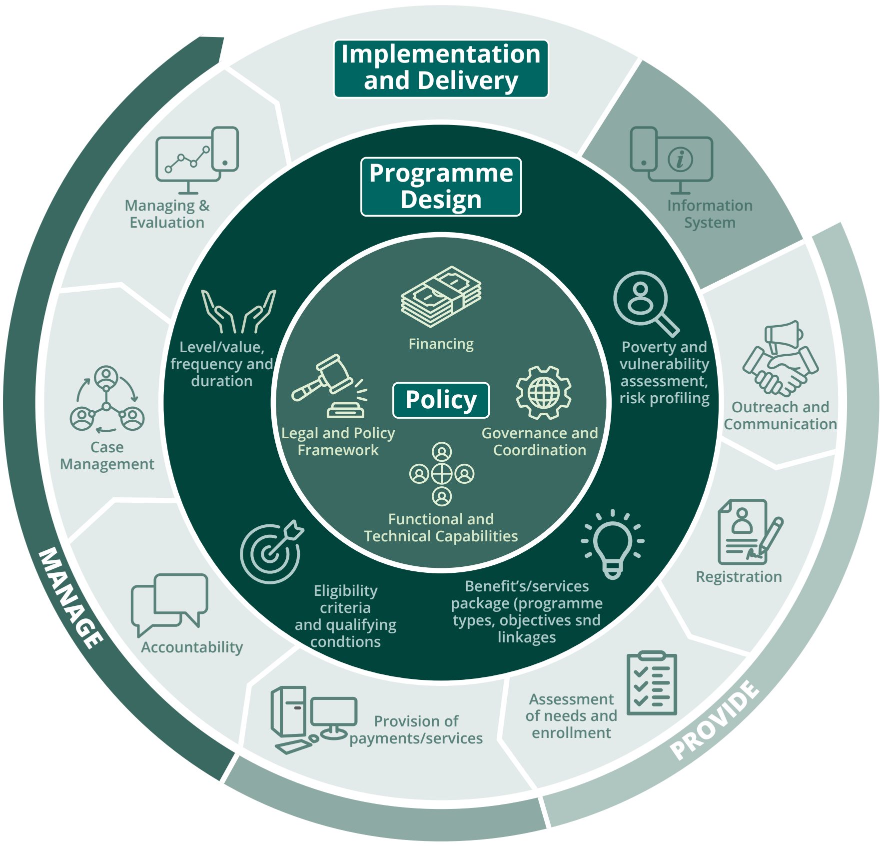

Figure 2. Illustration of social protection components — Source: Barca & Jaramillo Mejia (2023)

At the policy level, there are legal documents and policy frameworks outlining social protection strategies, plans, and responsibilities. To ensure predictability and accountability, social protection programmes are usually anchored in national legislation, which usually defines entitlements and obligations. Coordination between state agencies is key because, often, implementing social protection programmes is spread across

[8] International social security standards are developed and adopted by governments, workers and employer organisations from all 187 ILO member states. The Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) provides core principles and minimum benchmarks for social protection systems, while the Social Protection Floors recommendation (2012), which was adopted by all 185 member states, provides guidance on how all people can have at least a basic level of social protection.

different line ministries aligned with the objectives of the programme. For example, in Laos, a National Social Protection Committee was established by decree in 2021 to coordinate efforts across multiple agencies and sectors (Samavong & De, 2024). This committee also brings together social protection and climate-related actors, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Planning and Investment. Such platforms, backed by national legislation, can promote multi-sectoral collaboration and help leverage social protection for climate action.

At the level of **programme design**, components such as vulnerability and poverty assessments can inform the targeting strategy of interventions to determine eligibility, ensuring that they are aligned with the objectives of the programme (Barca & Jaramillo Mejia, 2023). Vulnerability and poverty assessments can be structured to include indicators of exposure to shocks such as market disruptions or other shocks.

The **implementation and delivery** level includes information systems that provide data on potential beneficiaries and a mapping of vulnerability, including socio-economic indicators, which is then used to determine eligibility for support from various programmes (each with their own eligibility criteria) and enrolment into these programmes. Increasingly countries are employing registries to support this function, with a growing emphasis on dynamic updating which ensures that information is consistently up-to-date and is responsive to changing risk profiles to ensure timely inclusion of newly vulnerable households. Additionally, programmes require established delivery channels for disbursing payments or providing services on time, efficiently, flexibly, and at-scale through national mechanisms, e.g. digitally into mobile wallets or through payment points (Barca & Jaramillo Mejia, 2023). During COVID-19, many countries used their social protection systems to provide income support and security for COVID-19 related income loss.

As a general, global trend, social protection systems are increasingly incorporating climate change considerations across these three levels into their policies, programmes, and implementation processes (Bhalla et al., 2024; Costella et al., 2021; Costella et al., 2024). The section below explores this evolution.

Social protection and climate action

Given that social protection's essential function is to reduce risks, protect people from shocks and strengthen resilience, it is well positioned to address the impacts of climate change on people and communities. While one of the main contributions of social protection is to build the resilience and adaptive capacity of individuals and households, it also has an important role to play across the other areas of climate action, including facilitating and supporting mitigation, responding quickly and efficiently to loss and damage, and underpinning a fair and inclusive transition to a green economy. Each of these are considered here.

Social protection and climate change mitigation. Social protection systems can support climate change mitigation directly, through programmes such as green-focused public works and conditional cash transfers that facilitate carbon sequestration through approaches such as promoting reforestation, natural resource management, and ecosystem conservation and restoration. In addition, social protection programmes can shape behaviours and consumption patterns by linking transfers to specific requirements, offering targeted subsidies, and facilitating access to alternative livelihoods

(Rigolini, 2021) and by leveraging social protection's outreach and communication channels to raise awareness and promote positive behavioural change. Further, social protection can also play a vital role in contributing to ambitious mitigation measures in its role in supporting a just transition (outlined below) (IPCC, 2023b). Fuel subsidy reform, which is crucial to reducing fossil fuel use is a leading example, with successful reforms in countries such as Indonesia and Egypt that have been underpinned by social assistance programmes (Feltenstein, 2017; ILO, 2016; UNDP, 2021).

Social protection and climate change adaptation. While much focus of climate adaptation falls on adapting physical infrastructure, and the environment, social protection systems are designed to build the resilience and adaptive capacity of people (Bowen et al., 2020). Social protection programmes have been extensively evaluated and consistently show positive impact for poor households on areas that underpin adaptive capacities-including health, education and food security-as well for indicators of economic strength such as economic diversification, productive assets and savings (Bastagli et al., 2016; University of North Carolina, n.d.). These impacts are greatly amplified when social protection systems are specifically adapted for climate change (UNFCCC, 2023), including ensuring programmes reach climate affected populations; combining cash-transfers or public works programmes with relevant complementary measures for economic diversification and empowerment; and developing data and information systems that allow effective and efficient programme outreach and implementation, among other things. These climate-adapted programmes not only increase resilience, but also build the social protection sector's capacity as a key path to rapidly respond to loss and damage (outlined below). Finally, focused public works programmes can also support the development and adaptation of climate-resilient community-level assets through improved land and natural resource management.

Social protection and loss and damage. Social protection is strongly aligned with loss and damage responses, as both areas are concerned with supporting the most vulnerable during and in the aftermath of shocks or crises (McCord & Ridout, 2025). Social protection programmes scaled to this end are based on vulnerability and poverty assessments and are, therefore, needs-based. They are transparent in the way they operate, enshrined in national law, making them predictable and rights- based for the recipients, and allow affected countries to retain complete political and financial ownership of the systems. The cash payouts provided through social protection systems are generally more effective than in-kind support in response to an emergency and to address loss and damage where markets are functioning, with benefits including increased empowerment and agency for recipients and greater efficiency in disbursement, as well as generating positive multipliers by stimulating local economies (World Bank 2024a; Global Donor Cash Forum, 2025). Beyond income support, cash transfers can strengthen social empowerment, improve well-being, and enhance access to health, education, and nutrition. When social protection systems are designed to be adaptive and, in particular, when they are connected to climate information and early warning systems, including anticipatory action, they are able to rapidly provide redress for monetizable loss and damage, which can be delivered more quickly, efficiently and sustainably than traditional relief operations (Ritu Bharadwaj et al., 2025).

Social protection and a just transition. Ensuring a just transition to a greener economy is both a moral imperative, given that the poorest and most vulnerable who have contributed least to climate change are likely to be most affected, and a practical one, as ambitious mitigation and adaptation will require rapid, and disruptive change, with losers as well as winners. Social protection lies at the heart of this agenda. Just transition strategies that phase out reliance on high-carbon industries require social protection interventions to cushion the socio-economic impacts of decarbonisation. Income support through social assistance or social insurance, combined with labour market interventions, provide backing to workers displaced from high-carbon industries by offering unemployment benefits and re-skilling opportunities. A similar approach might be taken for just transitions in agrifood systems to address the impacts of mitigation actions on agriculture and farmers. Moreover, cash transfers can help poor households absorb the negative impacts of green transitions, such as the rising cost of a nutritious diet or of heating and cooling, while also enabling them to adopt cleaner energy solutions and support improved natural resource management (Costella et al., 2021).

Box 3. Social co-benefits of linking social protection and climate action

Integrating social protection with climate action yields significant social co-benefits, which enhance resilience and equity.

- **Gender:** Linking social protection systems with climate change interventions can advance gender equality in key areas such as education, health, and economic empowerment. For more information, see *How gender-responsive age-sensitive social protection is related to the climate crisis: A summary of the evidence (Nesbitt-Ahmed, 2023).*
- **Disability:** Social protection offers a means to foster social transformation by tackling the unequal effects of climate change and exclusionary climate policies on persons with disabilities. For more information, see *Advancing disability-inclusive climate research and action, climate justice, and climate-resilient development (Stein et al., 2024).*
- **Economic inclusion:** Economic inclusion can be supported by encouraging diverse and stable income sources, extending access to climate-resilient practices, thereby enhancing livelihoods and reducing vulnerability to climate risks. For more information, see *Scoping review on the role of social protection in facilitating climate change adaptation and mitigation for economic inclusion among rural populations (Bhalla et al., 2024)*.
- **Health:** Integrating social protection with climate strategies can reduce vulnerability to climate shocks, mitigate health impacts and promote equitable health outcomes. For more information, see *Social protection in global crises: A gap between evidence and action (Landin Basterra, 2023)*.
- **Social inclusion:** Social protection programmes can strengthen social cohesion by increasing access to decision making on climate-related interventions, leading to fairer and more effective outcomes. For more information, please see *Amplifying climate resilience: The impact of social protection, social cohesion, and social capital on public support for climate change action (Tamasiga et al., 2024)*.

Each type of social protection intervention in this section can contribute to more inclusive climate action, as presented above and through the three examples below. While trade-offs can exist, for example, interventions could unintentionally support maladaptive outcomes, such as disincentivising vulnerable households moving away from areas facing increasing climate hazards, and are unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term. Careful design and monitoring of programmes can maximise resilience benefits and support sustainable, long-term pathways to climate action, while minimising any unintended consequences (Magnan et al., 2016; Schipper, 2020).

Example 1: Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)

Context: Ethiopia faces reoccurring food insecurity and poverty, with an estimated 16 million people affected nationally. Rural livelihoods are frequently disrupted by drought, floods, and land degradation, making asset loss and instability common for millions. The PSNP was established in 2005 and serves about eight million of the most vulnerable people in Ethiopia annually through public works and direct support, helping households manage (climate) shocks and rebuild assets. As one of Africa's largest social protection programmes, PSNP is crucial for Ethiopia's strategy to strengthen resilience and reduce dependence on emergency food aid.

General project information:

- **Duration:** Continuously implemented for 20 years (2005–present) – PSNP I: 2005–2009; PSNP II: 2010–2014; PSNP III: 2015–2020; PSNP V: 2021–2026
- **Managed by:** Ministry of Agriculture
- **Budget:** PSNP V (2021–2026): USD 2.2 billion

Objective: A social assistance programme to support food insecure, extremely poor households through public works (i.e., cash in exchange for labour) or through direct cash transfers for households without labour capacity

Targeting: Operates in 408 districts and uses satellite data, poverty levels, recipient history, and community-based assessments of vulnerability (disability, illness, gender) to target rural households in extreme poverty.

Connection to climate action: PSNP prevents asset losses among households while ensuring minimum consumption levels while promoting mitigation aims in community infrastructure projects. The programme has also demonstrated positive environmental impacts having increased, tree cover in PSNP districts by 3.8% from 2005 to 2019, which constitutes a 1.5% contribution to Ethiopia's national emission reduction targets.

Programme components:

- **Public works:** These include projects, such as watershed rehabilitation, reforestation, and soil and water conservation, which support mitigation and adaptation objectives.
- **Cash transfers:** For beneficiaries originally enrolled in public works programmes who temporarily cannot participate in heavy labour (e.g. during pregnancy or caregiving) or permanently cannot participate (households with no able-bodied labour capacity).
- **Economic inclusion:** This is actualised through complementary measures to incentivise self-employment, financial inclusion and income diversification.
- **Shock-responsive transfers:** These consists of pre-arranged finance disbursed in timely response to medium and large-scale shocks.

Sources: Ministry of Agriculture (2020); Hirvonen et al. (2022); Woolf et al. (2018)

Example 2: National Fund for Paid Leave and Bad Weather Unemployment for the Building, Public Works and Hydraulic Sectors (CACOBATPH)

Context: Workers in the construction and infrastructure industry in Algeria, especially outdoor workers, are exposed to weather events such as rainfall, snowfall, extreme winds and heatwaves, which impact on their health, safety and productivity.

General project information:

- **Duration:** Established in 1997
- **Managed by:** Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Directorate of CACOBATPH
- **Budget:** National budget unknown. In 2022, the Tizi Ouzou region distributed a total of 1,269,106,686.91 Algeria dinar (USD 9.753 million)

Objectives: The National Fund for Paid Leave and Bad Weather Unemployment for the Building, Public Works and Hydraulic Sectors (Caisse nationale des congés payés et de chômage intempéries des secteurs du bâtiment, des travaux publics et de l'hydraulique) is a social insurance programme that aims to provide workers in the building, public works, and hydraulics sectors with paid leave during periods of extreme or unsafe weather conditions. This ensures the protection of workers' health and safety, maintains income stability, and helps employers avoid layoffs during such events.

Targeting: Workers in the building, public works, and hydraulics sectors

Connection to climate change: As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, workers in outdoor sectors face growing risks to their health and safety, as well as disruptions to their livelihoods. CACOBATPH helps build resilience to these climate impacts by providing a financial and social safety net that reduces economic vulnerability. By institutionalising compensation mechanisms for weather-related work stoppages, it supports a more climate-resilient sector and promotes sustainable employment practices

Programme components:

- **Enrolment and membership:** Enrolment and membership are required by all workers and companies within the building, public works and hydraulics sectors.
- **Solidarity:** A solidarity principle is applied, through which employers and workers make contributions to the Fund.
- **Paid leave:** When paid leave is taken, the Fund provides financial compensation to replace lost income.

Sources: CACOBATPH (n.d); Tinssegouine (2023); ISSA (2023); Vleminckz (2025)

Example 3: China's Social Protection for Former Yangtze River Fishers

Context: The Yangtze River, Asia's longest waterway and a vital ecological and economic artery for China, has faced decades of environmental degradation. Overfishing, pollution, habitat loss, and the impacts of climate change-such as increased flooding and temperature shifts-have placed immense stress on the river's ecosystem. The collapse of fish stocks, combined with biodiversity loss, and the declining capacity of the river to regulate floods and store carbon require urgent action.

General project information

- **Duration:** 2021–2030
- **Managed by:** Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, in coordination with provincial and local governments
- **Budget:** USD 2.8 billion

Objective: The programme was designed to halt overfishing, restore river ecosystems, and ensure a just transition for affected fishing communities. This was achieved through (1) a comprehensive ban on fishing in key Yangtze waters, and (2) integrated social security, resettlement, and labour market support for displaced fishers.

Targeting: The programme focused on fishing-dependent workers and low-income households across all affected provinces with geographic priority given to areas of greatest ecological and economic risk.

Connection to climate action: The Yangtze River fishing ban covered 332 conservation zones across 10 provinces and marked a major ecological intervention to reverse environmental decline. It contributed to biodiversity restoration, reduced phosphorus levels, and supported climate resilience through healthier ecosystems. Crucially, the programme's social protection measures ensured a 'just transition' for 231,000 fishers, aligning ecological goals with inclusive development and reinforcing how climate and environmental policies can be designed to protect vulnerable livelihoods.

Programme components:

- **Labour market interventions:** Job placement, reskilling, entrepreneurship support, local recruitment campaigns, and promotion of alternative industries (e.g. aquaculture, eco-tourism)
- **Old-age insurance:** Universal coverage for eligible fishers, with targeted subsidies and streamlined processes for vulnerable cases
- **Social assistance:** Emergency relief, minimum income support (through the Dibao programme), medical and hardship aid, underpinned by dynamic monitoring systems to identify emerging needs

Source: Chinese Academy of Labour and Social Security & ILO (2025)

Operationalising the link between social protection and climate action

Strong foundational social protection systems, even when they are not specifically adapted for climate change, provide significant support to the goals of climate action by strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of beneficiaries and by providing financial protection to poor and vulnerable people and those whose livelihoods and assets are impacted by economic shocks. Strengthening these foundational systems and increasing their coverage will have significant benefits for climate action. However, as set out above, social protection can be much more effectively used to support, accelerate, and scale results across the areas of climate action where they are specifically adapted to this purpose (Costella et al., 2024).[9]

There is a spectrum of ways in which social protection policies and programmes can be practically operationalised for climate action. This ranges from light-touch but meaningful options, such as the using of social protection instruments to achieve wider programme objectives, to more systematic efforts that aim to design social protection systems to be adaptive and directly support climate action.

Multilateral climate funds can play a crucial catalytic role across this spectrum by integrating social protection into programme proposals through two avenues:

1. **Integrating specific social protection programmes or instruments into climate programming:** Specific social protection instruments can be integrated into bigger proposals and programmes to play a role in supporting climate action. While these are preferably part of and/or linked to strengthening government social protection systems they can also be standalone mechanisms.
   - **Climate change mitigation** through social protection programmes and instruments can directly support mitigation actions in economic activity and consumption including cash plus training, skills development and knowledge approaches as well as public works and incentivised cash transfers to strengthen sustainable land management and carbon capture.
   - **Climate change adaptation programmes** can include public works approaches that support the building and maintaining of climate resilient infrastructure, as well as cash incentives to protect ecosystems to create physical adaptation assets. Social protection programmes can also support focused adaptation of beneficiaries by connecting livelihood and income diversification programming to existing social assistance programmes.
   - **Just transition programmes** can include approaches such as cash transfers and active labour market support to alleviate the negative impact of mitigation policies on jobs, livelihoods and the cost of living and in so doing both provide protection to affected populations and strengthen political support for mitigation actions.
2. **Developing and strengthening social protection systems and programmes as a whole to deliver climate action:** Through building adaptive capacity among affected populations and developing systems that can rapidly respond to loss and damage and can also support mitigation and just transition goals, social protection systems can be leveraged to contribute to climate action at scale. Concrete areas of potential proposal development and programming include:

[9] For more information, Annex 1 provides a table on the climate-relevant features of social protection systems at policy, design and implementation levels

- **Improving the adaptive design of social protection programmes** through expanding programme coverage in regions highly exposed to climate change and to climate-vulnerable populations, developing climate shock responsive design features, and establishing complementary programming and services to build the adaptive capacities of beneficiaries. Social protection should also be extended to informal workers and those displaced, relocated or resettled due to climate change.
- **Developing data and information systems** to support modifications to existing information systems or the establishment of new systems that include data on relevant populations and inform rapid shock response. This includes collecting and analysing risk and vulnerability assessments that integrate emerging and innovative technology and data analytics to identify at risk populations, developing and expanding social registries that allow rapid expansion and the use of digital payment systems, and connecting early warning systems to social protection systems.
- **Establishing financing mechanisms for rapid response** including building capacities to undertake cost estimation mechanisms for climate impacts, developing disaster risk financing strategies and mechanisms for slow onset processes and extreme weather events, and linking them to rapid disbursement mechanisms.
- **Strengthening policy frameworks, institutional arrangements and partnerships** including integrating adaptive social protection in national climate and social protection policy and operational mechanisms, and establishing routine engagement mechanisms between key actors across climate, social protection and disaster risk reduction

This chapter demonstrated how social protection programmes not only prevent and reduce poverty and build resilience, but also contribute to climate objectives such as facilitating adaptation, supporting mitigation, enabling a just transition, and addressing loss and damage. While the chapter aims to outline these concepts, connections to climate action and practical ways forward, there is significant further literature that elaborates on these connections in more detail (see Box 4). Building on this, the next chapter examines how multilateral climate funds can advance climate action through social protection.

Box 4. Selected literature on social protection and climate action

While this chapter has outlined a framework for operationally connecting social protection and climate action, there is extensive literature and guidance that investigates the details of these connections. While outside the scope of this paper to outline them in full, the following selected resources provide more details on frameworks, guidance, and operational examples of adaptation social protection systems to support climate action:

Foundational frameworks and approaches

- Shock-responsive social protection: foundational work on adapting systems to respond to shocks **(O'Brien et al., 2018)**.
- Adaptive social protection framework: core approach and methodology, World Bank Group **(Bowen et al., 2020)**.

Institutional guidance and tools

- UNICEF: Programme guidance on strengthening shock responsive social protection systems and tool to assess the readiness of social protection systems with its accompanying user guide **(UNICEF, 2019**; **2020)**.
- WFP: Considerations for enhancing adaptation through social protection; integrating social protection and anticipatory action; and disaster risk finance (**World Food Programme 2019, 2022, 2023**).
- FAO: **E-learning course** on managing climate risks through social protection and guidance on social protection and anticipatory action to protect agricultural livelihoods (**FAO, 2023**).
- ILO: Just transition guidelines and resolution, including on social protection, skills and active labour market policies (**ILO 2015**, **2023**).

Analyses on the use of social protection for climate action

- World Social Protection Report 2024-2026: Universal social protection for climate action and a just transition (**ILO, 2024**)
- How can Social Protection Build Resilience? Insights from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda (**Ulrichs & Slater, 2016**)
- Social protection for climate-induced loss and damage: Priority areas for increasing capacity and investment in developing countries (**Aleksandrova et al., 2021**)
- Scoping review of the role of social protection in facilitating climate change adaptation and mitigation among rural populations (**Bhalla et al, 2024**)
- Mapping the integration of climate considerations in social protection in LMICs: An assessment of ninety-eight climate-relevant social protection programmes (**Costella et al, 2024**)
- How gender-responsive, age-sensitive social protection is related to the climate crisis: A summary of the evidence (**Nesbitt-Ahmed, 2023**)
- Supporting People and Workers in an Inclusive Green Transition: Framing Social Protection and Labour Policies to able and Ensure a Just Green Transition (**Honorati & Migliaccio/World Bank Group, 2025**)

3. Climate Finance and Social Protection

The following section introduces climate finance and examines the role of MCFs. It establishes a foundation for understanding the funds before turning to examine their intersection with social protection, highlighting current connections and identifying key commonalities. This is followed by a review of each MCF in detail, identifying links to social protection, examining funding windows to highlight potential entry points, and outlining the processes and support mechanisms available to national entities and other actors for engaging with them on social protection.

The role of multilateral climate funds

Climate finance is an umbrella term for all financing that seeks to enable climate mitigation and adaptation activities or responses to loss and damage (UNFCCC, 2022; UNFCCC, 2025b). This includes local, national and international finance from public or private sources, delivered through a diverse range of financial instruments, including, but not limited, to loans, grants and equity. The total global volume of climate finance was USD 1.9 trillion in 2023 and is estimated to exceed USD 2 trillion for the first time in 2024 (CPI, 2024).

For the purpose of this guidance note, it helps to focus on multilateral climate finance that is raised by the international community for developing countries, most importantly in the context of or related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2023, multilateral public climate finance provided by developed countries amounted to USD 50.6 billion, according to the latest data of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2024). This figure does not include bilateral public climate finance and is made up of two channels: climate finance disbursed by multilateral development banks (MDBs) and climate finance disbursed by MCFs. Given the nature of these two types of institutions, their roles and operations are different and, ideally, complementary. For example, in terms of financing instruments, MCFs currently focus more on grants, making up 54% of their spending, versus 39% on loans, and 6% in equity, noting here that each fund has a very different and often blended financial composition. MDBs, in contrast, provide 89% of their financing through loans, only 9% through grants and 2% through equity. Overall, the volume of climate financing channelled through MDBs is significantly higher (USD 46.9 billion in 2022) than that through MCFs (USD 3.4 billion in 2022, note USD 0.3 billion was unable to be allocated), which highlights the different roles of these bodies (OECD, 2024). MCFs focus on highly targeted support that facilitates key changes and innovations in the climate space, while MDBs are able to mainstream climate financing across a broad range of sectors and finance large-scale investments in national systems. Given that social protection instruments are still comparatively new in the toolbox of climate action, they will need the strong support of MCFs to live up to their potential. Hence, this guidance note focuses on the role of MCFs, while acknowledging that collaboration and complementarity with the work of MDBs is crucial.

In 1992, Article 11 of the UNFCCC introduced financing mechanisms for supporting developing countries (UNFCCC, 1992). To operationalise them in a targeted manner, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), as the first MCF, was tasked to fund climate action projects (UNFCCC, 2021a; GEF, 2019). Following this, the Adaptation Fund and the GEF-managed Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) were established in 2001 to provide support to particularly vulnerable countries in addressing climate impacts (UNFCCC, 1998). In 2008, the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) were established outside of the UNFCCC to pilot innovative climate finance mechanisms leveraging investments from multilateral development banks (CIF, 2025b). The Green Climate Fund (GCF) followed in 2010 as an operating entity under the UNFCCC, aiming to help developing countries pursue low-emission, climate-resilient development pathways (UNFCCC, 2021a). Most recently, the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) was created in 2023, with the mandate to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable in responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change (FLRD, 2025).

Today, MCFs are a key pillar of the international climate finance architecture with the mandate to serve the needs and priorities of **developing countries as defined by the UNFCCC** (UNFCCC, n.d.). However, there are various challenges in ensuring that climate finance is fully people-centred and inclusive, reaching those most in need. The United Nations Environment Programme Adaptation Gap Report (UNEP, 2023) found that in 2017, only 17% of adaptation funding was aimed at building local resilience. This is particularly noteworthy as the financing for adaptation measures is significantly lower than for mitigation measures. Across MCFs, the funding split is 57% for mitigation, 27% for adaptation, and 16% crosscutting measures; however, the allocation varies widely by fund (OECD, 2024).

Given their set up, the five MCFs covered in this note have a number of characteristics in common, but also differences in their processes and entry points for social protection. A joint feature is that all MCFs follow a country-led approach, which includes using ambitions embedded in national climate goals as a reference point for project funding. Box 5 introduces the most important, mandatory climate documents at the country level: Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

Box 5. Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans, and how to link them to social protection[10]

To raise ambitions and guide climate action processes in line with country priorities, the Paris Agreement introduced various types of national climate documents, including the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Long-Term Strategies, and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Critically, NDCs constitute formal climate commitments that every party to the Paris Agreement needs to submit on a five-year rolling cycle.[11] The NDCs act as national climate action plans, outlining strategies for both emissions' reduction and adaptation, and are a key reference point for climate funding, including the work of the MCFs. The development of NDCs is typically led by environment or climate ministries, with many countries using a whole-of-government approach to set cross-sectoral targets across priority sectors (USP2030, 2024). The next round of NDCs is due in 2025 (UNFCCC, 2024a).

Initial studies and guidance documents indicate to what extent social protection related activities have already been integrated in NDCs and NAPs. Recent reviews have found that only 13–14% of NDCs reference social protection (Furnaro et al., 2024; Task Force on Linking Adaptive Social Protection and Climate Financing, 2025; FAO, 2024b). Similarly, a review of 129 NAPs from developing countries found only 10% refer to social protection (ILO, 2022). While rather low, this indicates a momentum with significant room for improvement.

To increase the integration of social protection into NDCs, the following two policy briefs provide guidance to social protection and climate stakeholders as to how social protection can be linked to climate action in national planning documents:

- In ***Integrating social protection in Nationally Determined Contributions*** (USP2030, 2024), the USP2030 Working Group on Social Protection and Climate Change outlines the rationale for connecting social protection and NDCs for social protection experts.
- In ***Placing people at the centre of NDCs 3.0***, the Task Force on Linking Adaptive Social Protection and Climate Financing (2025) outlines how social protection can be effectively integrated into the development and implementation of NDCs. The target group here are climate change experts and policy makers within government.

Multilateral climate funds and social protection

There are many ways in which the work of MCFs offer links to social protection programming. While many of these linkages and potential entry points for social protection activities already exist under current MCF frameworks, opportunities remain for the funds to further facilitate and promote investments in social protection contributions to climate action.

Starting with existing features of MCFs, there are a number of aspects and entry points for social protection programming that the funds already have in common.

[10] Source: Authors' compilation based on various sources.

[11] See: *https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs*

The following list features the most important commonalities of this type, which at the same time introduce key elements of the work of MCFs:

- **Fund objectives/strategies:** Each MCF supports developing countries, focusing on reducing climate vulnerability. As reducing people's vulnerability is a core goal of social protection, it provides a natural entry point for social protection actors to engage with MCFs and their designated authorities. While some funds also address just transitions or loss and damage, all require clear, quantified evidence of how social protection contributes to adaptation or mitigation to strengthen proposals.
- **Country-led approach:** MCFs work with nationally designated authorities (NDAs) and operational focal points (OFPs)[12] at the country level to ensure that proposals are endorsed by line ministries and are in line with country priorities and climate action needs. A social protection ministry applying to an MCF will require an endorsement from the NDA, which will serve as the main liaison between countries and MCFs, overseeing the development of investment proposals, and endorsing them for subsequent investment. Engaging in the country engagement strategy strengthens ownership, aligns with national plans, and fosters collaboration to integrate social protection and climate priorities for coherent, sustainable policies.
- **Project design aspects:** Each fund promotes innovative, scalable, and replicable solutions that often align with social protection objectives, allowing actors to pilot interventions that demonstrate effectiveness and sustainability. However, as climate funds' project-based, timebound approach contrasts with the long-term, system-focused nature of national social protection, such projects should aim to connect with and strengthen national systems, as funds cannot finance ongoing programmes.
- **Compliance with safeguards:** Compliance with environmental, social, gender, and indigenous peoples' safeguards is required across all MCFs, and social protection not only supports this through stakeholder mapping and targeted engagement of vulnerable groups but also moves beyond compliance by advancing equality in line with fund objectives (see Box 5).
- **Grants to enhance capacity of actors:** Many MCFs offer grants, including readiness grants[13], to support capacity strengthening, institutional development, policy initiatives, and proposal-building skills.[14] Social protection actors can use these grants for important preparatory work, such as supporting the update of national climate strategies (e.g. NDCs and NAPs) to include social protection measures, conducting necessary research or developing proposals that integrate social protection.
- **Complementarity with other MCF and MDB funding:** Understanding the existing climate funding landscape, including the types of projects and programmes funded by each MCF and MDB, the accredited entities operating in the country, and the national actors involved, is essential not only for directing new initiatives and projects to the most relevant funds, but also for identifying potential synergies between projects and funding sources.

[12] The role of the NDA is applicable to the CIF national focal point, as it pertains to the programme (transformation) investment plan.

[13] The Adaptation Fund offers the Readiness Programme for Climate Finance, strengthening the capacity of national entities to access and manage climate finance. The GCF provides the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, helping countries build capacity for long-term climate planning and fund access, including projects with social protection components. Similarly, GEF implements the Capacity-building Initiative for Enhanced Transparency Framework, assisting countries in meeting UNFCCC reporting requirements and tracking NDC progress. Lastly, CIF does not have a dedicated social protection readiness programme, however, it does support countries in developing and implementing climate projects while coordinating with other funds to streamline access.

[14] For example, the GCF makes USD 4-7million available to each developing country government during its four-year programming cycle to build their country coordination systems, develop an investment pipeline, and share learning and knowledge with other countries.

A particularly important aspect to consider for social protection actors across the funds is the **role of the wider landscape of climate institutions at the country level** and the political economy that follows from that. As already mentioned under the country-led approach, NDAs and national focal points lead the engagement with each fund at the country level. As such, it is necessary for national social protection stakeholders to work with these counterparts, which are mostly housed in ministries of environment and ministries of finance, to ensure that climate projects can be considered for funding. In some countries, country platforms focusing on climate finance exist, which bring together various agencies, development partners, climate funds, MDBs and other stakeholders to coordinate climate finance, providing important opportunities for such collaboration. The GCF, for example, is actively promoting and supporting countries to establish country platforms. Mostly, however, the momentum for investments in social protection programmes to advance climate action needs to be built over time by social protection actors through consistent and targeted outreach and engagement activities to initiate and foster awareness and a commitment to social protection within the climate community. If funding for social protection is to increase significantly, social protection programmes will need to be included in NDCs, NAPs and the strategic process (see Box 5 above).

After describing the features and entry points for social protection programming that MCF have in common, we can now provide an overview of the specific features of the five funds and potential opportunities and access channels for social protection.

Table 1. Operational details of MCFs and linkages to social protection[15]

Fund	Objective	Key areas	Illustrative examples of potential social protection opportunities	Requirements	Funding and duration	Financing modalities	Access channels for social protection actors
Adaptation Fund (AF)	Support climate adaptation in vulnerable developing countries	While the operations of the AF are sector agnostic in general, key areas are climate resilient agriculture, food security, disaster risk reduction (DRR), water management, nature-based solutions, urban development, health, education, community-based adaptation, locally-led adaptation, and innovation.	Nature-based solutions linked to social protection (e.g. public works for ecosystem restoration) Livelihoods and food security in degraded areas (e.g. through cash plus approaches that combine cash payments with complementary services).	Developing countries only Projects must show adaptation rationale and meet criteria specific to the funding window	Readiness grants (max 1 year duration) Up to USD 30 million for regional projects Between USD 750,000 and USD 25 million for single-country projects Up to USD25 million for single-country projects (can access up to USD 40 million for regional single-country projects) Duration: no limitations	Grants only (no co-financing required)	Via AF's national, regional or implementing **entities**
Green Climate Fund (GCF)	Drive low-emission, climate-resilient development through adaptation and mitigation	Energy generation and access, transport, buildings, cities, industries, and appliances, forests and land use, health, food, and water security, livelihoods of people and communities, ecosystems and ecosystem services, and infrastructure and the built environment	Large-scale social protection programmes targeting climate-vulnerable households (e.g. by enhancing existing government public works programmes and cash transfers) Systems strengthening and enhanced social protection measures for shock response (e.g. early warning systems, anticipatory action and shock responsive social protection)	Requires partnership with an accredited entity Projects must show adaptation or mitigation impact	Readiness programme provides each country with up to USD 7 million to prepare their NDC, NAP, and an investment pipeline Funding for projects of more than USD 300 million Duration is project dependent.	Grants, concessional loans, equity, guarantees, blended finance Cofinancing is required if finance is not in form of grants	Requires working with GCF-**accredited entities** (national, regional, international) Opportunities for direct access through the Project-Specific Assessment Approach pilot Social protection ministries can coordinate via NDAs
Global Environment Facility (GEF) including Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)/Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)	Address global environmental challenges, and address impacts of climate change at the local level in least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS)	Biodiversity, land degradation, climate resilience, climate mitigation, ecosystems	Livelihood and economic support to address climate transitions (e.g. cash plus and economic inclusion programming, active labour market programmes, social insurance)	Focused on LDCs and SIDS (via LDCF/SCCF) Co-financing not mandatory for LDCF and SCCF	USD 10–250 million for large-scale projects For the LDCF, during the GEF-7, the initial national access cap was set at USD 10 million for LDCs. In GEF-8, it has been doubled to USD 20 million. For the SCCF, GEF-8 introduced a dedicated window for SIDS that set an initial cap of USD 3 million for each non-LDC SIDS.	Grants and blended finance Co-financing usually required, except for LDCF and SCCF	Access through GEF **implementing agencies** (e.g. UNDP, International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD]) Ministries of social protection can be executing partners

Fund	Objective	Key areas	Illustrative examples of potential social protection opportunities	Requirements	Funding and duration	Financing modalities	Access channels for social protection actors
Climate Investment Funds (CIF)	Drives transformational change in climate action through inclusive, country-led investments that empower developing countries to pursue low-carbon and climate-resilient development pathways	Clean energy, nature (forests and nature-based solutions), resilience, and industrial decarbonisation, just transitions	Social protection investments as part of broader resilience investment planning and projects, and infrastructure Innovations in livelihood resilience financing Social protection measures through just transitions in energy, nature and resilience programming Targeted support to vulnerable groups within multi-sectoral mitigation programmes Targeted support to women, local communities and indigenous peoples	Requires MDB engagement Co-financing often needed Country platform and coordination essential	Between USD 10–500 million depending on the programme Duration: 5–10 years	Can utilise the full range of financial instruments employed by MDBs including grants, concessional loans, risk-sharing instruments	Accessed via MDBs Social protection actors must coordinate through national CIF focal points Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) and Investment Plan Preparation Grants (IPPG) available for early-stage social protection-linked work
Fund for Loss and Damage (FRLD) under development	Activities responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage, targeting both extreme events and slow onsets Averting, minimizing and responding to loss and damage associated with climate change impacts	Addressing climate-related emergencies through pre-arranged systems, recovery, resilience building, but also preparedness, such as insufficient climate information and data	Post-disaster scale-ups (e.g. emergency cash for compensation and to support recovery) Social protection system adaptation to address and minimise cascading climate risks (e.g. risks to health and livelihoods) Coordination and articulation with humanitarian support	Only one call for proposals (the Barbados Implementation Modalities) foreseen in the start-up phase (2026) Long-term operations under development	USD 5 million to 20 million per funding request (total of USD 250 million for the first phase of the call for funding request)	Grants	Access modalities for the first phase approved Will support both direct access and access through entities accredited to the AF, the GEF and the GCF

Building on this overview of the funds' operational details and their linkages to social protection, the following sections examine each of the funds in detail, highlighting the specific opportunities they offer for social protection, current project examples, and key funding windows and how they might apply to social protection and the overall fund project processes.

[15] Source: Authors' analysis based on referenced sources

Adaptation Fund

Introduction

The Adaptation Fund was established in 2001 to finance adaptation projects through grants in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The fund prioritises projects that drive scalable action, innovation, learning and sharing (Adaptation Fund, 2023). Complementing these priorities, the Adaptation Fund emphasises concrete adaptation activities that deliver tangible results on the ground, integrating several cross-cutting themes to ensure a holistic approach. As such, the Adaptation Fund is less suited to projects aimed to establish systems, but rather to implement interventions with direct and concrete outcomes.

Social protection opportunities

Social protection is not explicitly mentioned in the Adaptation Fund's objectives and strategic documents. However, social protection-related objectives, such as providing financial support to vulnerable communities affected by climate change, who are often poor and marginalised groups, are embedded throughout the policies and frameworks of the fund. The most important framework document, the **Adaptation Fund Project Review Criteria**, outlines several approval requirements that provide entry points for social protection activities, such as:

- Climate adaptation proposals submitted must provide economic, social, and environmental benefits, especially for vulnerable communities, and consider gender aspects.
- The proposals must take the sustainability of outcomes into account. This provides an opportunity to link interventions to existing social protection systems, ensuring lasting support for vulnerable communities.
- The projects must align with the **Adaptation Fund Strategic Results Framework**. Results include increased community capacity to adapt to climate change, demonstrated by the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries and households with improved or maintained income levels.

The Adaptation Fund has previously financed several social protection projects, demonstrating how social protection measures can contribute to climate adaptation and support vulnerable populations. The Funds' portfolio with such components is worth USD 155 million. A portfolio analysis of social protection related projects conducted by the Adaptation Fund using keywords found 19 projects with direct components, outputs or activities related to social protection (see Annex 3). Box 6 provides an example of how social protection is integrated into a project funded by the Adaptation Fund.

Box 6. Economic, Social and Solidarity Insertion for Resilience in the Governorate of Kairouan, Tunisia (IESS Adapt)[16]

- **Duration:** 2021–2026
- **Implementing entity:** International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- **Executing Entity:** Ministry for Agriculture Water Resources and Fisheries
- **Budget:** USD 9,997,190

Project implementers: The IESS-Adapt project is implemented by the IFAD and executed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries in Tunisia.

Objectives: The project is a natural resource management and livelihoods initiative designed to enhance climate and economic resilience among vulnerable populations in the Kairouan region and aims to strengthen climate resilience by promoting sustainable environmental practices and improving livelihoods through training, capacity building, and enhanced knowledge management.

Project design and development: The project design took a multi-sectoral approach. While the project is executed by the Ministry of Agriculture, consultations were held with the national Social Protection Unit during project formulation to better understand the social context, particularly around providing cash support and preventing potential intra-household conflicts due to the payments to women. As a result, the project's cash transfer mechanisms are consistent with Tunisia's national cash transfer programme and the National Programme for Support to Families in Need, ensuring targeted support for women while maintaining household cohesion.

Alignment with the Adaptation Fund Results Framework: The IESS-Adapt project focuses particularly on Outcome 6 of the Adaptation Fund Results Framework, which aims to diversify and strengthen livelihoods and income sources for vulnerable populations affected by climate change. IESS-Adapt indicators include:

- Number of beneficiaries more climate resilient through graduation out of poverty
- Number of beneficiaries trained using the IESS-Adapt 5-pillars approach, which prioritises capacity building across social protection objectives, environmental sustainability and resilience, livelihood promotion of diverse income streams, financial inclusion and social empowerment
- Number of alternative off-farm income generating activities promoted

The full project proposal can be accessed **here**.

Source: Adaptation Fund (2024a)

Relevant funding windows

Table 2 provides an outline of the major funding windows under the Adaptation Fund relevant to social protection activities.

[16] Source: Authors' compilation based on referenced sources.

Table 2. Adaptation Fund funding windows and social protection opportunities[17]

Title	What is funded	Opportunities for social protection
Readiness Programme for Climate Finance	Works to strengthen capacity among national and regional implementing agencies with financial (up to USD 150,000) and non-financial resources **Project formulation** to develop projects (up to USD 250,000) **Technical assistance** to strengthen capacity on environmental and social risks, including gender equality during project development (up to USD 50,000) **Project scale up** grants for planning scale up pathways and collaboration for projects (up to USD 100,000)	The Readiness Programme may be leveraged to support the accreditation of **national implementing entities**, which can include ministries relevant to social protection.
Innovation Funding Window	Aims to promote and accelerate innovative approaches to climate action through three grant windows: small (up to USD 250,000), large (up to USD 5 million), and the **Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA)** programmes (up to USD 10 million), also offering small grants (up to USD 250,000)	The Innovation Facility will be able to fund social protection programmes to develop and scale up climate-resilient tools such as early warning-linked cash transfers, helping vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples, cope with climate shocks.
Locally Led Adaptation Funding Window	Works to make climate finance more accessible for national and sub-national action through three granting windows: LLA Single Country (up to USD 5 million), LLA Regional (up to USD 30 million), and the LLA Aggregator programme, which distributes grants to local organisations via regional or multilateral entities (up to USD 250,000)	Projects and programmes financed through the Adaptation Fund's Locally Led Adaptation Funding Window are designed to devolve decision-making and access to climate finance to the lowest appropriate level. If prioritised by local actors, this could include activities that build climate resilience through cash transfers, community-based insurance schemes, or labour market interventions. It is important to note that this window is not for national programmes. Social protection offices at the local government level can access this fund to finance social protection system strengthening (e.g. improving financial literacy to enable use of digital wallets for payouts) and add additional components like livelihood diversification training to promote adaptation.
Action Funding Window	Regular Single Country projects (up to USD 25 million) under the USD 40 million overall country cap and Regional projects (up to USD 30 million) are the funding modalities with the highest demand under the Adaptation Fund, aiming to finance concrete adaptation initiatives at national and regional levels.	Action Window projects and programmes can engage social protection stakeholders to design initiatives that safeguard the incomes and livelihoods of vulnerable communities. For social protection related projects, this opportunity is more relevant for country projects.

[17] Source: Authors compilation based on Adaptation Fund sources

Overview of project process

Entities applying for financing from the Adaptation Fund need to carefully consider several key **criteria**, outlined below.

Step 1. Eligibility and access

Proposals must be submitted through accredited implementing entities, and the project country must be a party to the Kyoto Protocol or the Paris Agreement and officially recognised as vulnerable to climate change (Adaptation Fund, 2023). Accredited entities may be national, **regional**, or **multilateral implementing entities** (Adaptation Fund, 2024a). These implementing entities can be contacted directly or through **designated authorities**, national Adaptation Fund contact points that manage the country pipeline and allocations, which makes them important partners to reach out to early in the process.

Step 2. Proposal development

The **Project/Programme Proposal Template** compiles all proposal materials including project information, justification of the project, implementation arrangements, endorsement by the government, and implementing entity certification. All proposals must adhere to the Adaptation Fund's strategic priorities, policies, and guidelines. For this, a concept note or a pre-concept note may be submitted before developing the full proposal, allowing for iterative feedback that can later be incorporated into the complete proposal.

Step 3. Proposal submission

The completed project/programme proposal template must be submitted with a **Government Letter of Endorsement** signed by the primary contact from the designated authority within the project country. The Government Letter of Endorsement confirms that the proposal aligns with national priorities, endorses the project, and specifies which agencies will be implementing the project upon approval. The completed application is submitted to the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat, which reviews projects on a rolling basis. Proposals that are technically cleared by the Secretariat are then forwarded to the Adaptation Fund Board for consideration and approval during its regular meetings. There are three approval processes: a 1-step approval process for fully developed projects, a 2-step approval process for concept notes, and a 3-step approval process for pre-concept notes which, upon approval, can be turned into a full proposal.

Step 4. Project implementation and monitoring

According to the Adaptation Fund **Evaluation Policy**, implementing entities, in collaboration with designated authorities, are tasked with carrying out/commissioning evaluations for every project. Required evaluations for implementing entities consist of project baselines, mid-term reviews (which are mandatory for projects with a duration of four years or more), and final evaluations. Additionally, there are optional operational evaluations, such as real-time and ex-post evaluations. All guidance documents on the evaluations are available under **Evaluation Policy Guidance Notes**.

Support available during the application process: During the proposal development process, applicants may access free technical assistance from the **Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)** to enhance and strengthen their project concepts. However, requests for CTCN support must be submitted through the concerned country's **national implementing entity**. For detailed information and guidance, the Adaptation Fund provides resources on the **How to Apply for Project Funding page**. This includes instructions on application procedures, eligibility criteria, and points of contact for any questions during the submission process.

Climate Investment Funds

Introduction

The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) aim to facilitate accelerated transformational change and mobilise climate finance to promote development pathways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance climate resilience, ensuring equity and justice (CIF, 2025a). This is achieved through well-coordinated and adapted funding to support pilot climate initiatives and attract further investment. The work of the CIF is guided by four key pillars (CIF, 2025a):

- Financing advanced technologies for energy system transformation
- Climate response through integrated systems led by central agencies
- Integration of private capital to accelerate and amplify impacts
- Financing labour market interventions and social programmes to support people and livelihoods

Social protection opportunities

The fourth pillar of the CIF focuses on people and livelihoods and has a particularly strong link to social protection. Its goal of enhancing financing for green jobs, livelihoods, social development, and just transitions, with a focus on women's empowerment and gender equality, aligns with the impacts that social protection can bring to climate action. Having said this, social protection aspects often play a cross-cutting role in the CIF and the overall portfolio of the funds is focused on energy transition, e.g., USD 3.7 billion or 48% of the CIF approved portfolio is invested in the renewable energy sector.

There are a number of programmes under the CIF that provide an opportunity for social protection programming (see next section). However, in the past the CIF has financed social protection projects in particular through the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), which funded projects building adaptation and resilience to climate change in low- and middle-income countries (see example Box 7). The PPCR provided opportunities to pilot adaptive and shock-responsive social protection for vulnerable populations and to generate evidence to support scaling and institutionalisation. Lessons from the PPCR have been used to inform its successor fund, the Accelerating Resilience Investments and Innovations for Sustainable Economies (ARISE) programme, which will be the main programme for investments in resilience building in the CIF going forward. At the time of writing, ARISE's design document has identified several entry points for social protection (see **CIF, 2025c**). It recommends strengthening assessments of how economic and social risks affect the most vulnerable groups to inform country-led climate resilience investment plans and specifically calls for exploring adaptive social protection and related mechanisms to safeguard livelihoods and wellbeing. As an example of potential ARISE investments to support rural livelihoods and food security, social protection is included as part of the package of interventions. Additionally, the ARISE design document identifies high returns on investments in social protection activities and recognises the need for multisectoral expertise, including a social protection perspective. Currently, the CIF team is actively seeking funding to support the implementation of ARISE, which is planned to be launched in the course of 2026. Box 7 provides an example of how social protection is integrated into a PPCR project.

Box 7. Pilot Program for Climate Resilience in Mozambique, Madagascar, and Comoros

- **Duration:** 2023–2025
- **Implementing MDB:** World Bank Group through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
- **Executing entity:** Mozambique: Ministry of Public Works. Housing, and Water Resources; Madagascar: Ministry of Land-Use and Urban Planning; Comoros: Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (Ministère Eau, Assainissement et Hygiene)
- **Budget:** USD 1,000,000

This two-year initiative focuses on enhancing water resource management, disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, as well as social protection. Implemented by IBRD in collaboration with national ministries across three countries, the programme aims to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities in the eastern and southern Africa region by reducing their exposure to climate-related hazards and improving national preparedness at both systemic and local levels.

Links to social protection

The grant provides vital technical assistance to boost the impact of each component of the Regional Climate Resilience Program in Comoros, Madagascar, and Mozambique by:

- Creating conducive conditions for regional cooperation on climate resilience efforts
- Integrating climate considerations into existing social protection programmes
- Enhancing programme outcomes through innovative design of climate-resilient infrastructure, paired with effective operations and maintenance to ensure long-term sustainability

As part of its second activity on social protection, the programme will develop technical guidance documents to support a new regional policy and regulatory framework that mainstreams climate resilience and empowers climate-vulnerable groups, particularly through social protection measures. This framework will facilitate the harmonisation of climate policies and regulations across the region, fostering knowledge sharing and collaboration. Success will be measured by the number of social protection policies, plans, and strategies that incorporate climate change considerations following the guidance.

Furthermore, the gender and social inclusion aspects of the funding emphasise the importance of enhancing social protection systems to specifically support climate- and socio-economically vulnerable populations, ensuring equitable benefits for these groups.

Source: **CIF (2023)**

With their focus on climate mitigation, the **Industry Decarbonization** and **Accelerating Coal Transition** programmes present additional, substantial opportunities to embed social protection measures that facilitate decarbonization and shifting away from coal industries. By integrating the principles of a just transition, projects under these programmes can help ensure an inclusive shift that leaves no one behind by supporting workers through retraining, income security, and access to alternative, sustainable livelihoods.

In general, access to CIF funding is facilitated through multilateral development banks only, specifically the Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Inter-American Development Bank, International Finance Corporation, and World Bank through IBRD and the International Finance Corporation (CIF, 2025b). Given the role of these banks in the development of projects for CIF, it is important to recognise that all of them are familiar with social protection, with some – such as the Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and World Bank Group – having extensive experience in implementing social protection programmes. Leveraging this experience can assist with better integrating social protection into CIF funds.

Relevant funding windows

Table 3 provides an outline of the major funding windows under the Climate Investment Funds relevant for social protection activities.

Table 3. CIF funding windows and social protection opportunities[18]

Title	What is funded	Opportunities for social protection
Strategic Climate Fund (SCF)	The SCF provides funding to pilot innovative climate solutions or scales up existing efforts that address targeted climate challenges or sector-specific needs. The following funds fall within the SCF umbrella.	
	The **Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR)** provides programmatic finance to help vulnerable, official development assistance (ODA)-eligible developing countries integrate climate resilience into national development planning and implement innovative adaptation solutions.	The PPCR provides a platform for piloting adaptive and shock-responsive social protection mechanisms, contributing to the broader evidence base for scale-up and institutionalisation. The programme explicitly targets vulnerable populations and emphasises climate risk management, making it well-aligned with the objectives of social protection programmes in reducing exposure and sensitivity to climate-related shocks.
	The **Forest Investment Program** aims to tackle the drivers of deforestation and the degradation of forests through grants and low-interest loans.	Social protection instruments, such as benefit sharing mechanisms (and payment for ecosystem services) in sustainable land use and forest management, livelihood support, and vocational training can facilitate income stability and skills development throughout this transition, enhancing both social equity and environmental outcomes.
	The **Nature, People and Climate** programme funds efforts to use nature-based solutions that recognise the interplay between land use and ecosystems for climate action and improved livelihoods for rural communities and indigenous peoples.	The Nature, People and Climate programme offers a cross-sectoral opportunity to align adaptive social protection with ecosystem-based adaptation, landscape restoration, and the promotion of climate-resilient livelihoods and can provide opportunities for integrated approaches that address both social vulnerability and ecological sustainability.

[18] Source: Authors compilation based on CIF sources

Title	What is funded	Opportunities for social protection
	The **Scaling Up Renewable Energy in Low Income Countries** programme helps expand the use of renewable energies, like solar and geothermal, to improve energy access in low-income countries. It is a leading global supporter of mini-grids.	Social protection programmes can help the uptake of renewable energy for vulnerable communities.
	The **Renewable Energy Integration** programme offers funding to overcome system-level challenges that hinder the incorporation of variable renewable energy into power grids, while also leveraging new opportunities arising from the shift to clean energy.	
Clean Technology Fund (CTF)	The CTF funds large clean technology projects in ODA-eligible countries to move towards low-carbon technology and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Financial resources provided range from grants, loans, and equity to guarantees. The following funds fall within CTF umbrella.	
	The **Accelerating Coal Transition** investment initiative is aimed at assisting rapidly developing, coal-reliant nations in transitioning toward cleaner, more sustainable energy systems in a fair and effective manner.	Many of the MDBs recognise the role of social protection in climate action, including for livelihood diversification and just transitions. Social protection mechanisms can help encourage the shift towards low-carbon industries. For example, conditional cash transfer programmes can be linked to reskilling initiatives, enabling people to gain the skills needed for green jobs. Social protection can also encourage the uptake of green technology. For example, subsidies can make green technologies more affordable and accessible to a wider population.
	The **Industry Decarbonisation Program** supports high-emission industries in developing countries to adopt sustainable, net zero-carbon practices by unlocking flexible concessional funding and fostering strong private sector involvement.	Social protection can support a just transition for workers and communities affected by industrial decarbonisation.

Overview of project process

Step 1. Country investment plans

The first step is to coordinate with the ministry/department in charge of finance, planning, environmental or climate-related matters to identify the designated authority and CIF focal point who submits the investment plan and leads internal coordination. Once identified, the designated authority can contact one of the six MDBs to begin preparing a full investment plan. In some cases, CIF programmes allow separate project funding proposals for all eligible countries apart from the investment planning approach. It is important to position national social protection systems and strategies for climate action within the priorities of the designated authority.

Step 2. Proposal development

After the CIF Trust Fund Committee has endorsed a country's investment plan, country focal points and their MDB partners collaborate to develop project proposals based on the project concepts put forth in the planning. The investment plan must adhere to the CIF governance framework for gender integration across CIF programmes and operations. Once approved, projects must follow the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) of the implementing MDBs, including fiduciary and indigenous peoples' safeguards. However, CIF provides programme-specific **integrated results frameworks** and **monitoring and reporting toolkits** for its programmes, which should be adhered to during proposal development. Additionally, the **Framework for Signals for Transformation Change** provides information on indicative signals that reflect progress toward change, and the **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Policy and Guidance** document gives directions on results management, accountability, and learning across all programmes and activities of the CIF.

Step 3. Proposal submission

MDBs are responsible for submitting all project proposals to the CIF Trust Fund Committee for approval on behalf of the country or countries involved. The CIF Secretariat reviews incoming funding proposals according to several key investment criteria, such as expected results, development impact, transformational change, and alignment with the CIF's pricing policy. They will either clear the proposal for Trust Fund Committee review or return the submission to the MDBs for further revisions prior to Trust Fund Committee review. After the Trust Fund Committee approves a project proposal, the project is submitted to the MDB's own board for final MDB approval.

Step 4. Project implementation

All CIF-funded projects are implemented through the chosen MDB. Each CIF programme has its own monitoring and reporting (M&R) system and an integrated results framework. Each M&R system is centred around a focused set of core indicators. In contrast, the integrated results framework maps out the programme's results chain, showing how programme-level outputs and outcomes connect to broader CIF-level impacts.

Support available during the application process: The chosen MDBs provide technical guidance and practical insights that help social protection actors understand and access CIF funding, enabling them to integrate and implement social protection activities that respond to climate-related challenges, while also protecting vulnerable populations.

Fund for responding to Loss and Damage

Introduction

The Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD, 2025), established at COP28, is the most recent MCF under the UNFCCC. Complementing the already existing funds, the FRLD aims to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in responding to loss and damage (UNFCCC, 2024b; FRLD, 2025). The term 'loss and damage' refers to the negative effects of climate change that occur despite mitigation and adaptation efforts and are, therefore, concerned with the unavoidable and irreversible impacts of climate change, both from extreme weather events and slow onset processes. While the estimations for funding needs for responding to loss and damage vary, a growing demand is anticipated (Tavoni et al., 2024).

Social protection opportunities

Due to its mandate, the FRLD strives for country-led, locally-driven solutions, ensuring that interventions are aligned with country needs, priorities and contexts (FRLD, 2025a). The FRLD is one of three dedicated mechanisms under the UNFCCC on loss and damage, the others being the **Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage**, which is tasked with, among other things, addressing gaps in the understanding of, coordination for, and approaches to loss and damage, and the **Santiago Network**, which is tasked with catalysing technical assistance for developing countries dealing with the impacts of loss and damage from climate change. The latter is of particular relevance for building capacities on and systems for social protection due to its mandate to facilitate access to knowledge, resources, and technical support.

As the FRLD is still evolving at the time of writing, the inclusion of social protection under the fund's mandate is still being discussed, mostly through the **meetings of the board**. However, a key founding document, **Decision 1/CP.28 Operationalization of the New Funding Arrangements**, explicitly calls upon MDBs and other relevant organisations to scale up support for adaptive social protection mechanisms in the context of the fund. The inclusion of social protection in the document followed the promotion of the topic through country delegations in several meetings of the **Transitional Committee** that prepared the operationalisation of the FRLD in 2023.

Conceptually, social protection programmes can be strongly aligned with the objective of the FRLD given that losses and damages from climate change are disproportionately impacting people living in, or at risk of, poverty, which are also the main target group of social protection, particularly of social assistance interventions (see McCord & Ridout, 2025). For this target group, social protection programmes constitute a need-based, transparent, timely and cost-efficient distribution mechanism in the face and aftermath of extreme weather events and as a response to slow onset events. In addition, social protection initiatives focus fully on building national capacities and systems, allowing affected countries to retain complete political and financial ownership, and they are enshrined in national law, making them predictable and rights-based for the recipients. Currently, **social protection programmes are estimated to reach 63% of the world's extreme poor**, which can be further scaled and strengthened to deliver resources directly to the people in need. At present, FRLD has not yet funded any projects, however, Box 8 illustrates how the Philippines' Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) operationalises loss and damage related measures through social protection programmes.

Box 8. Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) – Philippines

Context: The Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, facing an average of about 20 typhoons a year, frequent earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, storm surges and flooding, particularly in coastal and low-lying areas. Many homes are destroyed or severely damaged in these disasters, placing vulnerable families at risk of losing shelter and livelihoods. In response, the DSWD has established shelter-assistance programmes to help affected families rebuild or repair homes, thereby supporting disaster recovery and resilience.

General project information:

- **Duration:** Late 1970s (with formalisation and legal basis in the 1980s) to present
- **Managed by:** DSWD in coordination with local government units and barangay authorities
- **Budget:** Assistance is often event-based and amounts vary, for example, after Typhoon Odette, families were to receive PHP 10,000 each under ESA.

Objective: Provide immediate shelter assistance to families whose homes have been partially or totally destroyed by natural or man-made disasters, and enable reconstruction or repair of residences, ensuring affected households have safe and durable shelters while promoting resilient recovery.

Targeting:

- Families whose houses are totally or partially damaged by disasters
- Families not already receiving similar shelter assistance from other agencies, and who meet local government unit master-listing criteria (e.g. via the Disaster Assistance Family Access Card, DAFAC).

Connection to climate action:

- Given the Philippines' high vulnerability to climate-related events (typhoons, sea-level rise, flooding), the ESA programme contributes to climate resilience by ensuring that affected families receive timely assistance to rebuild homes, reducing long-term exposure to risk.
- By enabling households to transition from damaged housing (which may be structurally unsafe) to more resilient shelter, the programme supports adaptation to increasing disaster intensity/frequency under climate change and recovery from loss and damage.

Programme components:

- **Cash or material assistance for shelter repair/reconstruction:** Under ESA, affected families receive financial assistance or 'limited materials' to purchase shelter construction materials (e.g. wood, galvanised iron sheets, cement) if they opt not to move to a formal resettlement site.
- **Social preparation/validation:** Local government units, barangays and DSWD social workers conduct review and validate beneficiaries' circumstances. Awareness raising and orientation may be provided.
- **Technical assistance in housing construction:** This includes orientation and monitoring on proper execution of shelter units, promoting safe and standard designs.

Source: Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (2003), Department of Social Welfare and Development (2014; 2016)

Relevant funding windows and processes

For the start-up phase of the fund (2025–2026), the Board recently established the **Barbados Implementation Modalities** (FRLD, 2025b), consisting of a first set of grants for a total of USD 250 million, with amounts for each intervention ranging from USD 5 million to USD 20 million. The grants will "support bottom-up, country-led and country-owned approaches to loss and damage that promote and strengthen national responses to loss and damage and deliver results and positive impacts for particularly vulnerable developing countries, including through the building of national responses and systems" (FRLD, 2025b, p. 7). These interventions will be decided based on a set of criteria established in October 2025 and will be further refined for the first call for proposals by the end of 2025. The Barbados Implementation Modalities specifically include a minimum allocation floor of 50% for small island developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs).

Like the other MCFs, the FRLD foresees national authorities or national focal points as being responsible for the submission of funding requests. Having said this, national authorities or national focal points are just beginning to be announced by countries. The eligibility criteria decided in October 2025 at the seventh Board meeting are very much in line with what proposals that leverage social protection mechanisms can deliver, but there is no mention of specific instruments foreseen for implementation. With respect to the start-up phase, the FRLD could benefit from the submission of proposals that include social protection mechanisms to achieve its very mandate, given the status of social protection programmes in developing countries highly affected by loss and damage.

The FRLD's long-term operations are still to be fully elaborated. However, in line with the complementary role the fund has towards the other MCFs, it can be expected that it will focus on funding responses to loss and damage beyond existing adaptation financing. For social protection programming, this would mean that while other MCFs invest in strengthening the adaptiveness of the system themselves, the FRLD can focus on funding the actual scale up in response to climate events. Channelling funding to the last mile through social protection systems will make sure it reaches people living in or at the risk of poverty. However, if and how social protection systems and actors will be able to contribute to the mission of the FRLD will depend on how the countries decide to prioritise this into their requests, as well as the future frameworks set by the FRLD Board.

Global Environment Facility

Introduction

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in the early 1990s as the first MCF to support developing countries in addressing a diverse set of global environmental challenges (GEF, 2025a). The GEF has six distinct funds that correlate directly with the mandates of different environmental conventions:[19] the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency Trust Fund.

[19] Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement (GEF, 2025b).

Social protection opportunities

The GEF Trust Fund operates with four-year replenishment cycles and is currently in its eighth phase, covering the period from July 2022 to June 2026, with a strong focus on integrated approaches to drive systems transformation. Most of this support is delivered through grants, while its non-grant instruments (e.g. debt, equity or guarantees) are designed to attract private sector investment by de-risking projects and leveraging blended finance. The development of GEF-9 (active from July 2026 to June 2030) is currently underway and draft documents for both the GEF Trust Fund and LDCF/SCCF have already been published. Most importantly, the **GEF-9 draft programming strategy for LDCF and SCCF** for the first time lists adaptive social protection as one of the six approaches to deliver climate adaptation support and explicitly outlines specific entry points for incorporating social protection measures (see Table 4). The adoption of the GEF-9 Replenishment Resolution is expected in May 2026.

Table 4. Social protection approaches/instruments under GEF-9 Draft Strategy for LDCF/SCCF[20]

Social protection area	GEF-9 approach/instrument	Purpose
Adaptive social protection systems in general	Leverage existing social protection systems and links to other sectors	Tailor systems, across the social protection pillars in LDCs and SIDs contexts to assist vulnerable groups cope with climate shocks Support climate resilience in agriculture and food, water, human health, and infrastructure through pre-existing systems and strengthen social protection systems
	Connect with innovative early warning and rapid distribution systems	Enable timely and effective responses to climate shocks Inform social protection programmes with weather and climate information
Social assistance	Cash transfers	Forecast-based financing/cash transfers to provide climate-vulnerable individuals with timely support
	Public works	Restoration of degraded landscapes to enhance ecosystem resilience, linking to nature-based solutions
Social insurance	Insurance instruments linked to social protection programming	Help individuals and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) recover from climate change impacts and rebuild more resilient livelihoods
Labour market interventions	Skills training and business development	Strengthen the adaptive capacity of vulnerable households and support economic diversification
	Employment and income generation	Boost competitiveness, create jobs, and promote sustainable income generation through training and market access

To support the GEF-9 replenishment process, the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF produced a report titled ***Highlights of Evaluation Findings 2022–2025*** (GEF IEO, 2025a). The report explicitly states that, in terms of sustainability, some adaptation benefits from GEF-funded interventions were not fully realised due to limited coordination with national social protection programmes. The updated ***Ninth GEF Replenishment: Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF*** (GEF IEO, 2025b) also

[20] Authors' analysis based on linked sources. (See **GEF-9 Draft Strategy for LDCF/SCCF**).

categorised social protection as a main area of intervention, specifically for agriculture projects. Having said this, the GEF has financed social protection projects in the past. A portfolio analysis by GEF using keywords related to social protection identified a total of 44 projects. Box 9 provides an illustrative example of how social protection has been integrated within a GEF-funded project.

Box 9. Promoting climate-resilient livelihoods in rice-based communities in the Tonle Sap Region

- **Duration:** 2022–2027
- **Implementing agency:** Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- **Executing agency:** Cambodia's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment
- **Budget:** USD 9,781,000.00

Carried out jointly by FAO, Cambodia's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Environment, this LDCF-funded initiative focuses on strengthening the climate resilience of rice-farming communities in Cambodia's Tonle Sap region. The objective of the project is to strengthen the resilience of rice-farming communities to climate change and reduce their climate vulnerability through an ecosystem-based, market-driven approach. The project targets a population of approximately 170,200 people and covers an agricultural area of 67,309 hectares.

Links to social protection

In this project, FAO has highlighted key target groups and established four pillars to promote decent rural employment. Pillar 2 focuses on social protection and is monitored through the following indicators:

- Support for mechanisms that extend social protection to small-scale producers and informal workers
- Support for public employment programmes in rural areas that go beyond basic subsistence, aiming to strengthen self-reliance

Source: **GEF (2019); Full Project Identification Form** of Promoting Climate-Resilient Livelihoods in Rice-Based Communities in the Tonle Sap Region

Relevant funding windows

Table 5 provides an outline of the major funding windows under the GEF relevant for social protection activities.

Table 5. Global Environment Facility funds/programmes and social protection opportunities[21]

Title	What is funded	Opportunities for social protection activities
Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)	Helps least developed countries (LDCs) address climate impacts, particularly across sectors such as agriculture, water, health, disaster risk management, food security, infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and ecosystems (up to USD 60 million)	LDCF & SCCF: Under the draft GEF-9 programming strategy for the LDCF and SCCF, there is scope to finance a range of social protection programmes with climate objectives. Additionally, there is explicit interest in adaptive social protection by leveraging existing systems in LDCs and SIDS and connecting them to early warning and rapid response mechanisms to strengthen resilience in key sectors like agriculture, water, health, and infrastructure.
Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)	Supports both short- and long-term adaptation and technology transfer in UNFCCC developing countries, focusing on sectors such as water, agriculture, health, infrastructure, land use, and fragile ecosystems, including coastal and mountain areas	
GEF Trust Fund	Helps developing countries achieve the goals of international environmental agreements and conventions (full-sized projects exceeding USD 5 million, medium-sized projects up to USD 5 million)	The funds and programmes other than the LDCF and SCCF finance a range of activities related to environmental topics. Given the focus on climate change for this analysis, this guidance note does not cover the social protection opportunities within them in detail, but rather lists the most important funds that hold potential for social protection contributions in the future.
Small Grants Program	Provides technical and financial support to address drivers of environmental degradation and create co-benefits for development and livelihoods through a decentralised approach (up to USD 75,000 for technical projects and up to USD 150,000 for strategic projects that can be scaled)	
Global Biodiversity Framework Fund	Supports countries in improving how they manage biodiversity, create policies, govern resources, and raise funds (up to USD 5 million)	
Capacity-building Initiative for Enhanced Transparency Framework	Assists countries meet the communication requirements of UNFCCC and track the progress of NDCs (up to USD 500,000)	

Overview of project process

Step 1. Eligibility and access

To access funding from the GEF, countries must work through one of the **18 GEF-implementing agencies**, which include MDBs, UN agencies, and selected international NGOs. GEF agencies collaborate to design and manage projects, supporting governments and NGOs. The countries' **GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP)** identifies national priorities and works with an implementing agency to align on a project concept.

Step 2. Proposal development

The implementing agency supports the design of the proposal, ensuring it aligns with both GEF strategic priorities and national climate goals, warranting country ownership and global environmental benefits. Proposals must clearly articulate how they contribute to at least one of the GEF focal areas and adaptation priorities. In addition to strategic alignment, proposals must meet specific **technical and policy requirements**,

[21] Source: Authors' compilation based on linked sources

such as **gender safeguards**, **environment and social safeguards**, **stakeholder engagement**, and identification of **co-financing**. Every proposal must be endorsed by the country's GEF **operational focal point** before submission.

Step 3. Proposal submission

Full-sized projects require a Project Identification Form and a detailed Project Document after Council approval. Medium-sized projects may follow a streamlined, one-step process that does not require Council approval. GEF operates on structured timelines, with the Councils for the GEF managed Family of Funds convening twice a year to review and approve the work programme (GEF, 2025c). In addition, funding windows, such as the Small Grants Programme, issue periodic calls for proposals. Note that the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund follows a different project cycle.

Step 4. Implementation and evaluation

Once a GEF project is approved, it enters the implementation phase. Executing entities, government counterparts, typically through the GEF Operational Focal Point, and project teams are expected to coordinate closely throughout this phase to ensure alignment with national priorities, compliance with **GEF policies**, and timely delivery of results. **Evaluations** during the project lifecycle include a baseline assessment conducted at the start to inform realistic target-setting, mid-term reviews for medium to full-size projects to assess implementation progress and recommend course corrections, and terminal evaluations to be conducted by independent evaluators within 6 to 12 months of project closure.

Support available during the application process: Governments and project teams preparing GEF applications can draw on structured support from both, national representatives and the GEF Secretariat. During this application phase, teams can also access **Project Preparation Grants** to fund detailed project design. At the secretariat level, the **Country Engagement Strategy** offers a suite of preparatory support to strengthen proposal quality and alignment.

Green Climate Fund

Introduction

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was established in 2010 and is mandated to support developing countries in achieving the goals outlined in their NDCs, with a commitment to allocate its resources equally across mitigation and adaptation investments (GCF, 2025). The GCF invests in **eight key results areas** that cover all important lines of mitigation and adaptation activities, including results area 2 'Livelihoods of people and communities' (GCF, 2025). The fund provides its support through a mix of grants, concessional loans and other finance instruments such as equity, guarantees and other risk-sharing instruments. The GCF is the only MCF that can directly invest in and through the private sector.

Social protection opportunities

The **GCF's Investment Framework** evaluates proposals against criteria that align well with social protection objectives and programmes (GCF, 2024):

- **Impact potential to contribute to GCF's objectives and result areas:** Social protection interventions can contribute directly to GCF's objectives and result areas. Given that livelihoods of people and communities, and food security are key sectors for the GCF and central to social protection goals, programmes such as social assistance for consumption smoothing and complementary labour market initiatives offer clear opportunities to demonstrate measurable impact.
- **Paradigm shift potential** of the proposals extends beyond the singular project or investment, including fostering climate-resilient development pathways that are in line with national climate action plans and strategies: This is realised when social protection is integrated into national climate plans or vice versa when climate considerations are mainstreamed into social protection systems.
- **Sustainable development potential** to contribute to wider social and economic co-benefits: Social protection can drive broader social and economic co-benefits by designing interventions that strengthen livelihoods and improve access to essential services such as health and education.
- **Needs of the recipient,** including the economic and social development of targeted population, and the need for strengthening institutional capacity for implementation of projects must be considered in proposals: By investing in the capacity of social protection systems to anticipate and respond to climate risks, programmes can be delivered more efficiently, funding gaps addressed, and social protection systems integrated into broader national climate strategies.
- **Country ownership,** ensuring that projects are aligned with national climate strategies such as NDCs and NAPs, while also recognising the crucial role that NDAs or focal points play in formulating and operationalising these strategies: In countries where social protection is integrated into these strategies, this alignment provides opportunities to engage relevant social protection actors. Coordinating in this way can leverage existing programmes and strengthen social protection components, ensuring interventions effectively address the needs of vulnerable populations.
- **Efficiency and effectiveness** requirements for financial soundness can be met by linking social protection with climate action. Integrating social protection measures can enhance cost-effectiveness, ensure sustainable financing, and deliver measurable climate and social benefits.

The GCF has previously financed social protection projects and, together with FAO, conducted **a review of existing GCF projects that integrate social protection for rural populations** (FAO & GCF, 2025). The review identified 23 projects incorporating social protection programmes or instruments with a wide geographical distribution and range of approaches and climate objectives. Key findings for future programming included the need to scale-up investments in social protection, to leverage these investments to support a more ambitious inclusion agenda, and to ensure that projects support the strengthening of national social protection systems. The GCF team is now planning further research across the GCF portfolio to develop an analytical framework that can guide social protection investments, which is expected to significantly enhance the fund's capacity in this area. In addition, together with FAO, GCF is reviewing its social protection investments and gaps in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Once published, the documents will serve as a resource for all stakeholders involved in GCF project design and delivery with an interest in scaling-up the role of social protection for climate. Box 10 provides an example of a GCF-funded project that combines social protection with climate action.

Box 10. From NDC to GCF: Bridging social protection and climate action in Mozambique

- **Duration:** 2024–2025
- **Implementing entity:** Save the Children Australia
- **Budget:** USD 23,500,000

In Mozambique, the government has recognised a growing number of climate-vulnerable households in need of social protection services, particularly due to rising temperatures and more frequent heatwaves. This surge in demand has overwhelmed existing social protection programmes, which are struggling to meet the needs of the target group. To avoid relying on short-term, reactive measures, the government emphasised the importance of integrating climate-informed strategies that address both current and long-term risks within the social protection system.

For this purpose, the country's NDC update integrated social protection goals under measures to increase the adaptive capacity of vulnerable people, including the following (Ministry of Land and Environment, 2021, p. 45):

- Strengthening social protection programmes with climate considerations to build climate resilience among vulnerable populations
- Strengthening the targeting capacity of the Productive Social Action Programme to increase the resilience of vulnerable groups
- Strengthening linkages between the social protection system and disaster risk management, including linkages with early warning systems

By addressing both climate and social protection challenges, Mozambique met the basic eligibility criteria to apply the GCF funding. To pursue this, the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries partnered with a Multilateral Accredited Entity, Save the Children, to submit a proposal for Building Climate Resilience by Linking Climate Adaptation and Social Protection through Decentralized Planning in Mozambique (LINK).

The LINK programme builds on two existing initiatives in Mozambique: the Productive Social Action Programme (PASP) and the Local Adaptation Plans (LAPs). PASP is a public works programme that supports vulnerable households by providing cash transfers in exchange for participation in community-based labour activities. Through its connection with LAPs, PASP is incorporating a climate adaptation approach, with a focus on drought and heat-related risks. LINK not only strengthens this integration, but also aims to broaden PASP's eligibility to include a wider range of households vulnerable to climate-related shocks, particularly drought. In addition to these programmatic enhancements, LINK is generating evidence to inform the integration of climate adaptation into Mozambique's broader social protection system.

The programme received a total of USD 28.3 million in funding, including USD 23.5 million in GCF grants and USD 4.8 million in co-financing. Approved in 2024, the programme is set to run through 2029.

Sources: GCF (2024); Ministry of Land and Environment (2021)

Relevant funding windows

Table 6 provides an outline of the major funding windows under the GCF relevant for social protection activities.

Table 6. Green Climate Fund funding windows and social protection opportunities[20]

Window title	What is funded	Opportunities for social protection activities
Regular Project Cycle Funding	The GCF regular funds mitigation and adaptation projects (can exceed USD 250 million, co-financing is strongly encouraged).	The full range of social protection programmes with climate objectives can be integrated into projects across the eight result areas.
GCF Readiness Programme	To support country-led investment pipeline planning and strengthen institutional capacities and frameworks, including for NAP development and implementation, and to share knowledge with country peers, each country can access up to USD 7 million over 4 years.	Can be used to enhance the capacity of national social protection actors that are relevant to NDCs and NAPs.
Project Preparation Facility	Provides financial and technical support through grants and equity to facilitate the development of proposals. Entities can either select a consulting firm from the 32 firm-roster to assist applicants (up to USD 1.5 million for Direct Access Entities) or nominate their own technical assistance partner.	Can be used to support the development of social protection-related proposals. A range of delivery partners are pre-qualified to provide technical assistance, with a focus on climate investment expertise.
Simplified Approval Process	Small-scale, low-risk projects or programmes (up to USD 25 million) with significant climate impact potential and ready for scaling up toward low-emission, climate-resilient development are supported through a faster, simplified approval process with reduced documentation and review time.	Can be used for piloting or scaling up social protection measures that strengthen community resilience to climate risks. Reduced administrative requirements, simplified procedures and a smaller funding envelope make it accessible and ideal for first-time engagement of social protection ministries or entities seeking to tap into future GCF funding.
Enhancing Direct Access (EDA)	Enhancing Direct Access (EDA) aims to improve country ownership of projects through the dedicated window for direct access entities (DAEs) (USD 200 million available for 10 pilots from the private sector and NGOs).	Sub-projects within the EDA do not need GCF approval individually, so DAEs can implement small-scale, rapid-response social protection such as initiatives in response to extreme weather.

Overview of project process

Step 1. Eligibility and access

The first step in engaging with the GCF process is to contact the country's **national designated authority (NDA)**, which identifies national priorities, analyses financial needs, and finds accredited entities for the development and implementation of

[20] Source: Authors' compilation based on linked sources

proposals. Engaging with NDAs can provide an opportunity for social protection actors to understand national priorities and explore potential linkages with national social protection strategies and systems. Applications for GCF funding must be submitted by one of the 158 **accredited entities**, of which 66% are direct access entities at the local or regional level and 34% are international institutions. Alternatively, the **Project-Specific Assessment Approach** allows non-accredited entities to implement one-off project or programme while without having to go through accreditation programme.

Step 2. Proposal development

Proposals can be submitted on a rolling basis or, if in response to a Request for Proposal, must be submitted by the specified deadline. Applicants have the option to submit either a concept note or a full funding proposal. The **full funding proposal template** is available online and requires detailed information on the project, including, proposed activities, financing arrangements, alignment with GCF investment criteria, a risk assessment, and compliance with GCF policies and standards.

Step 3. Project submission

Once a proposal is complete, it must be accompanied by a **no-objection letter** from the NDA or focal point, confirming that the proposal aligns with the country's national priorities. Proposals are submitted virtually through the **GCF Partner Portal (GPP**). Once submitted, the review and approval process is expected to take less than nine months.

Step 4. Project implementation and evaluation

Accredited entities are responsible for monitoring and evaluating project activities. If a proposal is approved, project monitoring occurs through two main mechanisms: (1) compliance with GCF fiduciary, environmental, and social standards, and (2) oversight of project activities via performance reports and financial statements.

Support available during the application process: Key mechanisms for support include the **GCF Readiness Programme**, which helps build the enabling environment for climate action including institutional capacities, governance mechanisms, and planning and programming frameworks, and the **Project Preparation Facility**, which offers targeted assistance to develop project proposals. Currently, several GCF accredited entities have experience in implementing social protection projects and can provide tailored support. In addition, some national organisations are engaged in social protection efforts within their countries. When developing projects, these agencies will be able to provide insights on how to best position social protection during the application process.

Integrating social protection in multilateral climate funds: progress and gaps

In addition to the already existing entry points for social protection in the funding frameworks, the MCFs covered here are working to extend financing for social protection related activities. While the Adaptation Fund has not yet explicitly integrated social protection into its sectoral guides or research, it has already funded several initiatives that include social protection components (see Annex 3), highlighting a strong foundation for future integration. The CIF recognises the importance of social protection in the context of Payment for Ecosystem Services and Afforestation through their impact evaluation series on ***Coupling Afforestation with Social Protection: Effects on Food Security and incomes***. The CIF has also drafted the Accelerating Resilience Investments and Innovations for Sustainable Economies (ARISE) programme. Although ARISE is not yet active, its design document emphasises social protection as a core strategy and recommends adaptative social protection mechanisms to safeguard the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. The FRLD will be launching its first call for funding request at COP30. The eligibility criteria should allow for proposal on adaptative social protection, provided they are prioritised by the countries in their request to the Fund. Within the GCF, work is underway to clarify and strengthen the role of social protection across its portfolio, including joint FAO–GCF review of existing projects that has highlighted promising approaches, such as public works programmes and cash-plus models, alongside key challenges to scaling them up (FAO & GCF, 2025). The GCF is also commissioning research across its portfolio to develop an analytical framework to guide future investment in social protection and enhance its capacity in this area. Lastly, the new GEF draft programming strategy for the LDCF and SCCF under the Ninth Replenishment Period explicitly integrates social protection, opening the door for country proposals and more deliberate alignment between social protection and climate initiatives (see section above on GEF for details). In the GCF, work is underway to clarify and strengthen the role of social protection across its portfolio, including a joint FAO–GCF review of existing projects that has highlighted promising approaches, such as public works programmes and cash-plus models, alongside key challenges to scaling them up (FAO & GCF, 2025). The GCF is also commissioning research across its portfolio to develop an analytical framework to guide future investment in social protection and enhance its capacity in this area.

Overall, the picture that emerges is one of momentum and opportunity with considerable scope for acceleration. Realising this will require concerted and coordinated action across both social protection and climate actors at international and local level. The next chapter outlines key recommendations for advancing this agenda, identifying practical steps needed to embed social protection more systematically into climate finance to support climate action and ensure that future investments reach those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Chapter 4. Recommendations

Social protection can play a critical role in advancing climate action, while climate finance through MCFs has the potential to reinforce and expand social protection programmes and mechanisms to support them in delivering inclusive climate action. However, significant efforts are still required to fully realise this potential. Concerted actions are necessary from social protection stakeholders, MCFs, and regional and international organisations engaged in this area. Drawing from the findings of this guidance note, this chapter outlines a series of recommendations to guide such efforts.

For social protection actors at country level

Despite the clear potential, social protection is often overlooked in the discourse on climate policy, financing and programming at the country level. To include social protection actors as key stakeholders in the national climate landscape and discussions on climate financing, it is critical for ministries responsible for social protection to engage with the institutions leading national climate change efforts, policies, programming and financing. The following actions are recommended for social protection actors at the country level:

Recommendation 1. Invest in positioning social protection in your national climate policy landscapes:

- Climate finance must be understood as one element of the wider climate policy and programming landscape. Therefore, the work with MCFs is best embedded within a broader strategy on climate action and social protection programming that starts with a clear understanding of the existing capabilities and potential of the national social protection systems in the climate context.
- Operationalising climate policy involves many stakeholders across a range of ministries and agencies. Advocacy and relationship-building efforts are needed to convey the additionality and highlight the contribution of social protection to climate action to these institutions.

- NDCs, NAPs and, increasingly, country platform approaches set out national climate goals, pathways and investment opportunities. Social protection ministries and organisations should proactively target these processes with the goal to systemically incorporate social protection initiatives and policies.

Recommendation 2. Engage designated authorities and focal points of climate funds:

- Each fund operates through national designated authorities (NDA) and focal points, which are responsible for endorsing proposals submitted by the respective country. It is important for social protection stakeholders to establish outreach activities to engage with these institutions.
- Align early with NDAs and country focal points on country priorities, join relevant country programme or platform processes, and propose concepts anchored in national priorities (e.g. NAPs, NDCs) that leverage the social protection system.
- Clarify who is the signatory authority. NDAs issue no-objection letters/letter of endorsement for funding proposals and some issue letters of support for concept notes.
- Request a formal role in pipeline development (e.g. seats on technical review bodies for climate proposals that include livelihoods or relevant sectoral priorities, for example, agrifood systems, disaster risk reduction or just transitions).

Recommendation 3. Work with accredited entities with technical expertise in supporting social protection to develop proposals:

- All climate funds have a list of accredited entities that can submit proposals. Identifying an experienced accredited entity can help national social protection agencies during the project design phase and submission and will be helpful, among other things, in navigating the requirements and safeguards of the climate fund efficiently.
- Alternatively, social protection actors may consider becoming an implementing entity working with an established accredited entity, with a clear focus on delivering social protection initiatives that contribute towards a broader climate action activity, for example through the Adaptation Fund, CIF, and GEF.

Recommendation 4. Leverage preparatory grants provided by MCFs to facilitate social protection-climate collaboration:

Depending on the MCF, the support grants may be used to:

- Establish or strengthen a social protection-climate coordination group (with agencies such as the ministry of finance, ministry of environment, social protection ministry), with formal terms of reference, for supporting the development of proposals.
- Support diagnostic and design processes for social protection projects (e.g. climate risk mapping to update registries, trigger protocols with early warning systems, last-mile payment readiness, etc.), or other kinds of social protection programming relevant to climate action.
- For the GCF, develop concept notes or pre-feasibility for funding proposals that test relevant social protection mechanisms.

Recommendation 5. Make sure that proposals build on and align with existing climate programme design:

- Build on completed projects funded by MCFs to create opportunities to leverage prior investments and highlight the added value of integrating social protection.

For multilateral climate funds

The integration of climate finance and social protection policies should be mutually reinforcing, ensuring that social protection strengthens climate action and that climate finance complements and enhances social protection systems. The climate funds discussed in this guidance note all have very specific features and are at different stages with regard to integrating social protection, hence, the following recommendations should be seen as general statements that need to be interpreted differently by each MCF.

Recommendation 6. Integrate social protection explicitly into strategies and funding windows:

- Currently, social protection is mostly implicitly referenced in relation to vulnerability and livelihoods. To make it a core component of climate finance-supported projects, it is necessary to explicitly recognise social protection as a key tool for climate action within funding frameworks.
- Communicate the changes in strategy/inclusion of social protection proactively and support efforts to strengthen the capacity and confidence of social protection actors to engage with climate funds.

Recommendation 7. Foster learning on social protection and climate finance:

- Integrating social protection approaches requires strengthening in-house capacities to provide guidance on the topic, conduct technical reviews of proposals and respond to related inquiries. This can be implemented through staff trainings, case study reviews, and cross-thematic workshops to build expertise.
- Engage with social protection stakeholders including by inviting them for discussions, brainstorming, and attending their meetings/platforms to talk about climate finance etc.

Recommendation 8. Measure social protection impacts relevant to vulnerability and social inclusion:

- Track outcomes using more detailed socio-economic indicators, such as poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and increased income, rather than solely counting the number of beneficiaries reached. These indicators should be aligned with **Target 9f of the Global Goal on Adaptation**, which relates to poverty reduction and livelihoods improvement.
- This should also involve leveraging social protection to support a more ambitious inclusion agenda by incorporating gender-responsive approaches into social protection interventions, and supporting the participation of marginalised groups such as indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, migrants, and internally displaced people, who are often excluded from climate action.

Recommendation 9. Support the long-term development of social protection-related strategies:

- In the long-run, MCFs might consider funding multi-year, long-term social protection-climate programmes, rather than short-term or once-off interventions, as this helps develop and strengthen adaptative capacities among households and allows for climate outcomes to materialise, which can then be measured and evaluated.
- Promote cross-sectoral coordination to avoid silos, ensuring social protection strategies are aligned with other national development and climate initiatives.

For development partner organisations

International institutions – including regional and global NGOs, UN agencies, multilateral organisations, and development banks that design and implement social protection and climate programmes – play a critical role in advocating for and linking social protection and climate action. To get further involved and support national social protection and MCFs, the following points can be considered:

Recommendation 10. Support the integration of social protection in national climate action across your operations:

- Create opportunities for social protection ministries/authorities and climate actors to come together and be aware, as well as appreciate, each other's work better, thus creating a foundation for collaboration.
- Support governments in integrating social protection into national climate strategies by providing policy evidence and co-developing concepts from or aligned with NAPs and NDCs.
- Provide assistance to social protection ministries to design and implement interventions that contribute to national climate goals and identify funding opportunities for social protection ministries within and outside your institution.
- Engage with MCFs to share innovations and examples of good practices, and be a sounding board for them to develop guidance material on social protection.
- Assist designated authorities/focal points and social protection ministries in designing readiness requests, or co-developing concept notes and proposals.
- Invest in evidence generation to inform policies and strengthen the social protection and climate nexus.
- Develop shared approaches to measure the climate impacts of social protection, building on existing initiatives and methodologies to improve evidence-based decision-making.

Recommendation 11. Pursue accreditation with climate funds:

- Interested national, international and regional actors can seek direct accreditation with MCFs to be able to submit proposals that integrate social protection into climate projects.
- Support accreditation where needed by assisting local actors with the accreditation process to enable direct access, strengthen government ownership, and increase the number of accredited actors familiar with social protection systems.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Outlook

Under the leadership of the Task Force on Linking Adaptive Social Protection and Climate Financing, and drawing on the expertise of the social protection and multilateral climate finance communities, this guidance note outlines how social protection systems can play a transformative role in advancing climate action. By preventing poverty before shocks occur, protecting and supporting households during crises and transitions, and promoting long-term resilience, social protection programmes can break the vicious cycle between climate risks and socio-economic vulnerability.

The analysis demonstrates that social protection can directly contribute across all areas of climate action, including strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity, supporting mitigation and just transition strategies, and providing scalable mechanisms to rapidly respond to loss and damage. However, to achieve their potential social protection systems and programmes — including cash transfers, public works, social insurance, and labour market measures — need to be specifically modified and integrated as part of climate action.

As this guidance note highlights, MCFs are increasingly engaging with social protection. While some MCFs are beginning to explore the linkages through projects under existing funding frameworks, others are taking more deliberate steps to incorporate social protection instruments into their frameworks and operations. The Adaptation Fund, Climate Investment Funds, Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, and the emerging Fund for responding to Loss and Damage each offer distinct entry points ranging from livelihood support and shock-responsive mechanisms to system strengthening and just transition programming.

While the recognition of social protection's role is growing, the remaining gaps point to the need for more systematic integration, and unlocking the potential of social protection will require deliberate modification and investment. To this end, the guidance note outlines key actions for social protection actors and multilateral climate funds to take, ranging from embedding social protection within fund strategies, results frameworks, and country programming, to establishing technical and institutional partnerships across sectors and expanding the evidence base to guide policy and financing decisions.

After launching this guidance note at COP30, the Task Force on Linking Adaptive Social Protection and Climate Financing will determine its priority work areas to support these changes, in alignment with the evolving mandates of the MCFs and the Global Goal on Adaptation negotiations. As part of this work, it is envisioned that the Task Force will continue providing a platform to connect climate and social protection actors towards achieving shared goals, supporting the MCFs in their efforts to integrate social protection into their programming, and, as a crucial next step, assisting countries in developing concrete project ideas and proposals to support those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change at scale.

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Annex 1. Alignment and Features of Climate-Relevant Social Protection Programmes at Policy, Design and Implementation Level

Level	Sub-levels	Climate-aligned features
Policy level	Policies & strategies	• The policies, strategies, or legislation to which the programme is connected or arises from are climate-relevant (e.g. climate/environment strategies or laws). • The programme's rationale (policy impetus) is aligned with climate-relevant themes (e.g. programme creation document states climate theme or alignment) • The programme is officially recognised as part of a climate-relevant policy agenda in other way (e.g. official statements).
	Institutional & sectoral arrangements	• The type of instruments used by the programme (e.g. typical social assistance, social insurance, or labour market instruments) are more climate-oriented (e.g. payment for ecosystem services). • Sector of the lead agency (social protection, more climate-oriented, others)
	Objectives	• Official programme objective has climate-relevant considerations. • Objectives attributed to the programme by relevant stakeholders (i.e. 'unofficial objectives') are climate relevant.
Program level	Targeting	• Decisions about target group or eligibility are related in any way to climate-relevant considerations. • Data on climate hazards, vulnerability, or exposure used in decisions about who receives benefits.
	Individual benefits	• The design of the individual-level benefit (i.e. the benefit transferred to a person or household) includes climate-relevant considerations, for instance: • The type of benefit is climate-relevant (e.g. programme provides training on agroforestry to reduce land degradation). • The size of the benefit includes climate-relevant considerations (e.g. a benefit can is increased for regular beneficiaries of the program in case of drought). • The timing or duration of the benefit includes climate-relevant considerations (e.g. seasonal benefits).
	Area-level benefits	• Programme intends to address a climate relevant issue at area-level (does not refer to unintended benefits or positive externalities) (e.g. climate-related community-level assets or conservation of natural or ecological resources).
Implementation	Action or results	• The programme has performed a climate-relevant action or result associated with a climate-relevant function (see first section of Chapter 2): o explicitly reduced vulnerability in a way that also reduces climate risk o responded to a climate related shock o compensated for negative impacts of a policy or measure that is climate-relevant o supported climate change adaptation more broadly, or o contributed to emissions reductions or other mitigation

Source: More information can be found through Costella et al., (2024)
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212096324000779#t0005

Annex 2. List of Keywords Related to Social Protection[21]

Labour policy
Livelihood support
Micro insurance
Non-contributory scheme
Pension
Piggyback*
Poor households
Poverty reduction
Public work*
Registry / registries
Safety net
School feeding
Shock responsive
Social assistance
Social benefit
Social care
Subsid*
Targeting
Unconditional cash transfers
Unemployment
Vertical expansion
Voucher*
Welfare program*
Income diversification
Income generation
Income support
Informal workers
Just transition
Labour market program
Social insurance
Social pensions
Social protection
Social registries
Social safety nets
Social security
SRSP

[21] Note asterisk was used to allow for partial word matching.
Keywords adapted from Sengupta & Sivanu (2024)

Annex 3. List of Adaptation Fund Projects that Integrate Social Protection

A keyword search was conducted by the Adaptation Fund across 158 Adaptation Fund project documents (inception–February 2025), using terms such as cash transfers, in-kind transfers, social assistance, safety nets, social insurance, public employment, cash-for-work, complementary training, and economic inclusion. Additional criteria were included based on internal practices. Each instance was then reviewed in context to identify projects with a direct social protection component, output, or activity. Only these projects were included in the analysis.

Project title	Implementing Entity (IE)
Rural Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Building Project (RICAR)	WFP
Improving adaptive capacity of vulnerable and food-insecure populations in Lesotho	WFP
Programme Support for Climate Change Adaptation in the vulnerable regions of Mopti and Timbuktu	UNDP
Increasing Rural Communities' Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Bandama Basin in Côte D'Ivoire	IFAD
Building Adaptive Capacities of Small Inland Fishers for Climate Resilience and Livelihood Security, Madhya Pradesh, India	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
Enhancing Climate Change Resilience of Rural Communities Living In Protected Areas of Cambodia	UNEP
Addressing climate change risks to farming systems in Turkmenistan at national and community level	UNDP
Increased Resilience to Climate Change in Northern Ghana Through the Management of Water Resources and Diversification of Livelihoods	UNDP
Strengthening the adaptive capacities of climate-vulnerable communities in the Goascorán watershed of El Salvador and Honduras through integrated community-based adaptation practices and services	WFP
Enhancing resilience of communities and ecosystems in the face of a changing climate in arid and semi-arid areas of Zimbabwe	Environmental Management Agency of Zimbabwe
Increasing The Adaptation Capacity and Resilience of Rural Communities to Climate Change in the Central African Republic	IFAD
West And Central Africa Small Island Developing States Adapt – Building Resilience of Agricultural Systems To Climate Change	IFAD
Enhancing Resilience of Communities to the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Food Security in Mauritania	WFP
Addressing Climate Change Impacts on Marginalized Agricultural Communities Living in the Mahawel River Basin of Sri Lanka	WFP
Adapting to Climate Induced Threats to Food Production and Food Security in the Karnali Region of Nepal	WFP
Climate Change Adaptation Programme in Water and Agriculture In Anseba Region, Eritrea	UNDP
Increasing local communities' resilience to climate change through youth entrepreneurship and integrated natural resources management	IFAD
Increasing climate resilience through small-scale infrastructure investments and enhancing adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities in Kampot and Koh Kong Provinces in Cambodia	UN Habitat
Economic, Social and Solidarity Insertion for Resilience in the Governorate of Kairouan, Tunisia (IESS Adapt)	IFAD

Annex 4. List of GEF Projects that Integrate Social Protection

This analysis was conducted by GEF using the keywords identified in Annex 2.

Project title	Implementing Entity (IE)
Building Climate Resilience for Vulnerable Groups in Rural and Urban Areas of Yemen	UNDP
Madagascar Science-based management of Biodiversity and Natural Resources for Economic Development Project	World Bank
Phase 2: NBS Invest. Accelerating Investments in Nature Based Solutions to help address climate adaptation in Least Developed Countries	World Bank
Guinea Water and Sanitation Project	World Bank
Climate Change Resilience in the Caribbean Fisheries Sector (CC4FISH-II)	FAO
Scaling up Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience and Land Restoration across Burundi's fragile colline landscapes	World Bank
African Climate Risk Insurance Facility-Derisking Adaptation to Climate Change in Africa	African Development Bank
SMARTFARM – A data and digital technology driven and farm management solution for climate resilience.	IFAD
Financial tools for small scale fishers in Melanesia	World Wildlife Fund - US Chapter
Enhancing the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities in Sinoe County of Liberia	UNDP
Mauritania Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture Project	African Development Bank
Improved Resilience of Local Communities and their Livelihoods through the Restoration of a Degraded Catchment area in the Wilayas of South-East Mauritania	FAO
Strengthening the Capacities for Iterative National Adaptation Planning Process in Lao PDR	UNDP
Strengthening Resilience and Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change in São Tomé and Príncipe's Agricultural and Fisheries Sectors	African Development Bank
Community-based Climate Risks Management in Chad	UNDP
Integrated Management and Innovation in Rural Settlements	IFAD
Pacific Resilience Program	World Bank
Building Shoreline Resilience of Timor Leste to Protect Local Communities and their Livelihoods	UNDP
Livestock and Rangeland Resilience Program	IFAD
Community-based Climate Resilient Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in Bangladesh	FAO
Reducing Vulnerability of Banana Producing Communities to Climate Change Through Banana Value Added Activities - Enhancing Food Security And Employment Generation	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
Climate Adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA)	FAO
Disaster Risk Management and Urban Development Project	The World Bank
Reducing the Vulnerability of Cambodian Rural Livelihoods through Enhanced sub-national Climate Change Planning and Execution of Priority Actions	UNDP
Climate Resilient Livestock Management Project	African Development Bank
Ecosystem-Based Adaptation Targeting Vulnerable Communities of the Upper Guinea Region	UNDP
Supporting Rural Community Adaptation to Climate Change in Mountain Regions of Djibouti	UNDP

Project title	Implementing Entity (IE)
Assisting Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with country-driven processes to advance National Adaptation Plans (NAPS)	UNDP
Strengthening the Resilience of Women Producer Group's and Vulnerable Communities in Mali	UNDP
Improving Climate Resilience of Water Sector Investments with Appropriate Climate Adaptive Activities for Pastoral and Forestry Resources in Southern Mauritania	African Development Bank
Enhancing Capacities of Rural Communities to Pursue Climate Resilient Livelihood Options in the Sao Tome and Principe Districts of Caué, Me-Zochi, Principe, Lemba, Cantagalo, and Lobata (CMPLCL)	UNDP
Promoting Climate-resilient Development and Enhanced Adaptive Capacity to Withstand Disaster Risks in Angola's Cuvelai River Basin	UNDP
Senegal River Basin Climate Change Adaptation Project	World Bank
Senegal River Basin Climate Change Resilience Development Project	World Bank
Strengthening Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation through Support to Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Lesotho	FA0
India: Sustainable Livelihoods and Adaptation to Climate Change (SLACC)	World Bank
Climate Proofing Local Development Gains in Rural and Urban Areas of Machinga and Mangochi Districts	UNDP
GGW: Integrated Disaster and Land Management (IDLM) Project	World Bank
Forest Management and Water Conservation	African Development Bank
Pilot Asia-Pacific Climate Technology Network and Finance Center	Asian Development Bank
Gambia River Basin Project	World Bank
Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity and Resilience of Rural Communities Using Micro Watershed Approaches to Climate Change and Variability to Attain Sustainable Food Security	FAO
Improving the Resilience of the Agriculture Sector in Lao PDR to Climate Change Impacts	UNDP
Climate-resilient Infrastructure in Northern Mountain Province of Vietnam	Asian Development Bank
Promoting Climate-Resilient Livelihoods in Rice-Based Communities in the Tonle Sap Region project	FAO

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