

Green partnerships in international cooperation: A review of Global Affairs Canada policies and guidance for civil society

This policy brief is part of the Greening CSOs research initiative of Cooperation Canada

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Canada has committed to a range of national and international efforts to address climate change, preserve the environment and ensure sustainable development – both in Canada and for the world. The impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic have added an additional impetus for government action as stakeholders call on the need to seize opportunities to accelerate progress on the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#) (among other climate change and environmental agreements), and ensure a just, sustainable and equitable global recovery. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are key stakeholders in the call for progressive, climate-conscious approaches and critical partners of the government of Canada in implementing green initiatives at home and abroad.

Recognizing the critical role of Canadian international development and humanitarian CSOs in supporting the government of Canada's approaches to climate change and environmental sustainability abroad, this policy brief examines the legislative and policy frameworks that impact the opportunities for the sector to support positive action. Based on an analysis of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, Global Affairs Canada's Departmental Sustainability Development Strategy, the Feminist International Assistance Policy and other relevant policies and associated tools to support civil society partners, the policy brief seeks to strengthen knowledge on how CSOs work is impacted by available policies and guidance. It provides an overview of gaps observed between policy commitments and action as well as recommendations to strengthen the Canadian government's approach to partnership with CSOs working in international cooperation.

Government of Canada commitments

At the international level, Canada has signed on to [a variety of bilateral and multilateral agreements](#) such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and the [Montreal Protocol](#), among others.¹ The [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) guides domestic efforts in conjunction with provinces and territories and in consultation with Indigenous communities. The framework is Canada's plan to collectively reduce emissions, build resilience to adapt to a changing climate and transition Canada to a strong, diverse and clean economy committed to do its part in global targets and achieve international commitments.

The [Federal Sustainable Development Strategy \(FSDS\)](#) is Canada's principal instrument for planning and reporting for sustainable development, as well as the key element of Canada's response to the 2030 Agenda. Supported by the *2008 Federal Sustainable Development Act*, the federal government is required, by law, to prepare the FSDS and ensure stakeholder consultations every three years. The FSDS typically outlines environmental sustainability priorities, sets up targets and goals and identifies actions to achieve them. Canada's 2016-2019 FSDS recognized the 2030 Agenda and was linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The [2019-2022 FSDS](#) contributes to Canadian international sustainability commitments, particularly the 2030 Agenda and reflects government initiatives such as the Pan-Canadian Framework. As part of the Federal Sustainable Development Act, over 90 government departments are encouraged to prepare departmental strategies. These strategies include provisions related to corporate efforts to minimize negative environmental impacts, but also have implications for how federal government departments interact with their partners.

¹ See [Canada 2030: An Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) for a more detailed description.

Global Affairs Canada's commitments to climate change and environmental sustainability

Global Affairs Canada's (GAC's) approach to climate change and environmental sustainability can be understood broadly in relation to 1) overarching policies and 2) corporate commitments under its department sustainable development strategy. With respect to CSO partners, GAC's policies related to CSO partnerships and funding and reporting guidance are of particular relevance. These commitments translate into a series of partner specific policies, tools and resources that impact how the department engages with civil society partners in Canada's international development and humanitarian sector.

The Feminist International Assistance Policy

Canada's [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#) (FIAP) is grounded in a human rights-based approach and six key action areas with gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as central to all of the department's efforts. The policy aligns with the [2008 Official Development Assistance Accountability Act](#) which requires Canada's official development assistance to contribute to poverty reduction, account for the perspectives of the poor and ensure consistency with international human rights standards, in addition to annual reporting provisions.

Under the FIAP, interlinkages exist between action areas as part of the government's commitment to intersection and holistic approaches (including as part of the 2030 Agenda) though action area four focuses specifically on the environment and climate action. This action area includes support for mitigation and adaptation planning and initiatives, more specifically for women and girls, who are disproportionately more at risk from the threats of climate change. It emphasizes women's leadership and decision-making in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation, resilience building and sustainable resource management and support for women in the renewable energy sector.

The FIAP is underpinned by [policy indicators](#) as well as [action area policies](#) and policy [guidance notes](#). Indicators for the action area related to environment and climate action include employment created in the environmental sector, number of beneficiaries of Canada's climate adaptation projects and megatons of greenhouse gas emissions reduced or avoided as a result of Canada's government contributions. The [action area policy for environment and climate change](#) provides further elaboration on how GAC plans to support women's leadership in decision-making, investments in low-carbon and climate-resilient economies and support for healthy, resilient and adaptive communities, with a particular emphasis on local involvement, knowledge and ownership. GAC's policy guidance notes focus on [innovative finance](#), [innovation](#), [transparency and dialogue in international assistance](#) and [a feminist approach to innovation and effectiveness](#). The environment and climate change are featured only in the guidance on innovative finance. Supporting climate action and resilience is a "pathway" under Canada's approach to innovative financing, including references to further investments and mainstreaming climate adaptation into development finance.

Department Sustainable Development Strategy

GAC's [Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy 2020-2023](#) (DSDS) contributes to a handful of the FSDS goals, including through its global leadership in relevant international forums and negotiations, promotion of clean growth, activities to green its own operations and provisions related to ensuring the environmental sustainability of the programs and projects the department supports, among other activities.

With respect to global engagement, GAC engages through a variety of leadership roles in negotiations and implementation of agreements, initiatives, including the 2030 Agenda, free trade agreements and the provision of expert advice on corporate social responsibility. The department Climate Finance Division is cited as furthering commits to addressing global climate change and refocus development assistance on the poorest and most vulnerable. Since 2015, GAC has also been instrumental in the delivery of the Federal government's commitment of \$2.65 billion to help

developing countries. GAC has committed to delivering on climate financing to support developing countries' transition to low-carbon as well as promoting climate resilient economies, aligned with the FIAP; a target of 70% by 2020, and 100% by the end of fiscal year 2020-2021. In 2020, the department carried out consultations regarding Canada's next round of climate finance commitments. While a full discussion of this process is outside the scope of this briefing note, it is worth noting that Canada's commitment to [climate finance](#) has yet to match pace with its fair share of global climate financing. Moreover, [Canadian CSOs have called](#) on the department to ensure that climate finance better delivers on feminist approaches to supporting the poorest and most vulnerable and advancing women's rights and gender equality, directly linked with the goals of the Feminist International Assistance Policy.

With respect to clean growth, the DSDS notes that GAC also seeks to promote Canada as a leader for clean technologies, including through its 2017-2021 International Business Development Strategy for Clean Technology. Here, GAC assists Canadian businesses abroad to lead on export of clean and sustainable processes, among other initiatives.

In addition to supporting federal commitments through the Pan-Canadian Framework, GAC's DSDS points to efforts to reduce the environmental impact of government operations abroad. This includes through the implementation of its Sustainable Development Strategic Framework for Missions Abroad, which prioritizes the reduction of greenhouse gas, and the review and implementation of procurement practices that align with green objectives. According to the strategy, GAC continues to engage in sustainable procurement practices such as ensuring commodities come from sustainable manufacturers, can be reused, recycled, have reduced chemicals and can be disposed of in a sustainable manner. The department has worked towards the use of renewable clean energy and retrofits for reduced water consumption. The DSDS also highlights the promotion of sustainable travel practises. Efforts across the DSDS are linked with specific SDGs as relevant.

The DSDS also includes commitments that directly impact civil society partners. All of GAC's development assistance initiatives are to undergo an environmental analysis by 2020. As noted in the DSDS, GAC has also been instructed to integrate economic, social and environmental considerations into decision-making – in particular, through the [Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals](#) (the Directive), applicable to all plans, policy and programs. The Directive is the central federal policy that integrates sustainable and environmental development considerations into decision-making processes through application of a strategic environmental assessment – the strategic environmental assessment assists in identifying environmental risks and opportunities in a proposal. The Directive involves a three-stage risk-based review process including 1) screening, 2) preliminary scans and 3) a detailed analysis, when warranted. A strategic environmental assessment was created for the FIAP. All development initiatives are subject to an [Environmental Integration Process](#), from which stems a screening tool for partners to use, discussed further below.

Policies related to CSO partnerships

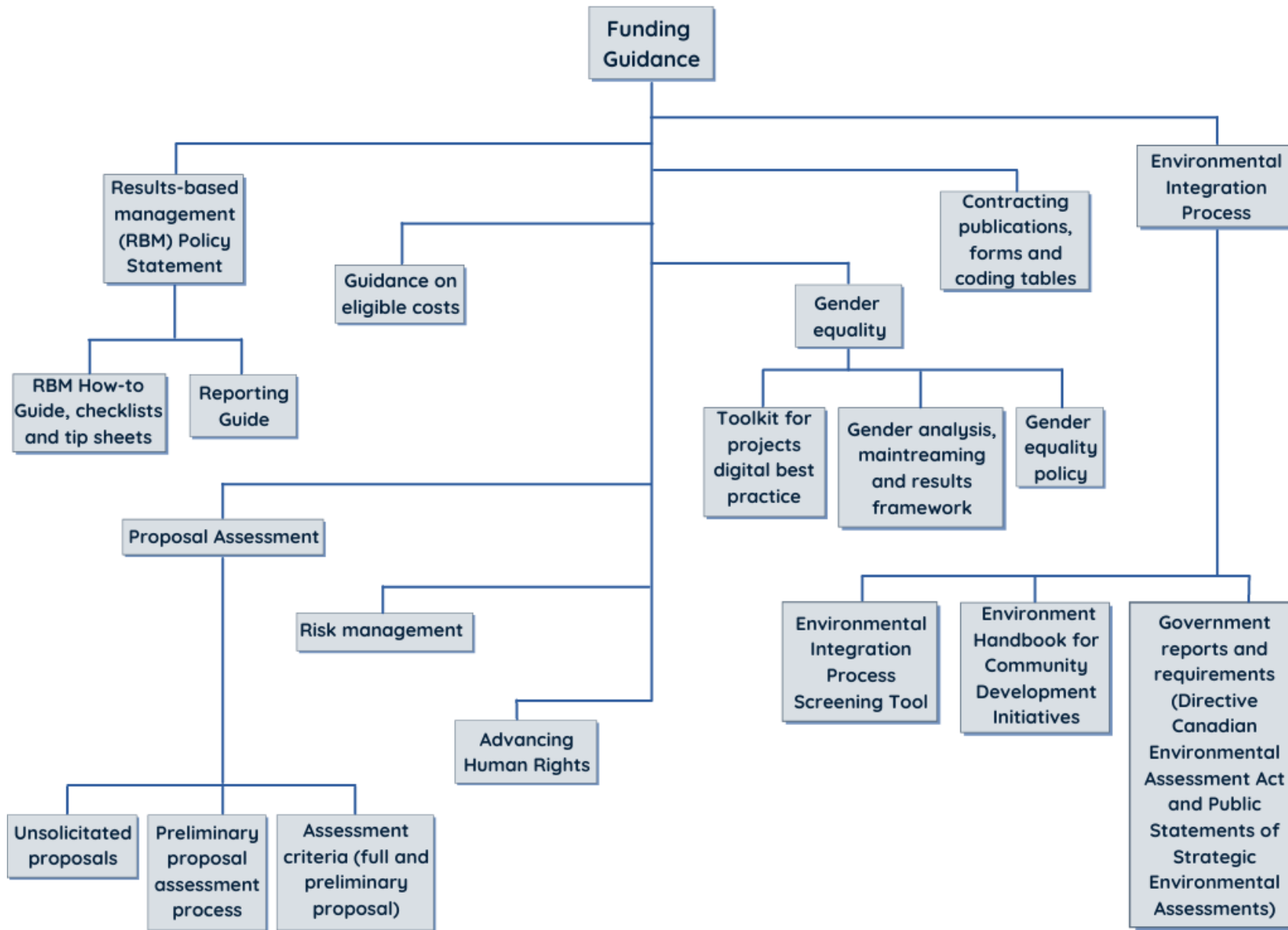
GAC's relationship with civil society is guided by the [Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance – A Feminist Approach](#) (CSO policy). This policy establishes GAC's approach to effective cooperation with Canadian, international and local CSOs to maximize the impact and results of Canada's international assistance. Aligned with the FIAP, the CSO policy strives for an intersectional approach through the empowerment of women and girls to promote gender equality, the protection of human life and dignity and integration of CSOs as leaders and independent actors in international assistance programming while promoting sustainability, transparency, accountability and results. The policy supports and links to other GAC policies, commitments and programs, namely the FIAP, the 2030 Agenda, the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act and support for small and medium-sized CSO. It also recognizes the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and other relevant frameworks related to effective development cooperation.

Although one of the guiding principles of the CSO policy is environment and climate action, the policy itself contains no actual guidance or particular focus on the environment and its safeguarding as well as no directives or partnership objectives directed at partnering with organizations who are sustainable in their operations and programming, or work to combat climate change. The policy is supported by an [Implementation Plan](#) that reflects the nine objectives under the CSO policy, developed in collaboration with CSOs through the [Civil Society Policy Advisory Group](#). While the implementation plan similarly makes no mention of environmental sustainability or climate change-related issues, it does include activities and milestones related to objective six focused on predictable, flexible, and transparent funding mechanisms. Activities relevant to how GAC works with CSOs to promote environmental sustainability and address climate change include provisions related to streamlining application processes as well as procedures related to funding and reporting.

Funding guidance

While the CSO policy and its implementation plan sets the overarching frame for CSO partnerships with the department, in addition to the FIAP, the department's funding guidance and technical provisions for CSO partners informs the establishment of formal partnerships to deliver development programs. Figure 1 provides an overview of the main policies, tools and guidance to support civil society partners. It focuses on those that specifically apply to formal partnerships. In what follows, the policy brief presents information on each tool, including references to and guidance related to the environment and climate change. In addition to the information presented in Figure 1, GAC also maintains a website on [questions and answers about applying for funding](#) (discussed further below).

Figure 1. GAC funding guidance for CSO partners



**Chart prepared by authors.*

The research included an examination of all policies shown in Figure 1 with the aim of identifying when and how they intersect with provisions related to environmental sustainability – both in terms programs as well as provisions that might impact CSO operations.

Environmental Integration Process

Of the funding guidance available, information on GAC's [Environmental Integration Process \(EIP\)](#), adopted in 2014, is the most relevant from the perspective of integrating environmental sustainability into CSO operations and programs. The EIP streamlines the department's policies and legal requirements tied to the environment into one process. The [EIP Screening Tool](#) is GAC's tool to determine the depth of environmental analysis that is required for initiatives – categories that are provided are based on the initiative's environmental risks and opportunities, conscious of the sector context and scale. There are four categories (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Environmental risk and related actions according to GAC's EIP Screening Tool

Category A	Category B	Category C	Category D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High environmental risk • Requires in-depth environmental analysis and consultation with GAC environmental specialist • Example: Large scale infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low or moderate environmental risk or any environmental opportunity • Requires environmental risk appropriate for level of environmental significance and consultation with GAC environmental specialist • Example: Small- or medium- scale changes to land use or forestry, health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible environmental risk or opportunity • Requires no further environmental analysis or consultation with GAC environmental specialist • Examples: Sectors that focus on a specific sector or activity such as governance, human rights, child protection or meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency - initiatives the must be carried out without delay to prevent damage to property or the environment or are in the interest of public health and safety • Requires no further environmental analysis but GAC environmental specialist must confirm • Example: Natural disaster, emergency conflict

GAC's website on questions and answers when applying to funding includes a specific question related to how partners should proceed if their project is rated as Category B. It also includes a question aimed at clarifying what partners should do in a situation when project activities are not fully defined but may include physical infrastructure. Beyond guidance in these two areas, the webpage does not include further questions related to environmental dimensions of projects.

The EIP Screening Tool is complimented by the [Environment Handbook for Community Development Initiatives](#). The handbook is a key tool for CSO partners. It provides information on GAC's environmental requirements and is meant to support partners to integrate environmental considerations in development initiatives. The handbook stipulates that GAC is committed to working with its partners and that, whenever possible, partners should consult appropriate GAC staff or environmental specialists when environmental questions arise. The section of the handbook focused on implementation encourages partners to develop and implement an environmental management system, though it does not include provisions that recognize how such systems might be impacted by organizational size, mandate and the nature of the local partners with which CSOs work whose own

capacities may vary greatly. The environmental assessment component of the handbook is detailed and comprehensive. It includes information on requirements in planning and implementation, as well as information on environmental tools including assessments, principles, guidance on analysis of environmental effects and their significance, participation, mitigation measures, monitoring and information on how projects are defined under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (2012).

Importantly, the handbook notes that CSO partners have contractual obligations to “systematically integrate environmental factors into its decision-making processes (in line with Global Affairs Canada’s Policy for Environmental Sustainability)” and that they must carry out environmental risk assessment in accordance with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Further, it notes that GAC “encourages [partners] to develop and implement an environmental management system” that reflects program related as it relates to the environment and that GAC “will ensure that the organizations have established appropriate environmental practices and have the capacity to carry out these responsibilities.” According to the handbook, GAC has the power to monitor environmental practices of organizations during contractual relationships and five years following the end of a contract, can request a copy of an environmental assessment report and perform environmental audits. Complementary to the handbook, GAC has prepared an [accompanying document of additional resources](#) to support partners. However this document is from 2005.

Indeed, although the handbook provides some useful information, it appears to be significantly out of date vis-à-vis GAC commitments and relevant international frameworks, including no mention of the 2030 Agenda or the Paris Agreement on Climate Change with information on the policy and regulatory framework focusing on government directives and commitments from 2002 or earlier. Moreover, the 2012 Canadian Environmental Assessment Act was replaced by the [Impact Assessment Act in 2019](#). This is not mentioned in the document and no guidance is available for partners regarding the implications of the new Act.

Outside specific guidance on the environment, GAC offers a range of resources that pertain to more technical funding guidance in relation to project approaches, proposals, contracting and risk management. The assessment of guidance to CSO partners included an examination of the common tools used by CSO partners to prepare proposals for and implement projects with GAC.

Results-based management (RBM)

GAC employs a results-based management approach to Canada’s international assistance. This approach focuses on results and outcomes particularly, in addition to activities and outputs, with implications for all phases of program development including planning, implementation, reporting and evaluations. Informed by GAC’s [RBM Policy Statement \(2008\)](#) CSOs are guided by two key reference documents, namely a [how-to guide](#) and a [reporting guide for partners](#), in addition to a series of [checklists and tip sheets](#).

Overall, given the nature of these documents - which focus on guidance to partners that are agnostic to a particular sector of work (education, health, environment, etc.) - there is little reference to concerns for environmental sustainability and climate resilience. The RBM policy itself is straight forward in that it offers objectives, scope and principles – however, similarly to the CSO policy, there is no mention of stewardship towards the environment or climate and importance or need of project planning and implementation to be done in an environmentally sustainable manner. The how-to guide, however, contains a section on environmental sustainability (p. 29). The section emphasizes the importance of environmental sustainability in project outcomes for all international assistance projects. It notes three main principles of 1) do no harm, 2) mitigating environmental related risks and 3) capitalizing on environmental opportunities. It notes the use of the Environmental Integration Process, leading to integrated and targeted approaches. The Environmental Integration Process is not explained within the document, though information is available specifically on this process under

funding guidance (as shown in Figure 1 and discussed further below). The guidelines provide steps for a situation analysis, in which the project team ideally identifies issues they aim to address and contextual factors. This portion, however, does not specifically address environmental sustainability nor does it mention climate change. Rather, the environment is a variable such as gender equality or governance. Similar to the how-to guide, the reporting guide does not posit any particular importance to the environment and climate change, nor does it specifically require reporting to include an environmental component – focusing rather on reports integrating environmental sustainability, without specific directive on how to do so. Overall, GAC's RMB tools provide little reference to environmental and climate change impacts which will arguably increasingly impact the work of all organizations in the international cooperation sector including civil society and beyond.

Proposal assessments

Guidance on GAC's [proposal assessment process](#) includes information pertaining to preliminary proposals and unsolicited proposals as well as assessment criteria for preliminary and full proposals. The preliminary proposal assessment criteria note that a proposal should have “appropriate environmental measures (...) incorporated into the project's design and planning.” The guidance for [unsolicited proposals](#) includes similar information, though also notes that the presentation of the development challenge addressed by the proposal can include issues related to environmental sustainability (and gender or human rights). The assessment criteria provided for full proposals contain a more detailed environmental sustainability section. While information on gender equality and advancing human rights clearly pertains to the goals of proposals, the section on environmental sustainability focuses on the environmental impacts of the proposed project and relevant implementation measures, in addition to demonstrated capacity to deal with the environmental factors and recommended measures. It does not request how a proposal advances GAC's priorities vis-à-vis environmental sustainability and addressing climate change. Guidance on proposal assessments does not cross-reference the EIP.

Eligible expenses

GAC offers [Guidance on Eligible Costs for Development Initiatives](#). This includes a list of eligible and ineligible costs for projects. The guidance does not refer to costs that might be associated with climate change mitigation or special efforts related to environmental sustainability. Section 1.5 clarifies allotments for travel but makes no mention of issues related to the carbon footprints of projects. GAC's [overhead compensation policy](#) for contribution agreements does not include carbon offsetting as an eligible project expense (any efforts by organizations in this area would have to come from overhead). Moreover, there is nothing in the guidance pertaining to green procurement, nor in the context of GAC's available [contracting forms](#) for partners. However, GAC has updated [eligible expenses](#) in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including allowing for incremental telework and telecommunication costs as part of project expenses.

Risk management

GAC's guidance on [risk management](#) presents integrated risk management as a tool to understand, communicate and manage risk in support of planned outcomes. While the five-step risk management cycle is presented, the guidance does not provide specific examples of risks (pointing to further information in the reporting guide to partners noted above).

Guidance on gender equality and human rights

Not unsurprising given the FIAP, GAC's funding guidance includes significant attention to [gender equality](#), making available:

- the [Gender Equality Toolkit for Projects](#),
- [Playbook for Gender Equality in the Digital Age](#),
- [Framework for Assessing Gender Equality Results](#),
- [Mainstreaming of a Gender Perspective](#),

- [Policy on gender equality](#), and
- Information on [gender analysis](#).

These resources provide guidance on designing and implementing FIAP programming. However, across these tools, climate change and the environment are not mentioned (except some examples of FIAP related targets on women and decision-making in addressing environmental issues). While the linkages between gender equality and climate change and environmental sustainability are outlined in the FIAP, this has not translated into more specific guidance for partners, including in relation to practical steps towards intersectional, holistic programming in line with the 2030 Agenda. Similarly, GAC's [Advancing Human Rights](#) considerations do not contain environmental or climate change components.

Opportunities and challenges for CSO partners

The review of GAC policies and guidance for partners suggests that opportunity exists for the department to better incorporate factors related to environmental sustainability and climate change. Key findings from the analysis are outlined below.

The importance of environment and climate change in GAC's international cooperation efforts is unclear to CSOs based on existing guidance

The Greening CSOs research project - which included a survey of 51 small, medium and large CSOs, in-depth interviews with 12 organizations, case studies and peer learning sessions - found that CSO partners are not clear on the extent to which environmental sustainability factors into proposal assessments, for example. This means that CSOs may not consistently include information on how their project addresses environmental sustainability and climate change factors if such issues are not related to primary or secondary objectives. In fact, many do not realize that most projects proposals submitted to GAC are seen by an environmental specialist.

Existing guidance for CSO partners does not reflect current environmental emergencies and the climate crisis

As shown above, key guidance for CSO partners on environmental sustainability is outlined in provisions under the EIP, and further elaborated in the Environment Handbook. However, these documents refer to outdated legislation and international government commitments that are nearly 20 years old. Additional resources are from 2005, raising questions regarding their ongoing relevance and value for CSO partners.

An important implication of the outdated guidance on environmental sustainability is that GAC's current approach does not fully reflect the urgency with which international cooperation must respond to climate change and environmental sustainability. Moreover, the 2030 Agenda and the FIAP layout principles and new ways of working that impact how Canada's partners approach the integration of environmental sustainability from a more holistic and integrated perspective. Moreover, current guidance does not reflect the linkages between environmental pollution and development outcomes,² or the impact of increasing extreme weather events. Given that Canada provides international assistance to the countries most impacted by these factors, including through partnership with CSOs, there may be a need to update guidance with respect to the EIP and its handbook, as well as guidance on risk management. Given current realities, there may be a need to re-examine guidance for Category C projects with negligible environmental risk or opportunity. While sub-sector projects may have low impacts on the environment, they may indeed be impacted by environmental conditions or the need to ensure resilience to climate change. Moreover, events such as conferences and meetings are listed as Category C. Yet, such meetings present an opportunity for

² A peer learning review of [Greening Development Cooperation](#) published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2019 noted this is a gap more generally among donors. The review included an examination of Canada's approach.

green efforts through climate-smart travel, carbon offsets and virtual participation options as well as choices with respect to sourcing, paper use and waste disposal. While decisions regarding specific events may not have a significant environmental impact overall, efforts in this area promote a greener sector.

Coherence between funding guidance resources could be strengthened with additional guidance provided

Overall, the review of funding guidance found few examples of crosswalks between guidance documents. Even when environmental sustainability was mentioned, stakeholders were not necessarily guided back to the EIP and its handbook. For example, civil society could benefit from flexible RBM guidance includes specific information related to how the environment and climate change should be incorporated into RBM strategies. Though women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate change, gender equality guidance documents do not provide practical tools or directives to support the better integration of climate change and environmental factors in gender equality programming.

Participants in the Greening CSOs project noted that, overall, the department could provide more guidance on how it would like to see partners integrate environmental sustainability and climate change into projects, prepared in consultation with CSO partners (as per GAC commitments related to consultation and co-creation under the CSO policy). Overall, there is little information on environmental and climate change considerations when applying for funding and in the assessment criteria. Moreover, CSOs are hindered during application processes in terms of their ability to access GAC staff and environmental specialists to raise questions. At a minimum, strategic engagement with CSOs around funding procedures and environmental issues could yield a range of new funding questions and answers regarding environment, climate, risks and sustainability, offering further guidance to CSOs (though this cannot be a substitute for updating existing information on the EIP, as highlighted above). The creation of environment and climate change toolkits, similar to what the department has done for gender equality, could be a useful way forward in this regard.

Contracting and EIP requirements intersect with possibilities to promote greening CSO operations

As noted above, GAC's EIP refers to the role of the department in guaranteeing environmental management systems when working with funded partners. Existing guidance is unclear with respect to how this works in practice and with respect to the type of support diverse partners might receive. Moreover, current contracting rules, including eligible expenses, may also undermine green operations and programs. For example, participants in the Greening CSOs project noted that eligible costs for development initiatives should contain environment and climate action components. Eligible costs and incentives for greener programs could include carbon offsets, use of local over Canadian experts to reduce carbon footprints and importantly, the cost of environmental assessments, whether prepared in-house or not.

It is unclear how GAC considers CSO partner capacity in provisions for greener international cooperation

Finally, while the Environment Handbook refers to ensuring the capacity of partners to fully adhere to the EIP, there is no information regarding how this is done in practice. As noted, existing tools that would support CSO capacity are either outdated or do not exist. The question of local partner capacity is not mentioned at all in available relevant guidance materials on the environment. Participants in the CSO Greening project noted that environmental analysis and requirements are not always reflective or realistic of international partners' capacity, in terms of available human resources, notably existing knowledge and expertise. However, Canada's feminist approach has implications for how the department engages with diverse types of CSO partners - in Canada and abroad. CSOs with diverse capacities and mandates will have varying degrees of ability to integrate

environmental concerns into their projects, an issue that does not seem to be factored into existing guidance.

Recommendations

This policy brief has sought to understand commitments made by GAC for environment climate change and clarify policies, tools and resources available to assist civil society partners in contributing to environmentally sustainable, climate smart international cooperation. Although GAC has committed to environmental and climate action, sustainable practices and international agreements, these commitments have not translated into up-to-date, comprehensive guidance for GAC's CSO partners.

Two key recommendations emerge. Global Affairs Canada should:

- ✓ **Urgently update, streamline and expand existing funding guidance and tools related to environmental sustainability and climate action.**

There is a need for GAC ensure its funding guidance aligns with Canada's global and national commitments, legal and regulatory frameworks and departmental policies, notably in relation to the FIAP and CSO policy. Updated guidance should articulate clear requirements vis-à-vis environmental sustainability and climate change action for CSO supported initiatives, including from proposal to implementation and reporting. Funding guidance should include appropriate crosswalks between resource documents to ensure coherence and exemplify the importance of environment and climate-smart initiatives within the context of GAC's international cooperation portfolio. Finally, updating guidance and tools presents an opportunity for GAC to better support CSO partner capacity to better integrate environment and climate smart solutions into their programming, contributing to greener international cooperation overall.

- ✓ **Ensure CSO partner consultation and engagement in efforts to update funding guidance and tools related to environmental sustainability and climate action.**

CSO consultation and dialogue are cornerstones of GAC's CSO policy. Efforts to update funding guidance and tools to support green(er) partnerships will necessarily require strong engagement with CSOs. This means further identifying the practical challenges faced by CSOs, setting shared, realistic expectations, offering opportunities for co-creation and joint solution finding and affording opportunities for diverse CSOs to inform and provide feedback on supporting tools. Some issues, such as the use of carbon offsets as part of project expenses, have already been flagged to GAC and may require discussion through existing dialogue mechanisms, such as the Task Force on Increasing Effectiveness. Overall, the review of funding guidance and inputs from CSOs participating in Cooperation Canada's Greening CSOs project suggest that the time has come for broad yet focused dialogue between the department and CSOs to promote environmentally sustainable and climate-smart international cooperation.