

# Institutional barriers to climate finance through a gendered lens in Fiji, Samoa, and Solomon Islands

A SYNTHESIS ACROSS RESEARCH  
OBJECTIVES  
November 2022





Australian Government  
Australian Centre for  
International Agricultural Research



Australian  
National  
University

Developed by UTS-ISF, QUT, ANU and Talanoa Consulting for the Australian Centre for Agricultural Research (ACIAR)

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#### PHOTOS

As indicated

**FRONT PAGE PHOTO:** Samoan Women's Association of Growers (SWAG) host a market in Samoa, the only market in Samoa that bans single use plastic and styrofoam.

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction and Context



# INTRODUCTION

This Small Research Activity (SRA) project has focused on the **decision-making processes underlying climate finance** allocations in the Pacific.

The research, funded by the Australian Centre for Agricultural International Research (ACIAR), came about in response to the **growing pressure** at the international level to **increase climate finance flows** to the Pacific, and also to make climate finance more gender sensitive.

Questions this research has sought to answer include:

What are the **types of adaptation** projects that get funded?

Who are the **main recipients and sources** of climate finance?

Are **locally-led and gender equitable** processes related? Are they being supported by existing climate finance streams?

Are there key **institutional barriers** to supporting these processes associated with the **major sources** of international climate finance?



Ofasina Toamua leads workshop with SWAG members on climate finance. Photo: SWAG

# INTRODUCTION

The main components of the research include:

## Climate finance

- “local, national or transnational funding from public, private and alternative sources that seeks to support climate change mitigation and adaptation actions”

## Soft adaptation

- Solutions based on cultural knowledge addressing community priorities.

## Agriculture sector

- What adaptation agricultural activities are funded in the Pacific?
- What counts as farming and who is a farmer?

## Gender equality

- How do we define gender equality in the agricultural sector?
- Does soft adaptation align with gender equality?

# RESEARCH PURPOSE

This research was led by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) with partners from University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Australian National University (ANU) and Talanoa Consulting, Fiji. The project was undertaken between December 2021 – December 2022.

The SRA aimed to provide insights for ACIAR, its Pacific partners, and Pacific civil society groups on the current options for climate finance that may best support **gender equity outcomes** as well as soft, **community-based, locally-led adaptation** approaches in agriculture.

The project also aimed to identify potential novel future interventions that could change, or at least better navigate, the climate finance institutional landscape to finance gender and systems change outcomes.

**The purpose of this SRA** is to identify more practical, actionable levers to adjust or complement the structural norms that support climate finance in **Fiji, Samoa and Solomon Islands** which have the potential to help achieve **gender, culture and climate** outcomes simultaneously in ways that are strongly aligned with partner priorities.



Samoan Women's Association of Growers (SWAG members participate in research discussion about climate finance. Photo credit: SWAG

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

## 1. Global focus

Analyse the extent to which soft adaptation approaches in the agricultural sector are compatible with agricultural interventions contributing to gender equity and identify the degree of match or mismatch with dominant policy framings of the UNFCCC institutions shaping gender, agriculture, and finance interventions.

## 2. Pacific regional focus

Examine if soft approaches are informing how the UNFCCC is directing climate finance within the Pacific. What is being funded, who is receiving the funding and how much agency and benefit do Pacific communities gain from adaptation projects?



## 4. Synthesis of findings

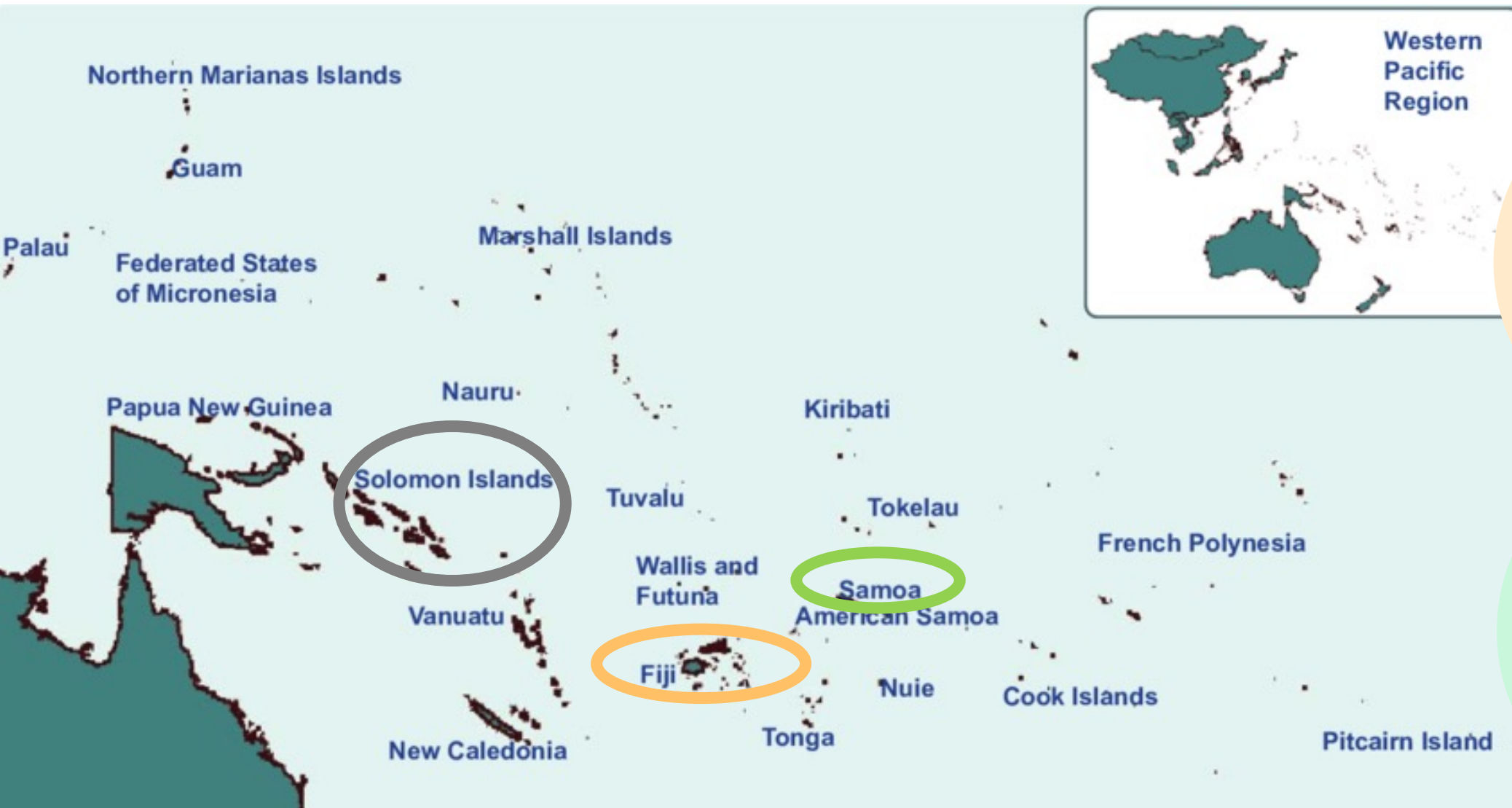
Synthesise project lessons to provide a conceptual understanding of the overall climate finance system and identify key leverage points for inclusion of soft adaptation and gender transformative approaches including collaborative, participatory and feminist methods.

## 3. Civil society focus in Fiji, Samoa and Solomon Islands

Explore Pacific civil society experiences in accessing climate finance through UNFCCC and other channels and assess whether existing climate finance supports the processes and activities sought by civil society. Identify the types of adaptation finance prioritised by civil society and assess if this aligns with soft adaptation approaches.



# PARTICIPATING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS



Coalition of Youth  
Environmental Sustainability  
Solomon Islands



More than just youths

House of Sarah, Fiji



Samoa Women  
Association of Growers



# CHAPTER 2

## Methodology



# RESEARCH METHODS

## OBJECTIVE 1 (QUT)



The QUT team led the feminist institutional analysis of UNFCCC instruments and processes at global level. Document reviews focused on assessing definitions of terms including soft adaptation, agriculture and gender equity in global and regional climate frameworks.

## OBJECTIVE 2 (ANU)



The ANU team led the analysis at Pacific regional level. Literature reviews focused on grey literature on agriculture, gender and climate change (FAO Gender Assessments), and were conducted alongside interviews with regional organisations and government officials in Fiji and Samoa. Insights from Global Talanoa – political ethnography on Climate Change negotiations – were also incorporated into Objective 2.

## OBJECTIVE 3 (TALANOA, WITH SUPPORT FROM UTS)



Talanoa Consulting, with the support of UTS, led the co-design of research activities in Fiji, Samoa and Solomon Islands with civil society organisations (CSOs). Research activities led by CSOs consisted of key informant interviews; focus group discussions, data collection and sense-making workshops; questionnaires and document reviews.

## OBJECTIVE 4 (UTS)



Synthesis workshops were led by UTS, with Talanoa supporting with logistics. The core research team and CSOs came together to share and synthesise findings across the three objectives. Emerging findings were shared with a wider group in Suva, Fiji in a stakeholder session in October 2022.

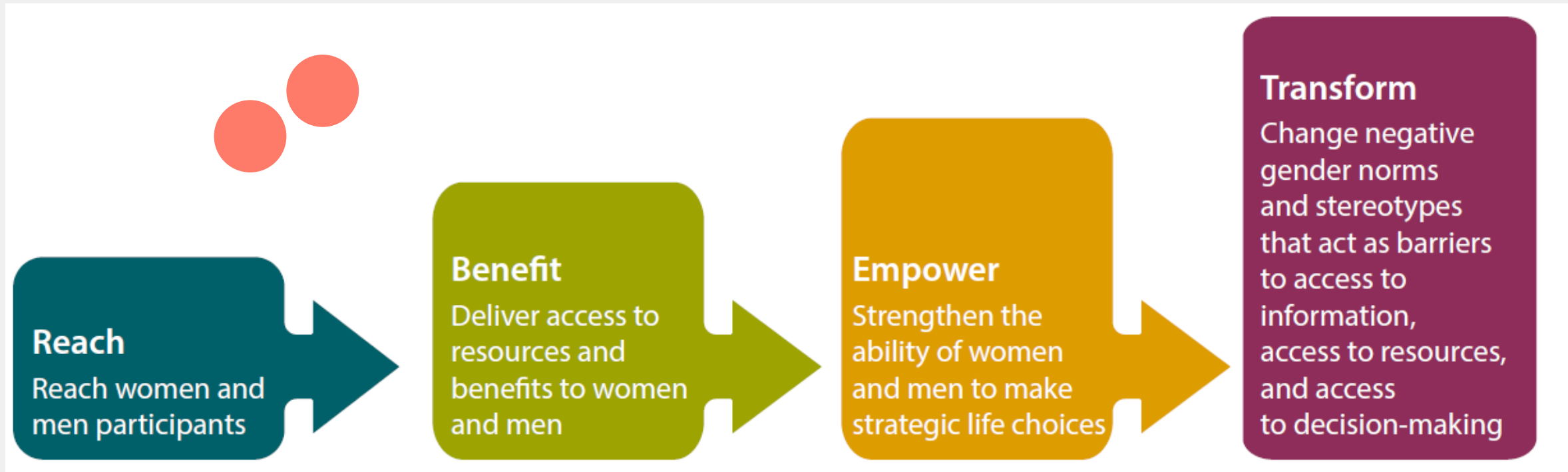
## CORE RESEARCH TEAM



Over the course of the project, the core project team (consisting of QUT, ANU, UTS, and Talanoa Consulting) met fortnightly, via zoom, to provide updates on work progressed, and to share ideas and resources to help fulfil project objectives.

# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK

The research drew on the 'Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform' framework to consider gender within climate finance, agriculture and climate change adaptation. This framework needs to be adapted to be contextually relevant to the Pacific in future research.



Source: Kleiber et al. (2019) adapted from the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (2017), Johnson et al. (2017), Theis and Meinzen-Dick (2016)

# CSO RESEARCH OBJECTIVES - OBJECTIVE 3



**CSO research objectives were to better understand the:**

- (a) types of adaptation projects that get funded;
- (b) main recipients and sources of climate finance, if locally-led and gender equitable adaptation processes are being supported by existing climate finance streams; and
- (c) key institutional barriers to accessing international climate finance.

**CSOs co-designed their own research methods** with the support of Talanoa Consulting and UTS. CSO research methods are described on the next page.

# CSO RESEARCH ACTIVITIES - OBJECTIVE 3



Two-day workshop with eight civil society organisations in Solomon Islands

Key informant interviews with eight workshop participants to gain deeper understanding of CSO insights



Document review

Key informant interviews with ten faith-based organisations and three non-government organisations

Validation workshop with eight participants to collectively make sense of the interview and document review data



Key informant interviews with three members of SWAG's Executive Committee

Questionnaire (11% response rate)

Think Tank discussion with nine SWAG members

# SYNTHESIS WORKSHOPS – OBJECTIVE 4

## Collaborative sense-making

The research team and three CSOs came together in October 2022 to collectively make sense of findings across the three objectives. UTS led the facilitation of participatory workshop activities, using Meadows (1999) and O'Brien (2018) 'Leverage points for transformative change' frameworks to structure the synthesis process. Through a joint sense-making process which included assessment across the local/national; regional and global domains, the group identified priorities for future action.

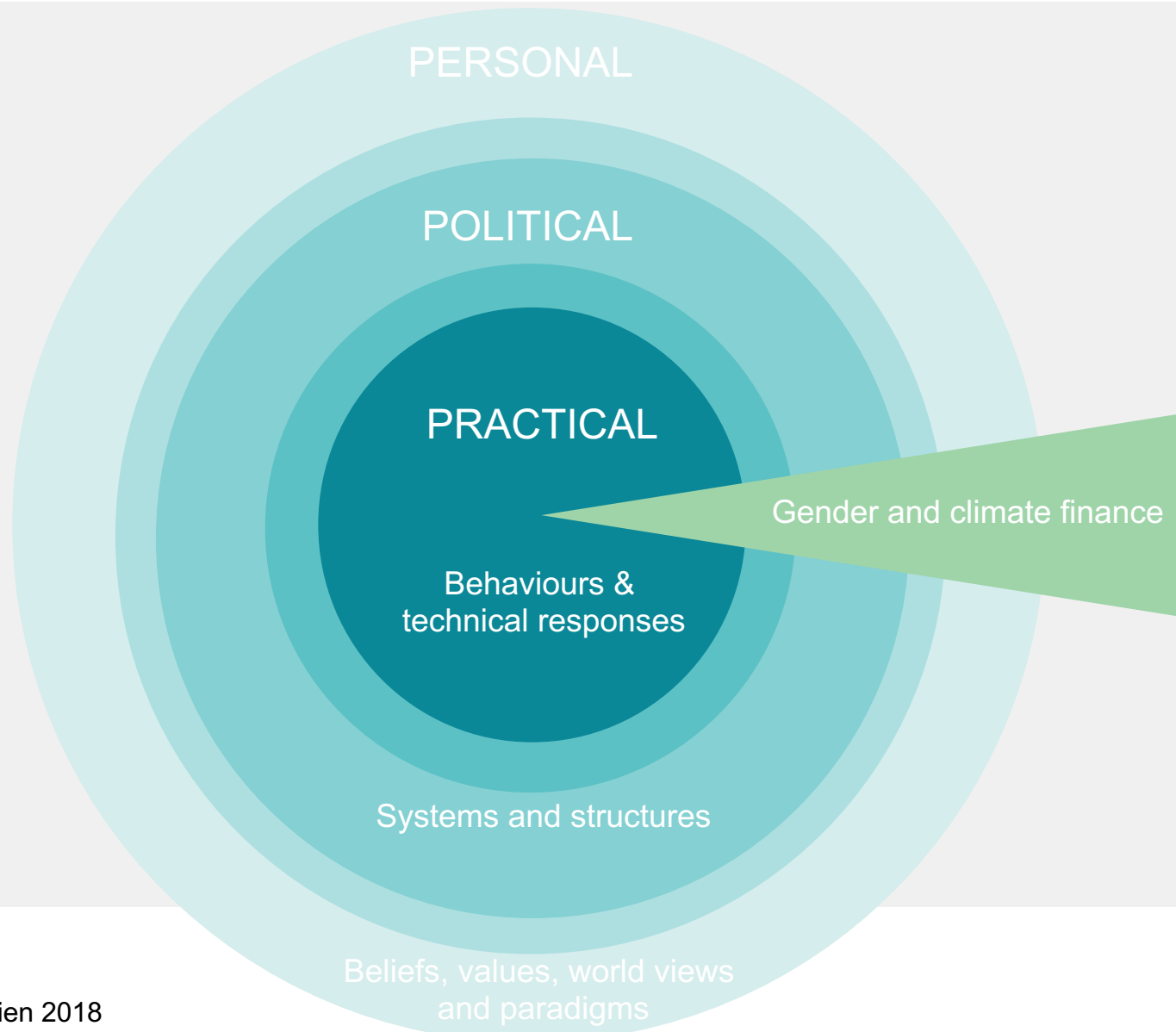


## Core research team synthesis

Day Two of the workshops involved the core research team from QUT, ANU, UTS and Talanoa Consulting. Common themes were identified to further solidify findings across the three research objectives. Key areas for further research were also identified.



# LEVERAGE POINTS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE – OBJECTIVE 4



‘Leverage points for transformative change’ frameworks (Meadows, 1999 and O’Brien, 2018) were used to synthesise findings across the research objectives.

The **personal sphere** represents the subjective beliefs, values, worldviews and paradigms that influence how people perceive, define or constitute systems and structures, as well as their behaviours and practices.

The **political sphere** represents the systems and structures that facilitate or constrain practical responses.

The **practical sphere**, at the core of the figure, “represents specific actions, interventions, strategies and behaviours that directly contribute to a desired outcome” (O’Brien 2018, p.155)



# CHAPTER 3

## Findings



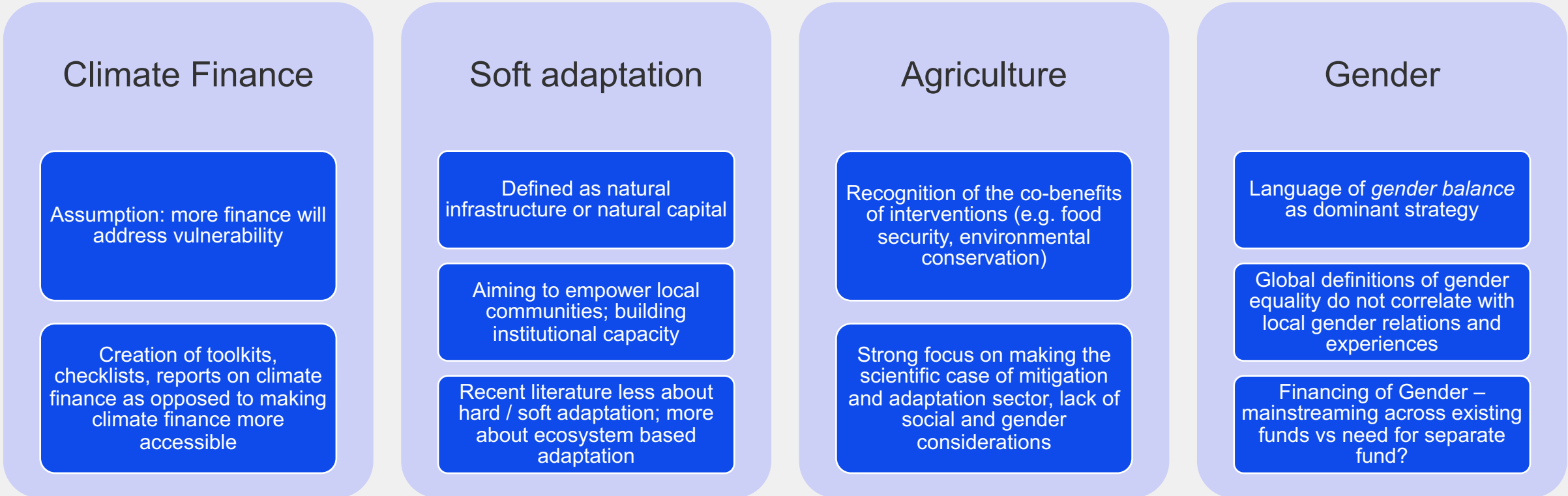
Photo credit: SWAG



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 1: GLOBAL SCOPE

## UNFCCC and global level findings

Objective 1 involved exploring how the following concepts were defined and used at global level.





# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 1: GLOBAL SCOPE

## Adaptation terminology

- **Nature Based Adaptation** (IUCN) and **Ecosystem Based Adaptation** (FAO) – terminology used with similar meaning to “soft” adaptation.
- Language of “soft” adaptation **not used** in Pacific literature or projects; rather emphasis on **community-based adaptation**.
- **Gender and social inclusion issues not adequately included** in these approaches.

## Adaptation in the agriculture sector

- **Regenerative agriculture** (FAO): Aiming for food and water security and meeting climate goals. Frameworks based on western science; economic rationalisation.
- **Lack of gender and social aspects**: Limited recognition of unequal power relations. Smallholder women framed as homogenous group unable to adapt as a result of vulnerability.

## Adaptation in the Pacific

- **Adaptation based on ‘no regrets’** activities to support resilience building.
- **Maladaptive approaches in agricultural adaptation** often due to outsiders’ poor design and misunderstanding of local context.
- **Faith based approaches to adaptation**: alignment with soft adaptation, culturally appropriate adaptation.

## Adaptation, gender and agriculture

- **Limited literature** – most gender / agriculture / adaptation research from East Africa.
- Emerging research on the **feminization of agriculture** and implications for climate change. Rural transformation leading to change in gender dynamics at farm level.
- **Global and local cultural** understandings of gender equity do not always align.



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 1: GLOBAL SCOPE



## Key output from Objective 1:

*“Gender and the Glasgow COP: “Please do more”*

- Given that we know that climate change is not gender neutral, this report explores what ‘doing gender’ means within UNFCCC.
- UNFCCC has historically focused on ‘gender balance’ with activities aimed at increasing numbers of women present at COP meetings.
- Discussions of gender and climate change typically occur on the margins of UNFCCC dialogue.
- The report identifies opportunities to genuinely elevate gender within the politics of global climate change discussions.



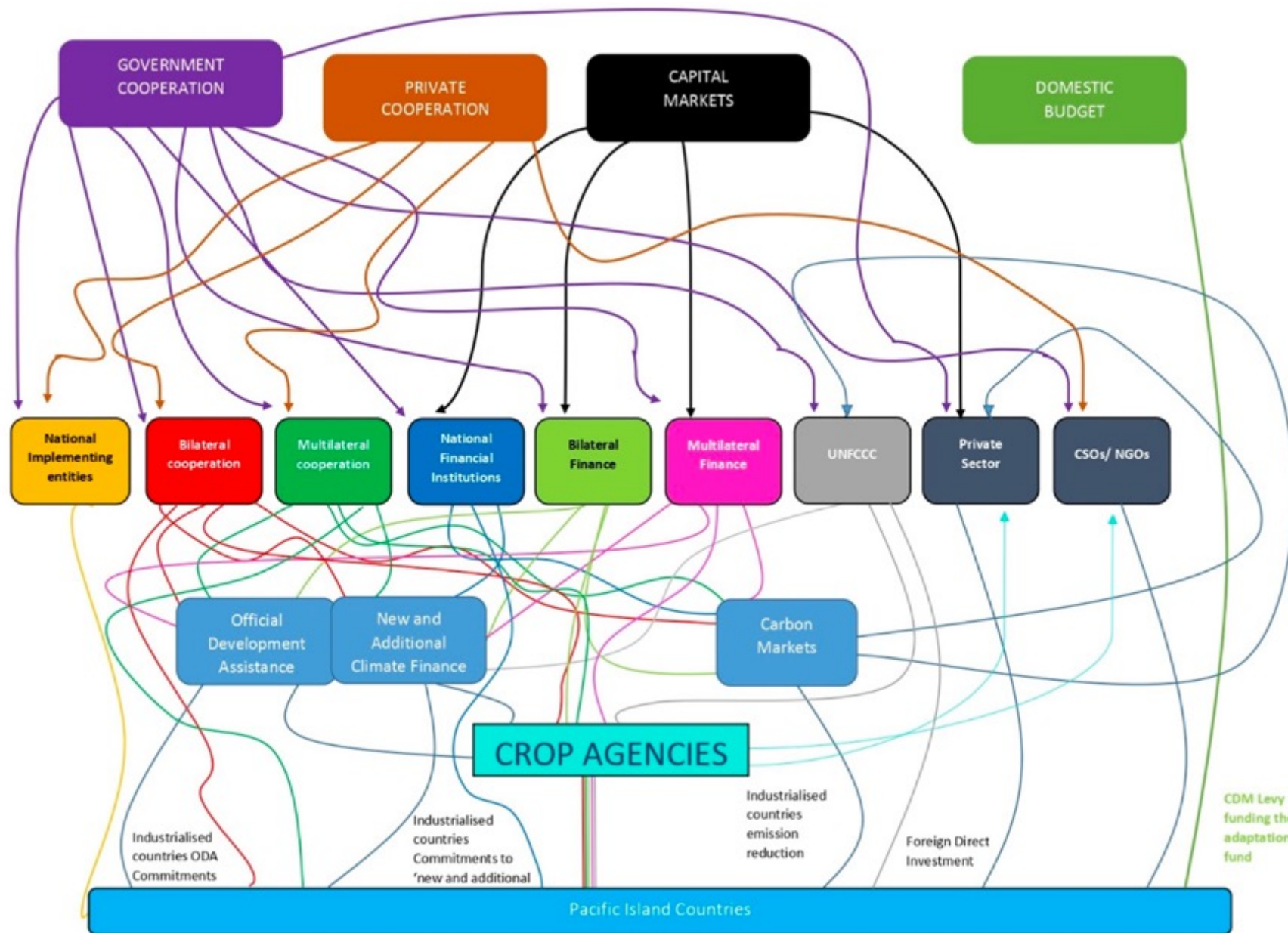
Objective 2

# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 2: REGIONAL SCOPE

Tracking the flow of climate finance to Pacific island countries is complex!

72% Bilateral  
28% Multilateral

Jale Curiaki and Eliala Fihaki, Making Climate Finance Work for Women: Voices from Polynesian and Micronesian Communities, [Oxfam Pacific](#) (2019)





# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 2: REGIONAL SCOPE

**Objective 2** found a lack of transparency and accountability of where climate finance goes in the Pacific.



Examples of climate finance tracking tools for the Pacific:



**Climate Finance Navigator**, housed at SPREP under the Pacific Climate Change Portal, provides news and guidance on multilateral climate funds and their activities in the Pacific.



**The Pacific Climate Change Finance Tracking Tool** prototype was developed in response to the need to track climate change and disaster risk finance as identified by Pacific governments across the region.

## Objective 2



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 2: REGIONAL SCOPE

### Structural exclusion of women

- Women's exclusion is structural: tokenistic response to mainstreaming; lack of understanding of who in government is responsible for mainstreaming; lack of accountability for mainstreaming and breakdown of funding flows - who is accessing finance?
- Gender aspects of climate finance are left to Women's Department which lack resources and power within government structures
- Disconnect between policy, government access to finance and women's awareness of climate change
- Consultation fatigue; tokenistic inclusion of women
- Donor requirements, gate keeping or with-holding information from recipients, e.g. civil society organisations
- Traditional norms restrict women's participation and the de-valuing of women's involvement in agriculture and fisheries.
- Women not recognising their own contributions to agriculture.



### Tracking climate finance

- SPC's Pacific Climate Change Finance Tracking Tool notes that there is no internationally recognised definition of climate finance.
- Climate finance is top-down through Ministries of Environment or Climate Change.

### Exclusion of women in access to climate finance adaptation projects

- CSOs are critical in ensuring gender considerations are implemented, especially where partnerships between CSOs and NGOs serve as an 'extension' of the arms of the government
- A 2017 review of Pacific Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects show gender is not a priority
- Projects that were smaller in scale through the GEF Small Grants Program were more likely to engage women through women's groups or include gender considerations
- Women have reported that there is a lack of support for women's groups and inclusion of them in climate change adaptation

## Objective 3



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 3: CSO EXPERIENCES

## Overview of CSOs:

Coalition of Youth  
Environmental Sustainability  
Solomon Islands



*More than just youths*

COYES is a youth-inspired, locally-led non-governmental organisation with a vision of an inclusive society where youth are; inspired, supported and connected, and make transformative changes in society.

House of Sarah, Fiji



House of Sarah is a faith-based CSO, offering referrals through community based “Sarah Carers” & counselling support through Dauveivukei services (counselling support) to survivors of violence against women and girls.

Samoan Women  
Association of Growers



SWAG is a women led NGO established in 2018 who believe in authentic and organic living and growing, innate with its planet conscious approach.





## FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 3: CSO EXPERIENCES

Types of climate finance accessed by CSOs

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GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP)

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UNDP – GOV4RES Project

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Global Green Grant Fund – The Nature Conservancy

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USF-PIFRI – Pacific Islands Forest Restoration

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IUCN Kiwa Initiative

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Natural Carbon

---

SPREP and SPC

---

Adaptation Fund

---

International Church counterparts

## Objective 3



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 3: CSO EXPERIENCES

Barriers and challenges in accessing climate finance

Analysis across the three CSOs found the following **barriers** for women and CSOs to access climate finance:

**Unrealistic requirements for proposals** (e.g. short time constraints, data gathering, budget development, co-funding obligations, lack of staff to undertake proposal, time taken, communicating with donors – difficult for rural and remote CSOs)

**Requirement of English** for written proposals

**Policy gaps within the CSO** e.g. working with children, gender etc., need for accreditation when applying for climate finance

**Complexity of process and inaccessibility in accessing climate finance** e.g. CSOs not aware when climate finance calls are made or how to apply

**Requirements of donors are misaligned** with CSO realities

**CSO reliance on external funding** to implement climate change actions at community level

**Unequal power dynamics** between donors and CSOs (all on the donors' terms)

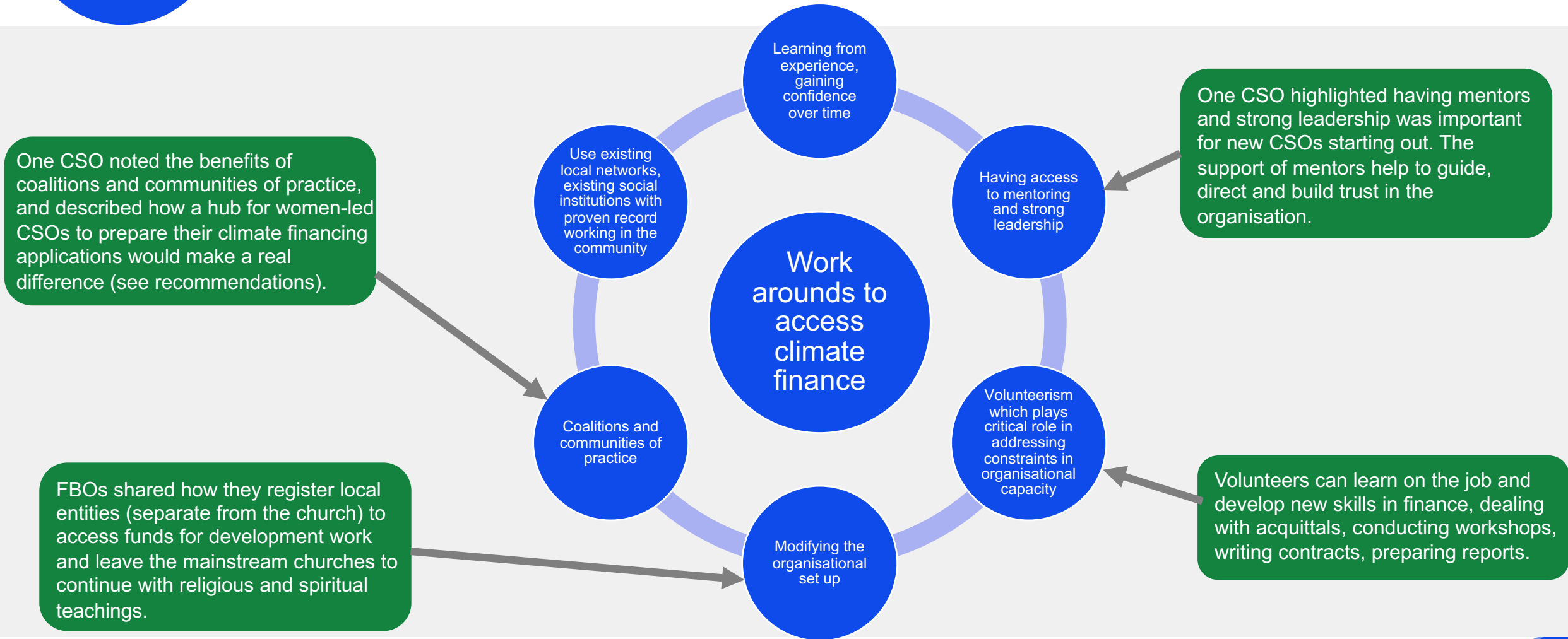


Photo: SWAG



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 3: CSO EXPERIENCES

Existing 'work-arounds' CSOs take to access climate finance



## Objective 3



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 3: CSO EXPERIENCES

Recommendations from CSOs

**Institution Building** – Support provided to CSOs in developing policies for gender equity, social inclusion and procurement to guide their work. Climate adaptation projects should contribute to support internal management to strengthen organisational capacity needs of CSOs as most CSOs have limited capacity to do more.

**Capacity Building** - Training for CSOs developed in project management for proposal writing, procurement, financial management, communication, audits, acquittals, technical trainings and networking effectively.

**Outsourcing of Proposal writing** - Support provided for CSOs, as part of the project proposal preparation, to outsource the hiring of proposal writing specialist. The cost for hiring the specialist could be factored in the proposal preparation cost for the project.

**Incentives** – Provision of financial incentives to encourage CSOs to apply for climate finance. Incentives would recognise the key role CSOs play in community-based adaptation.



Photo: House of Sarah

## Objective 3

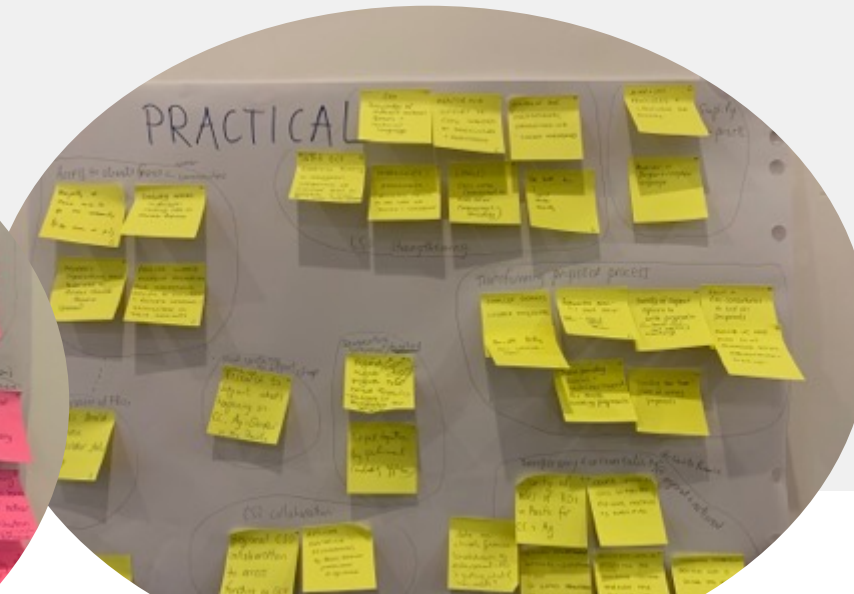
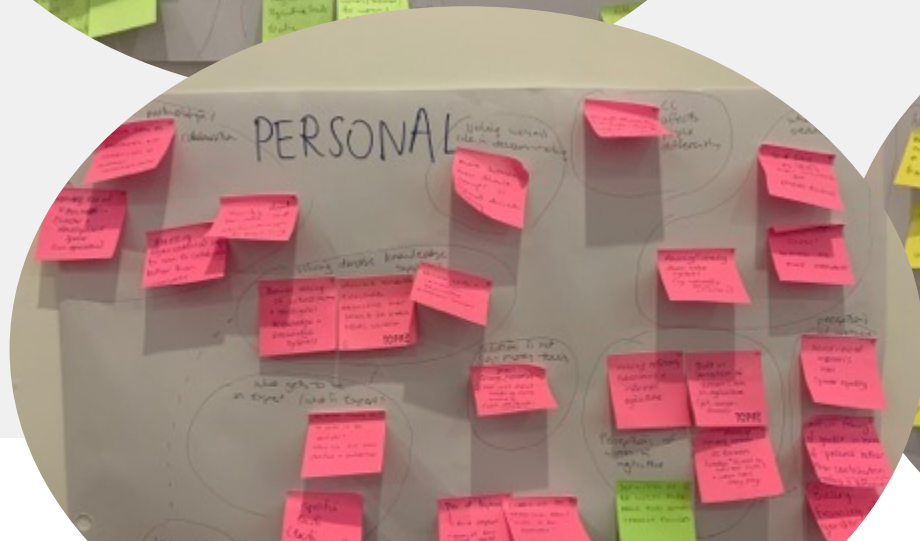


# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 3: CSO EXPERIENCES

Emerging recommendations from CSOs

**Improved donor understanding of local context** – Donors and governments to recognise women, CSOs and FBOs as key players in climate change action at local level.

**Collective CSO collaboration and sharing** – Provision of support from donors to CSOs (especially women-led CSOs) to work together and share experiences on climate finance applications. This would recognise and appreciate of the benefits of coalitions and partnerships.





## FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 4: SYNTHESIS

What changes are required at:

global, regional and national level



for climate change finance for agriculture to be more gender inclusive?

Leverage points framework was used to discern changes at

personal, political and practical levels

Objective 4



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 4: SYNTHESIS

## Personal

Build equitable partnerships and collaboration

Address varying perceptions of women

Value all types of women in agriculture

Question - who are we (regional – national ) serving?

Value diverse knowledge

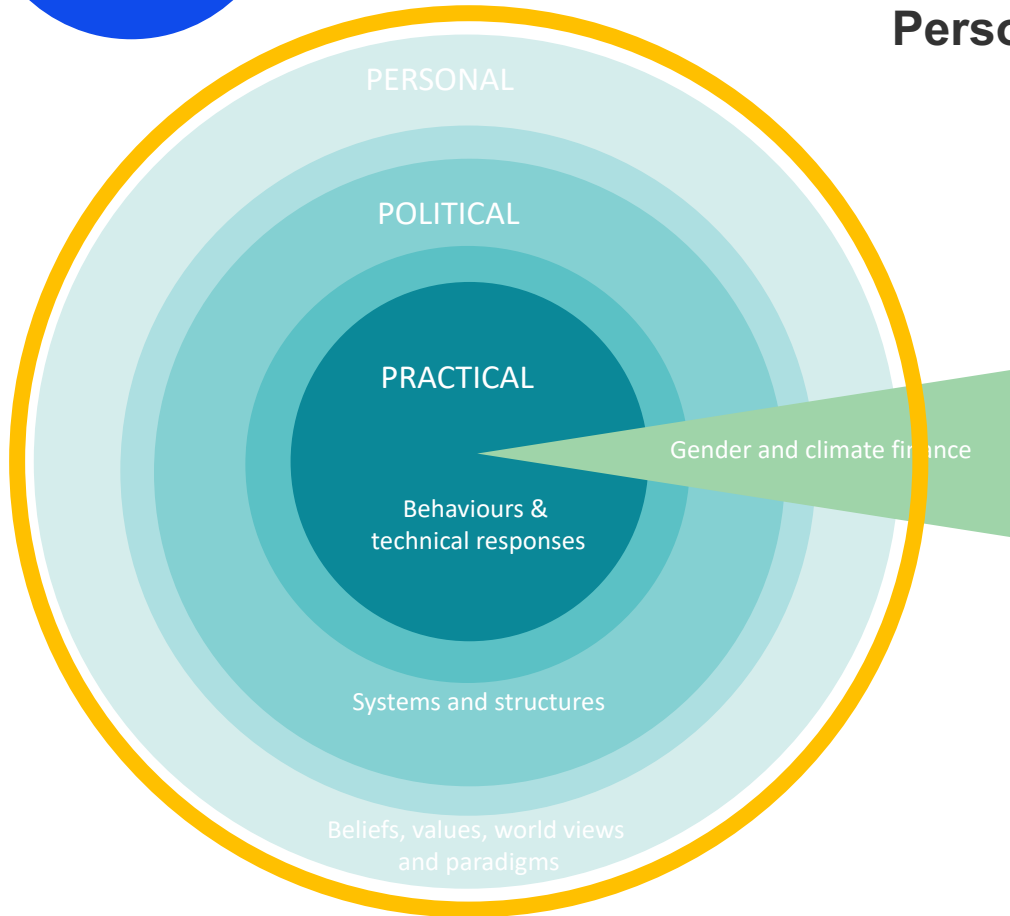
Challenge - who gets to be the expert?

Recognise that language matters

Craft solutions that are not just money focussed

Value women's role in decision-making

Acknowledge that climate change affects people differently

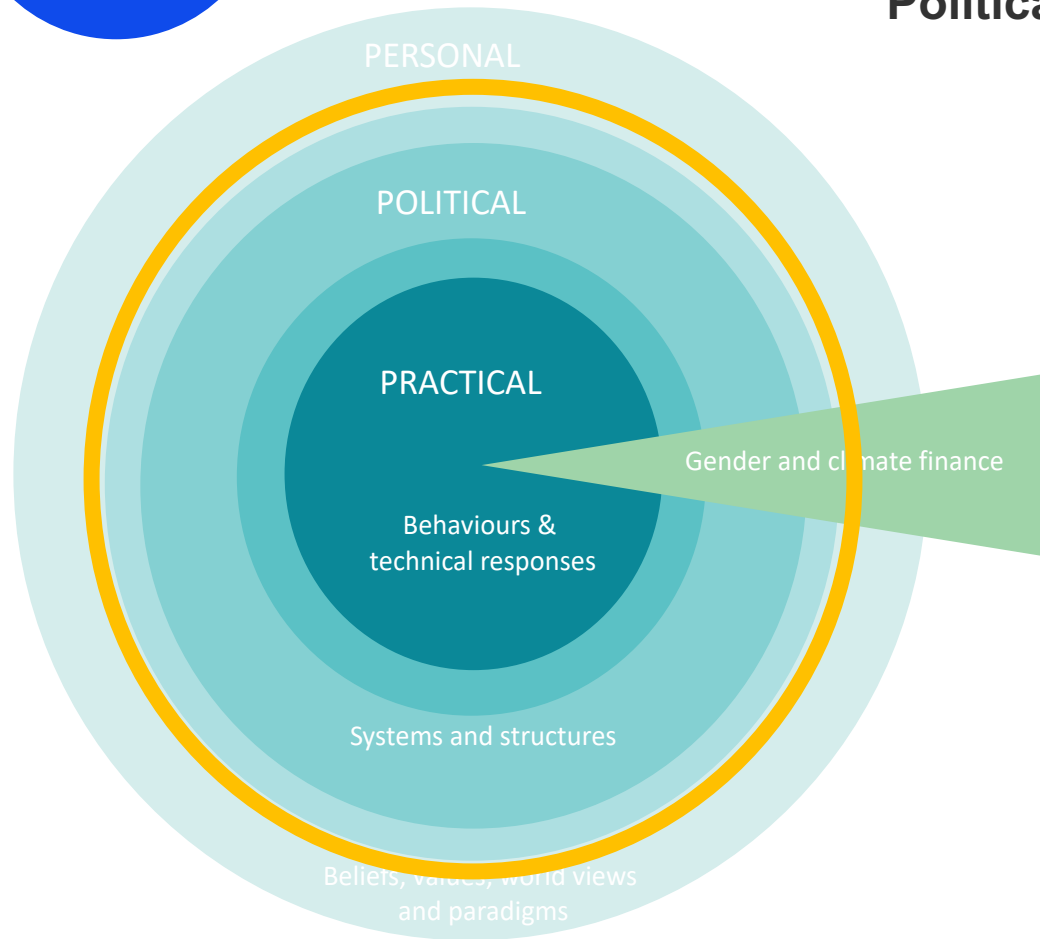


**Personal sphere:** subjective beliefs, values, worldviews and paradigms

Objective 4



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 4: SYNTHESIS



## Political

Political champions of gender equality and CSO access to climate finance

Invest in CSO expertise

Mainstreaming/integration of gender across sectors (climate, agriculture)

Resource government sectors (sub-national) and CSOs through government finance

Utilise the role of regional architecture to prioritise gender and climate finance

Connect CSOs, government and regional organisations

Focus on data, accountability and transparency of climate finance

Challenge the systems that silo

Prioritise donor reform

**Political sphere: systems and structures**





## FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 4: SYNTHESIS

### Practical

Increase transparency and accountability of climate finance at regional and national levels

Transform the proposal process for climate finance

Simplify the process – language of climate finance

CSO-led - CSO strengthening

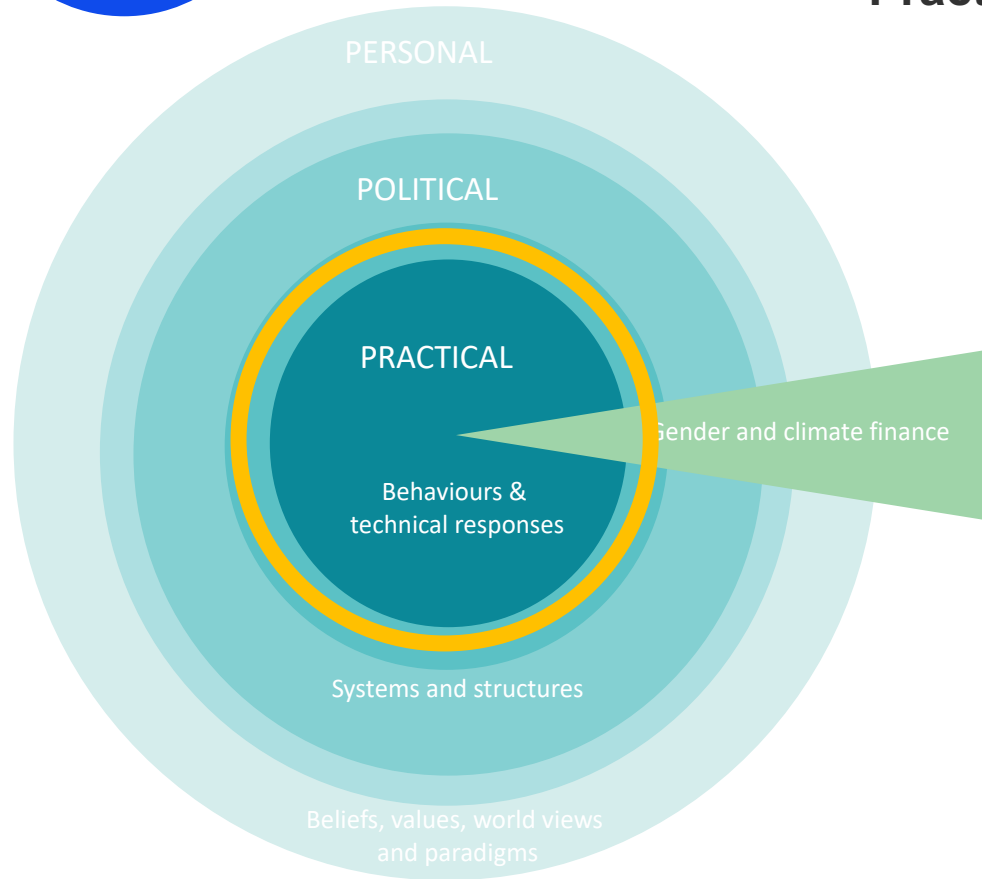
Document pipeline of potential 'climate projects'

Prioritise access to finance for women, CSOs, communities

Strengthen CSO collaboration for increased access to climate finance

Value voices and leadership of FBOs

Build more evidence to support change



**Practical sphere:** specific actions, interventions, strategies

## Objective 4



# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 4: SYNTHESIS

Synthesis across the three 'P's – Personal, Political and Practical – is presented on the following page in Figure 1.

This figure **summarises the leverage points** to strengthen inclusive climate finance, drawing on the categories of personal, political and practical leverage points introduced in Objective 4.

On the **left-hand side of the figure in green**, values and perceptions are described which underpin and inform inclusive access to finance. Recognition of women's role and value in agriculture and equality in gender relations are also described as well as value of traditional and local knowledges and language that centres local realities. Views on what are 'the solutions' are as well as recognition that climate change affects people differently are described as key to strengthen inclusive climate finance.

In the **middle of the figure in blue**, aspects associated with the role of CSOs and the 'climate finance processes' are described. Strengthening CSOs as agents of change and linking CSOs together and also to national and regional organisations is noted. A key dimension of CSO strengthening is recognition of the strengths already present and building on these, strengthening movement building across the Pacific. The need to simplify and transform the proposal process to increase accessibility for CSOs is also described.

At the **top of the figure in grey** reform required within the donor community as well as regional organisations and national government is described. Championing of gender equality as well as mainstreaming of gender considerations across all sectors is also described. Dissolving silos is also necessary to strengthen inclusion and participation in climate change finance.

On the **far right of the figure**, transformative change outcomes are described, with a focus on equitable power relations and also strong collaboration and partnerships for access and use of climate finance. Increased transparency and accountability of climate finance at global and regional levels is also described as key for CSOs to access.

# FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 4: SYNTHESIS



Objective 4

## Changed value and perceptions

Questioning: who are we serving?

Questioning: who gets to be the expert?

Value voices of FBOs

Recognise that language matters

Value diverse local knowledge systems

Recognise that climate change affects people differently

Recognition that solutions are not just money focused

Value role of women in agriculture – changing perceptions

Recognise value of women in agriculture access to finance

Value women's role in decision making

Value gender equality, women's empowerment and diversity of women

Pacific specific 'indicators' of women in agriculture climate finance

## Reformed international, regional and national structures to ensure inclusive climate finance

Donor reform

Shifting silos in policy and practice related to [resilient] development – climate change – humanitarian response

Regional architecture prioritizing gender equality and climate finance

Political championing of gender equality and women's access to climate finance

Gender mainstreaming - integration

Synergies of coordinated regional organisations

## Strengthen role of Pacific CSOs as agents of change from global - local

Resourcing local government and government sectors and CSOs to implement climate finance activities

Foster CSO collaboration

Nurturing skills and knowledge and expertise of CSOs

Connect CSOs, government and regional organisations – strengthening the role of CSOs and local government

## Evidence of climate finance projects

More evidence needed to support change

Document potential pipeline for CSO led climate finance projects

Exemplars of different modalities of climate finance systems and processes for CSO access

## Inclusive processes of climate finance

Simplify the climate finance proposal process

Transform the climate finance proposal process

Increased CSO access to climate finance for agriculture

Equitable power relations

Equitable partnerships and collaboration

Transparency and accountability of climate finance at global-regional-national levels of CSO access

Figure 1. Synthesis of findings

# CHAPTER 4

## Next steps



# SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Feminsiation of labour in agriculture – as men move overseas for work, women are stepping into more roles in agriculture

Research supporting the global climate finance reforms needed to enable grassroots access to climate finance

Profiling and documenting organisations like SWAG – what were the practical steps they took to move from \$5000 grants to \$400,000 grants. How they have shifted along the continuum?

Roles of different actors, e.g. regional level organisations and CROP agencies working in climate change, agriculture and gender; the role of local government, the role of private sector?

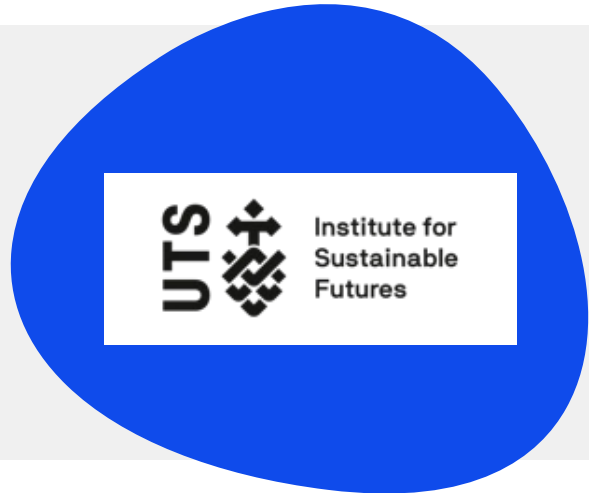
Pacific specific indicators – what do we mean by gender for Pacific communities? What is the indicator we want to achieve that is appropriate for CSOs?

Supporting CSO institutional strengthening – action research – and testing what CSOs want to see if it helps them. Supporting implementation.

Connection between equitable jobs and opportunities and a just transition to support workers rights in addressing climate action. Lots of CSOs – poverty reduction and jobs and socially framed mandates – don't have the ability to link in with technical agricultural expertise. Is there demand from CSOs in the region for agricultural technical support?



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**Australian  
National  
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**TALANO****A  
CONSULTING**

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