TECHNICAL NOTE

Technical Note on SOGIESC and Climate Change

Options for national assessments under the Belém Gender Action Plan

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Purpose

This note presents options for Parties, National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points, civil society, researchers and other stakeholders preparing submissions under Deliverable A.3.9 of the Belém Gender Action Plan (Decision 7/CP.30). A.3.9 invites submissions by March 2027 on the findings of national assessments of relevant issues, such as health, violence against women and girls, and care work, in the context of gender and climate change.

The note focuses on people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), also referred to as sexual and gender minorities (SGM). It sets out what the evidence says, where to look for more, and points Parties may wish to consider. It does not propose a fixed method. National contexts differ widely, and in some countries collecting this information carries real risk.

SOGIESC and climate change

Climate hazards meet people where they already are. For SGM people, that often means living with discrimination in housing, work, health care and family life. A recent global review of climate governance finds that their heightened risk is not inherent to their identities. It is created and sustained by legal, social and political systems that marginalize them (Madrigal-Borloz, 2026).

The pathways are well documented. Discrimination shapes where people can live. In Uganda, laws criminalizing same-sex relations and sex work push key populations into flood-prone areas (HRAPF, 2025). In the United States, same-sex couples are more likely to live in counties with higher climate risk (Mahowald and Shaw, 2024). Relief systems built around the traditional household, or around lists drawn up by local leaders, leave out people estranged from their families (HRAPF, 2025; Madrigal-Borloz, 2026). And climate policy that reads gender as a synonym for women and girls leaves SGM people out of the frame entirely (IIED, 2023).

Much of what we know comes from community-led research. Organizations and researchers in Fiji, Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, India and the Caribbean have documented these realities, much of it through community-led research. This work is the main evidence base available to Parties today.

Key messages

1. Climate change amplifies the discrimination SGM people already face. The harm comes from exclusion and criminalization, not from identity.
2. SGM people are largely absent from national climate policy and data. As of early 2026, 16 of 195 Parties to the Paris Agreement mentioned LGBT persons in their NDCs (Madrigal-Borloz, 2026), and 23 of 198 UNFCCC member states mentioned SGM in their National Adaptation Plans or related documents (Goodwin and Goldsmith, 2025). What is not counted is rarely planned or paid for.
3. SGM communities are also actors in climate response. They run mutual aid networks, savings groups, health outreach, research and advocacy, usually outside official systems.
4. Including SGM in A.3.9 assessments is possible with tools Parties already have: civil society evidence, safe consultations with SGM-led organizations, and voluntary, confidential data collection where conditions allow.

The Belém GAP and policy context

Activity A.3 of the Belém GAP aims to strengthen the evidence base on the differentiated impacts and opportunities of climate change and climate action. Deliverable A.3.9 asks for findings from national assessments, with health, violence against women and girls, and care work named as examples. The wording leaves the door open for other issues relevant to each national context, including the differentiated impacts of climate change on sexual and gender minorities. The submissions will inform a dialogue at COP32 (A.3.10) and later workshops (A.3.11).

The preamble of the Paris Agreement asks Parties, when taking action on climate change, to respect, promote and consider their human rights obligations, including toward people in vulnerable situations, together with gender equality. Equality and non-discrimination apply to everyone, whatever their SOGIESC.

Some Parties already provide examples. Mexico's NDC 3.0 draws on the lived realities of LGBT persons as part of its evidence base, identifies them as a priority population and sets lines of action that include data disaggregated by sexual orientation and gender identity. Argentina's NAP included consultations with LGBT civil society. Bangladesh's NAP 2023 to 2050 recognizes hijra and non-binary persons and commits to their participation, despite a restrictive legal environment (all as reported in Madrigal-Borloz, 2026).

What the evidence shows

The examples below follow the GAP entry points and the themes most often raised by SGM-led research. They are illustrations, not a complete review.

Health

Researchers expect SGM populations to face more exposure to climate-related disasters, greater susceptibility to their effects and fewer resources to recover (Mann, McKay and Gonzales, 2024). A 2024 survey of 882 queer residents of Ohio found that transgender respondents had 3.8 times the odds of a negative health experience

from extreme heat compared with cisgender men (Wong et al., 2026). A community-led pilot study with 63 transmasculine people in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh found that most reported heat-related physical symptoms, that daily chest binder use made heat harder to bear, and that over 95% reported some emotional impact during heatwaves (Living Through Heat, 2025). Displacement can also cut people off from HIV treatment and other care they rely on (HRAPF, 2025).

Violence and safety

Studies from the Pacific, Asia and the Caribbean describe harassment and violence against SGM people in evacuation centers, at relief distribution points and in the community after disasters, as well as being blamed for disasters by religious or community leaders (Dwyer and Woolf, 2018; IIED, 2023). In times of conflict and disaster, existing stigma is amplified and can be acted on with impunity, a risk that criminalization makes worse (Human Dignity Trust, 2019). Lesbian, bisexual and trans women fall within the scope of violence against women and girls and should be visible in that analysis.

Care, family and support

Many SGM people cannot count on family support during a crisis. In Fiji, people described turning to informal networks and "chosen family" after Tropical Cyclone Winston. For some, this was the only help they received (Dwyer and Woolf, 2018). This care is real work, usually unpaid and invisible in national accounts. Aid systems that assume a traditional household can miss both the need and the care provided.

Shelter, housing and displacement

In the United States, LGBTQ+ people were displaced by disasters at nearly twice the rate of cisgender heterosexual people (2.4% compared with 1.4%) in 2022 to 2023, and reported worse conditions while displaced (Geiger, Méndez and Goldsmith, 2023). In Uganda, SGM people and sex workers reported being refused access to shelters because of hostility from other residents (HRAPF, 2025). In the Caribbean, evacuation and environmental migration frameworks largely ignore LGBTQ+ people (Knight et al., 2024).

Livelihoods and access to relief

Many SGM people rely on informal, climate-sensitive work (HRAPF, 2025), and lose income when heatwaves make work impossible (Living Through Heat, 2025). In Nkhata Bay, Malawi, 67% of LGBTQ respondents reported discrimination during disaster relief and 45% reported being denied assistance outright (Youth for Change and Development, 2023).

Participation and recognition

Exclusion from consultations and from official data means SGM priorities rarely reach climate plans or budgets. Recognition can also be fragile: where it exists, it can be reversed after a change of government (Madrigal-Borloz, 2026).

Contributions to climate action

SGM people also respond to climate change, often through networks that official systems do not see. In Fiji, sexual and gender minority support groups pool money to fund members' livelihoods, and after Cyclone Winston

friends shared food and clothing with people who received no other help (Dwyer and Woolf, 2018). In Uganda, key population organizations run savings groups and cooperatives that work as informal social protection and help members move away from flood-prone housing (HRAPF, 2025). In Kenya, lesbian, bisexual and queer organizers stress that their communities hold capacities that reduce climate impacts for themselves and their wider communities (Innovators 4 Climate Action, 2024). In the United States, queer climate activists bridge LGBTQ+ and climate justice movements through intersectional analysis, survival and resilience, and play (Feng, 2024). The community-led studies cited in this note are themselves a contribution: they produce evidence that official systems do not.

Environmental consciousness runs deep in many SGM communities, and some activists describe climate justice as a logical extension of their work for sexual and gender rights (as reported in Madrigal-Borloz, 2026). Professional networks that connect and support SGM people working in sustainability also play a part. They help people enter and stay in climate and environmental careers, and bring more inclusive perspectives into mitigation and climate action more broadly. Some Parties have begun to recognize this. Canada's NDC names 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals among the underrepresented groups that green job initiatives in the energy transition should reach (Madrigal-Borloz, 2026).

Assessments that capture these contributions help Parties see where support would strengthen work already under way.

Evidence to consider under A.3.9

Official data on SOGIESC and climate is scarce in most countries. A useful first step is to map what exists, including:

- national surveys or censuses that include questions on sexual orientation or gender identity, where these exist and can be used safely;
- disaster loss and damage assessments, humanitarian needs assessments and post-disaster reviews;
- health information, especially on continuity of HIV, sexual and reproductive health, mental health and gender-affirming care during climate events;
- records of consultations held for NDCs, NAPs, gender and climate change action plans and disaster risk reduction plans;
- research by SGM-led organizations, universities and human rights institutions, including qualitative studies and testimonies.

Where data does not exist, saying so is itself a finding. Qualitative evidence gathered with SGM-led organizations, through interviews, focus groups or written inputs, can fill much of the gap. Collecting information on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics must always be voluntary and confidential and follow do-no-harm principles, especially where same-sex relations or gender diversity are criminalized.

Points Parties may wish to consider

- Naming SGM people explicitly in the assessment where national context allows, and using inclusive language that leaves room for them where it does not.

- Inviting SGM-led organizations to contribute evidence and to take part in consultations, with safety measures agreed with them in advance.
- Reporting contributions as well as challenges.
- Recording data gaps and capacity needs, so that future assessments can do better.
- Linking findings to NDCs, NAPs, disaster risk reduction, health adaptation, social protection and climate finance.

Conclusion

A.3.9 is an early chance to make sure the Belém GAP rests on evidence about everyone affected by climate change. For SGM people, much of that evidence already exists in community research and civil society reports. Bringing it into national assessments, safely and with the organizations that produced it, would give Parties a fuller picture of both the risks and the resources in their countries.

Key resources

- Madrigal-Borloz, V. (2026). *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in the Global Climate Change Architecture.* Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.
- Goodwin, S. and Goldsmith, L. (2025). *Mapping Sexual and Gender Minority Inclusion in National Adaptation Plans Globally.* Research Square preprint.
- Dwyer, E. and Woolf, L. (2018). *Down By The River: Addressing the Rights, Needs and Strengths of Fijian Sexual and Gender Minorities in Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Response.* Oxfam Australia and Edge Effect.
- Youth for Change and Development (2023). *The Impact of Discrimination on Access to Disaster Relief Items Among LGBTQ and Key Populations Aged 18-35 in Malawi.*
- Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) (2025). *Formal vs Practical Equality: The Effect of the Legal and Policy Framework on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience for Key Populations in Uganda.*
- Innovators 4 Climate Action (2024). *The Impacts of Climate Change on Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Individuals in Kenya.*
- Knight, Y., Rambarran, N., Bailey, R. and Francis, M. (2024). *The Caribbean Environmental Migration Legislative Landscape with Regards to LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Evacuation Processes: Gaps and Recommendations.* IOM policy brief.
- Singh Rana, A. et al. (2026). Invisible in the Storm: Climate Change and the Lived Realities of Transmasculine People in India. *Health Promotion Practice.*
- *Living Through Heat: Heatwaves, Health, and Access Among Transmasculine People, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh* (2025). Community-led pilot study, Transmen Collective.
- Mann, S., McKay, T. and Gonzales, G. (2024). Climate change-related disasters and the health of LGBTQ+ populations. *Journal of Climate Change and Health* 18: 100304.
- Wong, S. et al. (2026). Flooding and extreme heat experiences among Ohio's queer communities. *Population and Environment* 48: 12.

- Geiger, J., Méndez, M. and Goldsmith, L. (2023). *Amplified Harm: LGBTQ+ Disaster Displacement.*
- Mahowald, L. and Shaw, A. (2024). *Climate Change Risk for LGBT People in the United States.* Williams Institute.
- IIED (2023). *Beyond Inclusion: A Queer Response to Climate Justice.* IIED Backgrounder.
- Human Dignity Trust (2019). *Criminalising Homosexuality and LGBT Rights in Times of Conflict, Violence and Natural Disasters.*
- Feng, J. L. (2024). Framing Queer Climate Justice. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, October 2024.
- Goldsmith, L., de León, D. and Reyes Galindo, E. (2024). *Environmental Justice for 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities: Dimensions on Queering Environmental Policy in North America.* Commission for Environmental Cooperation.
- APCOM, APTN, ASC, Edge Effect, IPPF and UN Women (2018). *Pride in the Humanitarian System: Consultation Report.* Bangkok.