

Integrating sexual and reproductive health and rights with climate adaptation and resilience

An overview of the European policy and funding landscape

Countdown 2030 Europe is the 'go-to' cross-country sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) expert Consortium in Europe seeking to increase European SRHR funding in international cooperation and strengthen political support for sexual and reproductive freedom worldwide. The Consortium is made up of 15 leading European non-governmental organisations and is coordinated by IPPF European Network.

The climate crisis is underpinned by grave injustice. While the threat is global, climate change goes hand in hand with other forms of inequity: the climate crisis and its impacts both reflect and exacerbate existing, deep-running inequalities between countries and among communities¹. In particular, the **climate crisis and gender (in)equality are intrinsically linked**, since women are disproportionately affected by it, including due to **limited access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) care** and **increased exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)**.

SRHR are a pre-condition to achieve gender equality and are thus crucial to adapt and build resilience to the climate crisis gendered impacts. When SRHR are fully realised, people are able to make informed decisions about their lives and the life of their ecosystem, to better manage risks, participate in the public sphere politics and engage in collective action. Unfortunately, the link between access to SRHR and climate action has often led the way towards instrumentalising the provision of contraception, and of women and girls' bodies, as a means to control population growth as a mitigation measure². This approach is unethical and violates human rights. It also distracts from the responsibility of high-income countries to address the structural drivers of the climate crisis, placing the burden on those mostly impacted by it³.

Climate solutions must be grounded in reproductive and climate justice.

Instead, the connection between SRHR and climate action must be grounded in a rights-based framework that

empowers people to make their own informed choices, being able to contribute to the collective good, rather than with the aim of curbing population growth.

As access to SRHR is put at risk due to climate change, and evidence is clear that this crisis is expected to increasingly worsen in the future, European donors' financing must adapt to this new reality to ensure that resources are efficiently used and maximised in order to achieve their goals.

The overall objective of this research is to assess if and how 14 European donors⁴ are bridging their efforts between the protection and promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and the fight against climate change. Considering that both priorities are urgent and inextricably linked, this research sheds light upon the degree to which donors politically acknowledge this connection and/or integrate it within their Official Development Assistance (ODA) programming.



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1. IPPF, *The climate crisis and sexual and reproductive health and rights*, (2021).
2. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the UN *Fifth Assessment Report assessing the impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability brought in by climate change* (2014), p.714.
3. See footnote 1.
4. Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the EU institutions.

Key findings

Do European donors acknowledge the links between SRHR and climate change at policy level?

All 13 governments and the EU institutions identify both access to SRHR and the fight against climate change as priorities in their framework for international cooperation. However, the interlinkage between these two areas is not often explicitly mentioned, while they are often listed as side-by-side priorities in donors' policies.

From the 78 policies from the last ten years analysed for this paper, only 11, by 6 European donors, specifically link climate change and SRHR, be it because the former is acknowledged as threatening access to the latter, or because there are specific intentions to address both areas to mitigate the exacerbated effects of deriving inequalities.

	SRHR	CLIMATE CHANGE	SRHR & CLIMATE CHANGE ⁴
BELGIUM	✓	✓	
DENMARK	✓	✓	●
FINLAND	✓	✓	
FRANCE	✓	✓	◐
GERMANY	✓	✓	◐
IRELAND	✓	✓	
ITALY	✓	✓	
THE NETHERLANDS	✓	✓	●
NORWAY	✓	✓	●
SPAIN	✓	✓	
SWEDEN	✓	✓	
SWITZERLAND	✓	✓	
THE UK	✓	✓	●
EU INSTITUTIONS	✓	✓	

There are **two commonalities between those policies that interlink SRHR and climate change:**

- i) none of these are the donors' flagship policy for international cooperation, but rather other gender-related or sectorial strategies / frameworks that guide action in a specific area;
- ii) all identified policies, except two, are centred on supporting access to SRHR, gender equality and women's rights, which then include considerations on climate change. The exceptions are a UK government's strategy centred on fighting climate change through education, and the Dutch Global Climate Strategy, as both specifically mention SRHR.

Policies that link SRHR and climate change largely do so by focusing on the impact climate change has on SRHR outcomes. When donors adopt specific approaches, these are mostly linked to SRHR as a means to reinforce climate adaptation and resiliency.

Are European donors financially investing in the links between SRHR and climate change?

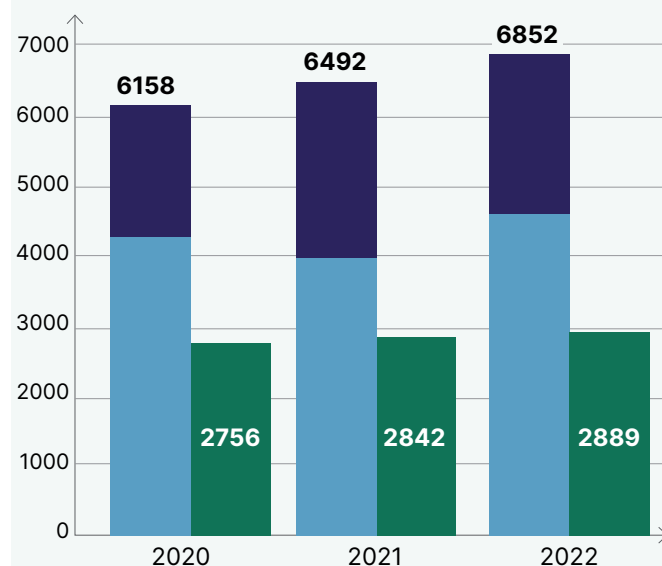
Between 2020 and 2022, the 14 European donors⁵ spent a total of **19.5 billion Euros** on **climate action**, considering projects that have both climate mitigation and adaptation as a principal objective. This overview also shows that European donors' spending on **SRHR** was equivalent to **8.5 billion Euros** across those three years (see graph 1)⁶.

Graph 1

EUROPEAN DONORS' OVERALL INVESTMENT ON SRHR AND CLIMATE ACTION (MILLION EUROS)

CLIMATE ACTION SRHR

- Climate Mitigation
- Climate Adaptation



But how much of these amounts actually interlink both areas? The answer is: very little.

On the one hand, there are **very few projects that specifically aim at tackling both SRHR and climate action** – a total of **75 million Euros** between 2020-2022. On the other hand, when this analysis takes into account **programmes working on both SRHR and climate adaptation and/or resilience among other areas**, the volume of funds **increases by more than ten-fold**. Therefore, there is a very limited amount

4. Half full or full circles are used in this column to illustrate the degree to which European donors acknowledge the interconnection between SRHR and climate in their policies: either through recognising a causality between both areas (half full circle), and through identifying concrete action to address them in an integrated way (full circle).
5. To be noted that Italy is not accounted for in 2020, only in 2021 and 2022, to ensure comparability with the findings on SRHR spending from the Tracking What Counts reports.
6. For more information about the methodology used, please refer to the [main report](#).

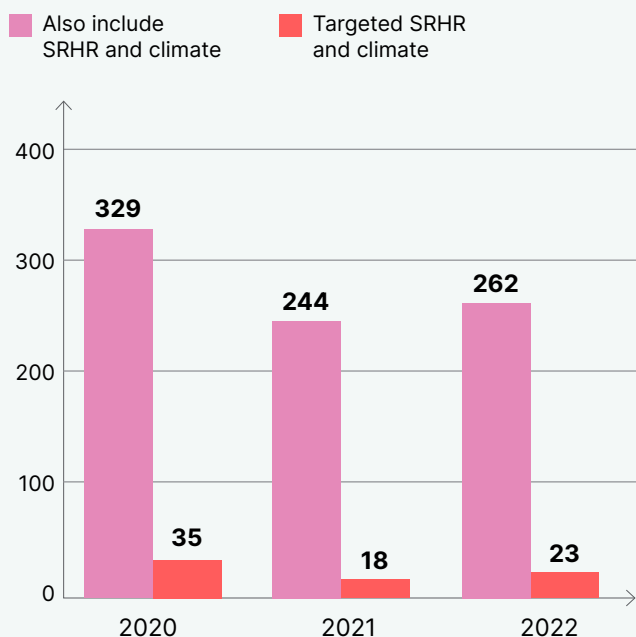
of programmes prioritising specifically the interlinkages between SRHR and climate action, but there is quite a significant number of them addressing this interconnection among many other issues (see graph 2)⁷.

European donors rely on different channels to implement these projects. The analysis of the past three years of ODA disbursements shows that the multilateral system,

with predominance of UN agencies, is the funding stream that mostly channels European investments that support simultaneously SRHR and climate adaptation and resilience – about double of the investments compared to other funding streams (see graph 3). But while the multilateral system receives the chunk of the funds, European donors fund three quarters of their projects through the category ‘organisations & initiatives’⁸.

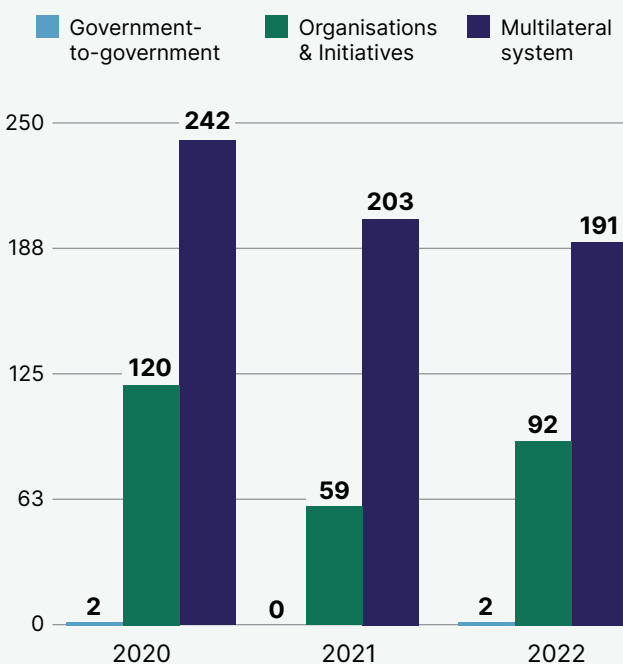
Graph 2

EUROPEAN DONORS’ SPENDING ON PROJECTS THAT ADDRESS BOTH SRHR AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE, PER YEAR (MILLION EUROS)



Graph 3

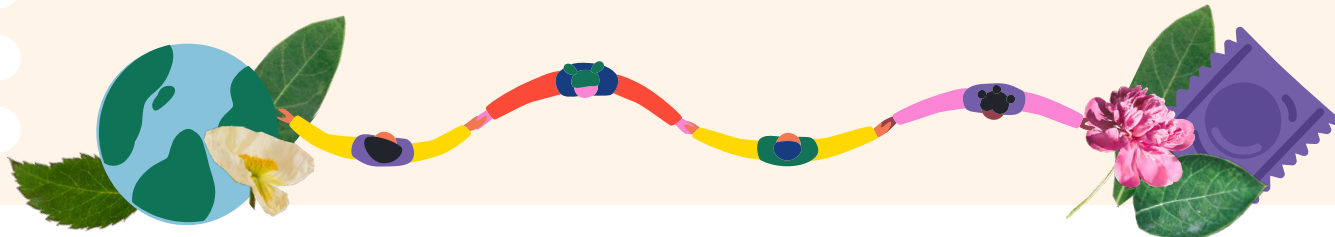
FUNDING STREAMS FOR LINKING SRHR & CLIMATE (MILLION EUROS, 2020-2022)



Case studies:

A snapshot of concrete examples of how European governments support the links between SRHR and climate adaptation and resilience

In order to understand how these interventions may look like in practice, to ensure potential inspiration for further funding and scaling up, C2030E has shortlisted **six projects funded by six European donors** (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK) **interlinking SRHR and climate action**. Projects were selected given their representation of different European donors’ support and geography, as well as following the key criteria of relevance, innovation and replicability.⁹



7. Examples of programmes that fall under the latter category include: support to humanitarian response plans of countries where these areas are specifically prioritised, among others; or support to strategic plans of organisations that include both areas as priorities.
 8. This includes grassroots, national or international NGOs, network, universities or the private sector, as per the methodology of the [Tracking What Counts report](#).
 9. For details check the full report [here](#)

Recommendations

This research shows that there is significant room for improvement for European donors to increase their efforts towards politically acknowledging the links between SRHR and climate action, and also investing in such interconnections.

There is significant opportunity to do so, by building upon existing investments and commitments, while advancing greater attention towards intersectional approaches. Based on the above analysis and findings, Countdown 2030 Europe calls on European donors to:

1

Further align policies

European donors should strive to acknowledge more the links between SRHR and climate adaptation and resilience in their policy frameworks.

2

Allocate more funding to the interlinks between SRHR and climate adaptation and resilience

Increasing funding for such integrated multi-sectoral approach is crucial.

3

Increase transparency of reporting on multi-sector projects

The OECD CRS database includes different elements that help donors report against relevant objectives, but this system is not always used in a granular way by donors, making information difficult to find.

4

Collaborate to collect further evidence

While growing evidence shows that the climate crisis is not gender-neutral and that SRHR is crucial for adaptation and resilience, there are still some gaps in research that help understand the causes and effects between these areas.

5

Build capacity of staff of Ministries of Foreign Affairs and support partner countries to work more on the links between SRHR and climate adaptation and resilience



[Read the full report](#)

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