

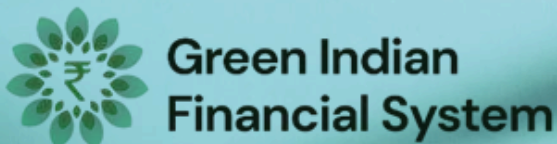
# STRENGTHENING GREEN FINANCE AND MAINSTREAMING GENDER

**GIFS-GROW ANNUAL EVENT**

**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

**JANUARY 2024**

**MUMBAI**



**An Initiative by**



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*SHRI PRAKASH KUMAR, DMD, SIDBI*

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# GIFS-GROW ANNUAL EVENT

The GIFS Initiative is the first Indo-European platform which supports the greening of the Indian financial system, through knowledge exchanges, trainings, and networking, targeting like-minded finance practitioners from banks, investment funds and financial institutions. The GIFS Initiative expects to widen and shape the discourse around greening the financial ecosystem and support its operationalization through the Indian institutions. It has been founded by Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), Agence Française de Développement (AFD), and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) in December 2021. In 2022 and 2023, more than 500 participants participated in the different events organized by the GIFS Initiative. GIFS gathered again the financial community to reflect on the recent developments on green finance from the financial market side and invited more stakeholders to discuss how the financial system and the Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs) can find a common ground to ensure a resilient and low-carbon transition in India. The conference also included the GROW summit. GROW is the professional network for women in green and climate finance, which was created as part of the GIFS Initiative.

## **Objectives of the Annual Event:**

- Platform to share updates on the 2022 and 2023 activities (newly created regulations, schemes, tools, and working groups) which have contributed to the greening of the Indian financial system
- GIFS visibility, capitalization and presentation of its next developments, which include (i) setting up the “Greening the Finance-to-Finance Green” (G2FG) Technical Assistance platform for MSMEs and financial institutions, and (ii) network for Greening of Finance by Women (GROW)
- Networking of the financial and MSME communities
- Present key updates, enable collaboration and advancing engagement of women in green and climate finance through GROW



# OPENING REMARKS

## SHRI PRAKASH KUMAR, DMD, SIDBI

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Yesterday honorable PM announced PM SURYODAY YOJANA for solarising 1 crore houses. India is inching towards greener eco system and MSMEs have to play greater role. GIFS took birth amidst SIDBI prioritising green and digitisation as key institutional agenda and this was aligned to national PANCHAMRIT mission.

While SIDBI has been into energy efficiency since 2005-2006 but first into greening required leap in emerging areas. We were looking for someone who can hold our finger and walk with us. As they say when you are thinking like minded walk in. GIFS partnership brought on board a confluence of global leader on climate finance “AFD”, national think tank as “Shakti foundation” and feet on street - one with MSME pulse – “SIDBI”.

SIDBI's Actonomy (aligned to global taxonomy) has passed through experienced eye of stakeholders including receiving guidance of GIFS Partners. We developed a stack of technology. During our journey, we decided that periodical events and exposure visits should lead to an annual theme event where we should bring key stakeholders to discuss what we have done, what we can do more better, what are sectoral aspirations and our responsiveness and what we didn't do the right way. Can we make green journey a delight. How we can mainstream the pilots. What could be done on capacity building needs from lenders lend as also from aspirational entrepreneurs.

SIDBI's aspirational strategy to evolve as green bank on four layered strategy of green tagged loan, green loans, green MSMEs and green clusters started gaining pace. We blended funds for better rates to last mile. We also blended development and financing. We also connected dots of local regional state and national policies programmes and tried to leverage or help in shaping the policies.

Today SIDBI is on IBA working group on ESG. It is our pleasure to co-chair IDFC Climate Working Group . This has come forth due to dilation of our vision from GIFS platform. We also became 44th signatory institution in "UN Women". This came from insights gained from GROW (green financing for women) a sub platform or initiative under the aegis of GIFS. Thanks to our partners that SIDBI is in process of chalking out its Gender Inclusive Green Growth Policy.

We as GIFS partners are walking along with MSMEs aspirations and inspirations. We have targeted to become Carbon Neutral by December 2024. It's Green era which requires deliberation, contemplation, overview, analysis, and innovation. Do walk with us in this Green Enterprise Journey.

.....Excerpts from DMD Speech

# KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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The GIFS-GroW Annual Event highlighted a need for collective action towards sustainability, regulatory measures, and green finance, emphasizing the intricate dynamics of transitioning towards environmentally conscious practices within various sectors.

## **Funding and Gender Disparity**

- **Gender Gap in Funding:** A significant portion of the discussions focused on the funding disparities faced by female entrepreneurs. Studies indicated that female founders receive a disproportionately low amount of start-up funding. The need for a paradigm shift in investment practices was emphasized to recognize the critical role of women in driving innovative, sustainable solutions.
- **Language Barrier:** Bridging the communication gap between innovators and investors was deemed vital. A shared language is necessary for translating groundbreaking innovations into viable business models, enhancing mutual understanding, and aligning environmental impacts with financial sustainability.

## **Education and Visibility for Women Entrepreneurs**

- **Educational Initiatives:** Women entrepreneurs face challenges in educating investors about sustainability. The need for targeted initiatives, workshops, and mentorship programs was stressed to bridge knowledge gaps and foster a supportive environment for women pursuing sustainability-driven initiatives.
- **Role of Platforms:** Platforms like GROW were recognized for their essential role in providing visibility, networking opportunities, and raising awareness about the impactful work of women entrepreneurs in predominantly male-dominated sectors.

## **Policy Perspective on Climate Finance**

- **Banking Sector Developments:** Discussions on the banking sector and regulation highlighted the need for better allocation of financial resources towards sustainable development. Despite substantial financial resources, the funds often fail to reach areas requiring immediate attention, underscoring the need for better-targeted financial interventions.

# KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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## Transition to Sustainable Practices

- **Institutional Support:** Institutional backing was emphasized as crucial in aiding MSMEs through their transition to greener practices. This includes creating frameworks that support entrepreneurs as they navigate new regulatory landscapes, highlighting the importance of specialized credit and concessional policies to mitigate the compliance burden.

## Insights from Global and National Perspectives

- **Global Climate Finance Dynamics:** Discussions on the global climate finance landscape, particularly post-COP28, highlighted the need for strategic allocation of international resources. The commitment to tripling renewable energy was deemed insufficient without robust pipelines in various countries, stressing the need for precision and collaboration in resource allocation.
- **Transition Finance:** The session also explored the mathematics of transition finance, noting the significant cost disparity in mitigating CO2 emissions between OECD countries and developing nations. The lack of recognition of this disparity at COP28 highlighted the necessity for accurate financial models and international cooperation.

## Industry Association Perspectives

- **Collaborative Efforts:** Industry associations were shown to play a pivotal role in steering MSMEs towards sustainable practices. Collaborative efforts between SIDBI, World Bank, Bureau of Energy Efficiency, and GIZ have been instrumental in initiating a green movement, incentivizing financial institutions and integrating them into regulatory frameworks.

## Environmental Initiatives and Symbolic Actions

- **Symbolic Tree Plantation:** As a unique initiative, the event opted to present certificates instead of physical plants, symbolizing a commitment to environmental sustainability. SIDBI's pledge to plant trees on behalf of each speaker and attendee reinforced the summit's overarching theme of environmental consciousness.

# SESSION 1 VOICES ON GROW BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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## MODERATOR:

**Ms. Kruthika Jerome**

*Programme Manager, Climate Finance, Shakti  
Sustainable Energy Foundation*

## PANELISTS:

**Ms. Chaitsi Ahuja**

*Founder, Brown Living*

**Ms. Kalyani Shinde**

*Founder, Godaam Innovations*

**Ms. Sahar Mansoor**

*Co-Founder, Bare Necessities*

**Dr. Vanita Prasad**

*Co-Founder and CTO, REVY Environmental  
Solutions*

# INTRODUCTION

The GIFS-GroW Annual Summit's opening session, themed "Voices on GroW by Women Entrepreneurs" featured visionary female climate entrepreneurs discussing sustainability. The session had Ms. Chaitsi Ahuja of Brown Living, who is operating an innovative plastic- and chemical-free online marketplace; Dr. Vanita Prasad of REVY Environmental Solutions that focuses on waste reduction and resource reuse; Ms. Kalyani Shinde, from Godaam Innovations, aiming to transform the sector of agricultural technologies (agri-tech) and add value to each step of the crop cycle; and Ms. Sahar Mansoor, of Bare Necessities, who is championing a people- and earth-centered approach to create zero-packaging footprint products. In the session, the attendees shared their respective journeys and obstacles faced while running environmentally friendly businesses. They discussed the achievements and challenges that define the landscape of eco-conscious companies in the present world. The session highlighted the unique difficulties faced by these pioneers in obtaining funding, creating brand recognition, and balancing ecological impact with financial sustainability. All of this occurred in the context of a worldwide trend towards sustainable practices. As the conversation unfolded, a common thread emerged on the pervasive funding gap for women-led green and climate enterprises. This disparity underscores the urgency of reshaping investment paradigms to nurture and propel women entrepreneurs striving to make meaningful contributions to environmental solutions.

The session prompted a reassessment of investment strategies and a shared commitment to backing enterprises genuinely devoted to advancing global sustainability.

## Key Insights

### **Funding Disparity in Sustainability**

Studies show that female founders receive a disproportionately low amount of total start-up funding, with only a slight increase observed over the years. However, if start-ups with both male and female co-founders are considered, there is a small uptick in the share of funding received, although it remains below 20%. These findings indicate the need to address the gender gap in funding and provide more support and resources to female entrepreneurs. Overcoming this challenge requires a fundamental shift in investment practices, recognizing the indispensable role women entrepreneurs play in driving innovative and sustainable solutions.

### **Language Barrier between Innovators and Investors**

The need for a shared language between innovators and investors in the environmental sector was emphasized. Bridging this communication gap is vital for translating groundbreaking innovations into viable business models. Enhancing mutual understanding fosters an environment where environmentally impactful solutions align seamlessly with financial sustainability.

### **Technological Solutions for Agri-Tech**

Potential of the agri-tech was showcased with innovative IoT-based solutions addressing significant post-harvest wastage. Traditional storage practices often lead to significant losses ranging from 40-50% in the agricultural sector. One transformative example is gas monitoring technology. Unlike the conventional method, where wastage is identified by smell, this IoT-based electronic device detects it at a much earlier stage, improving early identification from 25% to an impressive 1-2%. This demonstrates the revolutionary power of technology in reshaping the agri-tech storage ecosystem.

### **Educating Investors on Sustainability**

Women entrepreneurs face challenges in educating investors on the unique aspects of sustainability. Overcoming this hurdle is crucial for dispelling misconceptions and garnering support. To enhance this educational process, there's a growing need for targeted initiatives, workshops, and platforms that facilitate direct interactions between women entrepreneurs and investors. Establishing mentorship programs and industry-specific training sessions can bridge the knowledge gap and foster a better understanding of the nuances of sustainable ventures. By actively promoting such educational avenues, the ecosystem can create a more informed and supportive environment for women entrepreneurs pursuing sustainability-driven initiatives.

### **Role of Platforms in Increasing Visibility**

Entrepreneurs expressed gratitude for platforms like GRoW, recognizing them as essential for visibility, networking, and increased awareness. Such platforms play a pivotal role in advocating for increased funding for women-led initiatives, fostering an enabling environment, and collectively raising awareness about the impactful work of women entrepreneurs in a predominantly male-dominated sector.

## **SESSION 2 POLICY PERSPECTIVE ON CLIMATE FINANCE LANDSCAPE INDIA: DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BANKING SECTOR AND REGULATION FOR THE SAME**

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### **SPEAKERS:**

**Mr. Sivasubramanian Ramann**

*Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), SIDBI*

**Mr. Sunil Nair**

*Chief General Manager, Reserve Bank of India  
(RBI)*

**Mr. V. Chandrasekar**

*Senior Advisor, Indian Banks' Association (IBA)*

# INTRODUCTION

The second session at the GIFS-GRoW Annual Summit brought together esteemed speakers to address the pivotal role of policy perspectives in navigating India's evolving climate financing landscape. The overarching theme centered on the banking sector's initiatives on integrating climate and channeling funds for climate investments effectively. The session witnessed stellar speakers who set the tone by acknowledging the commendable initiatives undertaken by women entrepreneurs in the sustainability space. They underscored the prevailing challenge that it is not the lack of funds but the diversion of available finances. Despite India's substantial financial resources, the funds often fail to reach the areas demanding immediate attention for sustainable development.

## Key Insights

### Financial Challenges in Electric Vehicle (EV) Adoption

The challenges hindering the economic viability of EVs in India was stressed on. Despite the monumental aspiration of achieving 30% of new sales of electric vehicles by 2030, only 5 million out of the 90 million targeted electric vehicles have been realized. The financial obstacle lies in the fact that EVs cost 1.5 times that of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles, coupled with high-interest rates reaching 18-20%. This financial landscape poses hindrances to consumers and necessitates a reevaluation of financing models to make the adoption of EVs more economically viable.

### RBI's Green Deposits Framework

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) response to the evolving landscape with the introduction of a green deposits framework in April 2023 was highlighted. The absence of a taxonomy in India prompted the need for a framework to ensure funds raised under green deposits are genuinely directed to green initiatives. The framework defined criteria for raising and deploying funds, emphasizing the need for a financing framework and third-party verification. It showcased how a clear regulatory framework encourages responsible lending practices, mitigating the risk of greenwashing.

### Incentivizing Green Deposits and Capital Incentives

The debate on incentivizing green deposits and exploring differential interest rates for such deposits was a focal point. Complexities emerged concerning capital maintenance requirements for banks and the potential penalization or incentivization based on lending to green or non-green sectors. The ongoing discourse revolves around determining the ideal capital maintenance for climate-related activities. The Basel Committee is actively exploring possibilities to strike a balance between risk and incentivization in the realm of green financing.

The central bank has not mandated or endorsed any differential interest rates to be implemented at this time. The Basel Committee is reportedly in the process of discussing the integration of climate factors into Pillar 1, 2 and 3, but it may be too early to make any changes to the capital requirements or risk weights for green and climate projects.

As more knowledge is gained about the risk levels associated with different green and climate projects, supervisory guidelines will continue to evolve. However, it was emphasized that banks should not avoid financing transition and climate projects, and they must build significant capacity to support these activities.

### **IBA's Advocacy Role in Green Finance**

The Indian Banks' Association (IBA) was recognized for its pivotal role in advocating green finance. As an unregistered association, IBA champions issues on behalf of banks, collaborating with international agencies and conducting seminars to enhance awareness. The focus is on integrating climate considerations into the banking framework, emphasizing the importance of taxonomy, disclosure, and scenario analysis for attracting green investments. IBA's involvement in task forces related to the greening of steel and the National Green Hydrogen Mission showcased its commitment to steering the banking sector towards sustainable practices.

### **Challenges in Greening MSMEs**

The challenges in introducing green technologies to the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector were underscored. The informal and production-oriented nature of MSMEs requires continuous handholding, awareness-building, and simplifying government benefit processes. Efforts to streamline processes under the Ease of Doing Business initiative and introducing clusters to comprehensive schemes from various ministries were discussed. The

session emphasized the importance of providing MSMEs with a holistic package of schemes to effectively transition towards sustainable practices.

### **Facilitating Energy Efficiency in Clusters**

Discussions focused on facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the support available for MSMEs to adopt energy-efficient measures seamlessly. This aligns with the broader agenda of improving the ease of doing business and promoting sustainable practices in the MSME sector. An example of the establishment of the Facilitation Centre for Energy Efficiency was highlighted as a crucial initiative. This center aims to provide a consolidated platform for MSMEs, offering information on technologies, financing options, and government schemes.

## SESSION 3

# SHARING OF GIFS ACHIEVEMENTS

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### SPEAKERS:

**Mr. Nitin Desai**

*Board Member, Shakti Sustainable Energy  
Foundation*

**Mr. Sivasubramanian Ramann**

*Chairman and Managing Director, SIDBI*

**Ms. Audrey Brulé**

*Deputy Head, Financial Systems Division, AFD*

# INTRODUCTION

The third session of the GIFS-GRoW Annual Summit provided a nuanced exploration of the evolving landscape where climate action, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and gender inclusivity converge. The distinguished speakers collectively highlighted the pathways for sustainable finance, the pivotal role of MSMEs in climate resilience, and strategies to bridge gender gaps in the climate and financial sectors. This session encapsulated a robust dialogue on aligning financial mechanisms with environmental goals, propelling MSMEs beyond networking into tangible action, and the imperative of integrating gender-focused initiatives into the broader climate finance narrative.

The session, over and above all tried to underscore the initiatives undertaken by the Green Indian Financial System. The proposition of the G2FG (Greening the Finance-to-Finance Green Technical Assistance) platform surfaced as a catalyzing force to foster collaboration between MSMEs and financial institutions, aiming to provide technical assistance and support. This initiative seeks to leverage collective efforts in greening financial practices and expanding avenues for sustainable finance, thereby creating an ecosystem conducive to innovation and resilience. To further its goal, GIFS is currently undertaking a feasibility study for setting up a technical assistance center that would help with carrying out systematic interventions to bridge green financing needs of MSMEs.

Secondly, the Greening of Finance by Women (GRoW) Network, a part of the GIFS initiative, aims to promote the participation of women in the green and climate finance. The network plays

an important role in recognizing the expertise of women in the field and helps strengthen and take advantage of the gender aspect of the sector. The main objectives of the network include increasing the visibility of women professionals in green and climate finance, fostering collaboration among different stakeholders in the field, and providing targeted knowledge enhancement opportunities for women professionals in green and climate finance.

## Key Insights

### **MSMEs: Beyond Networking to Action**

There was a demand for MSMEs to move away from networking and instead focus on taking action. This involved combining technology, entrepreneurship, and finance. Drawing parallels with the success of the Silicon Valley, this insight emphasized the need for a holistic ecosystem supporting MSMEs in climate change mitigation, innovation, and sustainability. The narrative brought forth the urgency for actionable steps and collaboration to empower MSMEs to play a central role in sustainable finance.

### **Role of Finance in Climate Resilience**

A compelling case study, spotlighting the impact of finance in transforming traditional coal-based furnaces to gas-based ones in Moradabad, a city in the state of Uttar Pradesh, was underscored. This not only underlined the transformative power of financial intervention in MSMEs but also shed light on the intricate challenges, including regulatory hurdles and the need for tailored solutions such as energy audits. These audits, happening in various

clusters, emerged as strategic tools guiding MSMEs towards environmentally acceptable practices and aligning them with global environmental standards.

### **Gender-Centric Climate Finance Strategies**

A comprehensive approach to integrate gender-centric strategies into climate finance was articulated. This involved not only internal practices but also mainstreaming gender considerations across operations and developing dedicated financial tools. The emphasis on partnerships, peer-to-peer exchanges, and global networks underscored the interconnectedness of gender diversity and financial success in green landscapes.

### **Challenges and Opportunities in Climate Financing**

Speakers acknowledged the intricate challenges faced by MSMEs, especially at the micro-level, and navigated through the ongoing debate on incentivizing green investments. The emphasis on addressing legal issues, building resilience, and adapting to environmental standards highlighted the multi-faceted nature of challenges and opportunities in the climate financing landscape.

## **SESSION 4 INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION PERSPECTIVES: WHAT ARE THEIR GREEN ASPIRATIONS?**

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### **PANELISTS:**

**Mr. Rajiv Chawla**

*Founder and Chairman, Integrated Association of SMEs*

**Mr. Anil Bhardwaj**

*Secretary General, Federation of Indian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (FISME)*

**Ms. Madhu Tyagi**

*Director and National President, Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs (COWE)*

### **MODERATOR:**

**Dr. R. K. Singh**

*Chief General Manager (CGM), Green Climate Finance Vertical, SIDBI*

# INTRODUCTION

The Industry Association Perspective session at the GIFS-GroW Annual Summit convened a distinguished panel to delve into the green aspirations shaping the landscape of MSMEs. The intrinsic role played by industrial associations in steering the MSME ecosystem towards sustainable practices was highlighted with key perspectives shared on fostering green initiatives.

## Key Insights

### On Collaborative Green Revolution

The session emphasized the need for collaborative efforts and cited example of SIDBI, World Bank, Bureau of Energy Efficiency, and GIZ in initiating a green revolution in India. The concerted endeavors sought to incentivize financial institutions and NBFCs, integrating them into regulatory frameworks to ensure the widespread embrace of environmentally conscious practices among entrepreneurs.

### On Navigating Regulatory Measures

The discussion shed light on the array of regulatory measures imposed by the Government of India, including bans on single-use plastic, firecrackers, and specific fuel sources. Acknowledging the compliance burden on MSMEs, the need for supportive measures during this transition was underscored. These measures include institutional backing, specialized credit lines, and concessional policies.

### On Appeal for Transition Support

With India's commitment to a net-zero future and an anticipated surge in compliance and regulatory measures, the session advocated for institutional backing. The necessity of a framework that supports entrepreneurs during the intricate phase of transitioning towards greener business practices was stressed.

### Symbolic Tree Plantation

The session's unique approach of presenting certificates instead of physical plants held a symbolic gesture. Participants learned that SIDBI committed to planting 10 trees on behalf of each speaker and one tree on behalf of each attendee. This initiative underscored the summit's overarching theme of environmental consciousness and sustainability.

# SESSION 5 LESSONS LEARNED FROM G20 PRESIDENCY FOR THE INDIAN FINANCIAL SECTOR & COP28 MESSAGES & TAKEAWAYS IN INDIA CONTEXT

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## PANELISTS:

**Mr. Dhruba Purkayastha**

*India Director, Climate Policy Initiative (CPI)*

**Mr. Vivek Adhia**

*Head of Climate & Sustainability, Boston Consulting  
Group (BCG)*

**Ms. Neha Kumar**

*Head, South Asia Programme, Climate Bonds Initiative*

**Mr. Shubhashis Dey**

*Director, Climate Policy Program, Shakti Sustainable  
Energy Foundation*

**Mr. Mukund Govindarajan**

*ECube Investment*

## MODERATOR:

**Dr. R. K. Singh**

*Chief General Manager (CGM), Green Climate Finance  
Vertical, SIDBI*

# INTRODUCTION

The session on Lessons learned from G20 Presidency for the Indian Financial sector & COP28 messages at the GIFS-GroW Annual Summit brought together seasoned experts to dissect global trends in green finance and chart out strategies for an effective transition. This dynamic discussion aimed at evaluating COP28 outcomes, examined the complexities of global green finance and additionally, outlined critical challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the need for precision, collaboration, and innovative financial mechanisms in the pursuit of sustainable transitions.

## Key Insights

### Global Climate Finance Dynamics

The global climate finance landscape, particularly focusing on COP28 outcomes was discussed. Despite effective communication strategies, the lack of quantitative targets in phasing out fossil fuels was criticized. The commitment to triple renewable energy was deemed insufficient, especially considering the negligible pipelines in several countries, emphasizing the need for strategic allocation of international resources for a global public good.

### Mathematics of Transition Finance

The session delved into the fundamental mathematics of transition finance, where light was shed on the cost disparity of mitigating one unit of CO<sub>2</sub> in OECD countries versus developing nations. The failure of COP28 to recognize this distinction raises questions about the equitable

utilization of international resources. The discussion emphasized the significance of accurate mathematical models and international collaboration in achieving sustainable transitions.

### Challenges in Climate Communication

Drawing parallels between COP28 and educational testing processes, the communication challenges in conveying transitional fuel nuances were discussed. The panel recognized the need for precise communication, avoiding the oversimplification of complex concepts. This insight resonates beyond climate conferences, accentuating the importance of effective communication in climate action initiatives and garnering global support.

### ESG Governance in MSMEs

The importance of incorporating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in MSMEs was also addressed. Best practices observed in larger companies, such as governance-focused committees, circularity, internal carbon pricing, and research & development (R&D), were highlighted. The challenge of MSMEs lies in accessing technology and financing, where institutions such as SIDBI could play a pivotal role by showcasing exemplary MSMEs and providing additional support.

### Facilitating a Just Transition

The necessity of a rapid, orderly, and just transition, acknowledging that decarbonization is critical was underlined. While large corporations have taken the lead, it was noted that the financial

sector's delayed entry needs acceleration. The session underscored the importance of a synergistic approach at global summits, advocating for increased accessibility and affordability of capital between developing countries.

### **Role of Private Capital and Blended Finance**

The evolving role of private capital in addressing climate aspects was acknowledged, indicating the need for innovative instruments. Blended finance emerged as a potential solution, but the emphasis shifted to converting projects into bankable propositions. Technical assistance was identified as crucial to enhancing bankability, ensuring the successful conversion of projects and attracting philanthropic funds for impactful market-making initiatives.

## **SESSION 6 THE NEXUS OF WOMEN AND GREEN FINANCE ACROSS STAKEHOLDERS**

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### **PANELISTS:**

**Ms. Ekta Mehra**

*Senior Sector Specialist, KfW*

**Ms. Smitha Hari**

*President – India, auctusESG*

**Ms. Shruti Srivastava**

*Investment Director at Avaana Capital*

### **MODERATOR:**

**Ms. Neetu Chitkara**

*Managing Director and Partner, BCG*

# INTRODUCTION

The sixth session of the GIFS-GroW Annual Summit brought together a distinguished all-women panel to explore the interconnection of women and green finance across diverse stakeholders. The session engaged in a comprehensive discussion, aiming to uncover challenges and opportunities in empowering women entrepreneurs within the climate and sustainability sphere. There was a particular focus on the role of women in green finance, examining how financial support could be channeled towards initiatives contributing to climate goals.

## Key Insights

### Blending Climate and Gender in Financing

The effective integration of climate and gender perspectives in financing initiatives can yield positive outcomes, especially in sectors like urban mobility and energy. Urban mobility projects, for instance, can be designed with a gendered lens, enhancing workforce participation rates for women. However, challenges persist in sectors like energy, necessitating tailored approaches for blending climate and gender considerations.

### Data Challenges in Gender-Related Metrics

Obtaining gender-related data for reporting and analysis poses a significant challenge despite reporting standards emphasizing gender metrics. The need for sensitizing organizations on reporting gender-related information was highlighted. Building internal capacities and

creating structures supporting gender-friendly policies are essential to navigate the complexities of data collection.

### Investment Philosophy and Gender Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming gender in investment processes involves considerations like sensitization, flexible post-maternity policies, and intentional efforts in organization design. Gender considerations can eliminate biases in investment processes, it has been increasingly observed. This includes creating roles that are women-friendly and supporting women founders through mentorship and networking.

During a panel discussion, a proposal was made for SIDBI to build a gender and climate-focused portfolio at the grassroots level. The panel discussed the financial parameters necessary for such initiatives with a specific focus on gender and climate objectives. Perspectives were shared on regulatory costs associated with supporting women in the workforce could be offset through philanthropic blended capital. They emphasized the potential benefits of initiatives like setting up daycare facilities and proposed framing these costs as R&D investments to showcase long-term advantages. While on the other hand, concerns were raised about global competition for funds and questions why companies would invest in such initiatives abroad when they could use the funds domestically. The debate reflects the intricacies of balancing financial considerations, regulatory support, and global competition in advancing gender and climate goals.

### **Role of Blended Finance in Gender and Climate Initiatives**

Blended finance, involving concessional finance, plays a crucial role in supporting gender and climate initiatives, but aligning financial parameters poses challenges. The panel highlighted that while blended finance offers support, practical challenges need addressing to align expectations of financial and gender experts. Sustainability-linked products and strong dialogues between borrowers and lenders were deemed effective.

### **Performance Impact of Women Borrowers**

Studies suggest that financial products perform better when women are borrowers, emphasizing the importance of reporting mandates and investor focus on gender metrics. The potential advantages of reporting mandates, where investors prioritize gender metrics, acting as a driving force for institutions to utilize gender-related information effectively are significant

### **Future Expectations and Aspirations**

The session concluded with aspirations for a future where women and men share equal vulnerability to climate change, leading to an overall reduction in vulnerability, particularly for economically vulnerable sections. The panel envisioned a future with increased integration of women into diverse fields, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and improved working conditions to sustain their participation. Building capacities across both rural and urban women and fostering platforms like GroW for collaborative efforts were highlighted as essential steps in this vision for the future.

# ANNEXURE – AGENDA

Timing	Topic	Details
10:00am - 10:30am	Registration, coffee, networking	
10:30am – 10:40 am	Opening Remarks	Introduction on GIFS – Mr. Prakash Kumar, DMD, SIDBI
10:40am -11:00am	Session I: Voices from GRow Entrepreneurs	<p>Introduction on GRow by Ms. Kruthika Jerome, Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (5 mins)</p> <p>Credit Access for Green Investment by Women Entrepreneurs and role of GRow (5 mins each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Kalyani Shinde, Godaam Innovations (climate smart post-harvest solutions)</li> <li>• Ms. Chaitsi Ahuja, Founder of Brown Living</li> <li>• Ms. Sahar Mansoor, Bare Necessities (sustainable home and personal care products)</li> <li>• Ms. Vanita Prasad, REVY Environmental Solutions (waste management services)</li> </ul>
11:00am - 11:45am	Session II: Policy Perspective on Climate Financing Landscape India: developments in the banking sector and regulation	<p>-Mr. Sivasubramanian Ramann, CMD, SIDBI</p> <p>-Mr. V Chandrasekar, Senior Advisor, IBA</p> <p>-Mr. Sunil Nair, CGM, RBI</p> <p>-Mr. P Shyam Sunder, Joint Director, BEE, MoP</p>
11 :45am -12 :30pm	<p>Session IV: Sharing of GIFS achievements by Founding Partners?</p> <p>-GIFS Report Card</p> <p>-Introduction to the G2FG Platform (Shakti)</p> <p>GRow Network (AFD)</p>	<p>Speakers: (15 mins each)</p> <p>-Mr. Nitin Desai, Member of Board, SSEF</p> <p>-Mr. Sivasubramanian Ramann, IA&amp;AS, Chairman &amp; Managing Director, SIDBI</p> <p>Ms. Audrey Brulé - Françoise, Deputy Head Financial Systems Division, AFD</p>
12:30pm - 2.00 pm	Networking Lunch	

# ANNEXURE – AGENDA

Theme Sessions		
2:00pm - 2:45pm	Session V: Industrial association session: what is their green aspiration?	<p>Feedback from Companies' representatives regarding access to climate finance: aspirations, successes and difficulties</p> <p>Potential questions to be answered:</p> <p>(i)What are they looking for (in terms of products, scale, level of involvement from the banker)?</p> <p>(ii)What are the difficulties they encounter? can they share a success story?</p> <p>Speakers: (15 Min each)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mr. Rajiv Chawla, Chairman, IamSMEofIndia</li> <li>2. Mr. Anil Bhardwaj, Secretary General, FISME</li> <li>3. Ms. Madhu Tyagi, President, COWE India</li> </ol> <p>Moderated by - Dr. R. K. Singh, CGM, SIDBI</p>
2:45pm - 3:30pm	Session VI - lessons learnt of G20 Presidency for the Indian financial sector and perspective. + COP28 messages and takeaways in Indian Context	<p>Proposed Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mr. Dhruva Purkayastha, Director, CPI</li> <li>-Mr. Vivek Adhia, Associate Director, BCG</li> <li>-Ms. Neha Kumar, Climate Bond Initiative</li> <li>-Mr. Shubhashis Dey, Director of Climate Policy Program at the Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation</li> <li>-Mr. Mukund Govindarajan, ECube Investment</li> </ul> <p>Moderated by - Dr. R. K. Singh, CGM, SIDBI</p>
Break - 15 Minutes		
3:45pm - 4:30pm	Session VII: GRoW Session – Panel Discussion: The Nexus of Women and Green Finance across Stakeholders	<p>Discuss how climate outcomes can be improved from two lenses: (i) increased access to finance for women climate entrepreneurs; (ii) increased participation from women in green finance. Focus on key challenges to be addressed and what GRoW is doing to bridge the gaps.</p> <p>Proposed Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ms. Ekta Mehra (Senior Sector Specialist), KFW</li> <li>-Ms. Smitha Hari, President, AuctusESG</li> <li>-Ms. Shruti Srivastava, Investment Director, Avaana Capital</li> </ul> <p>Moderated by – Ms. Neetu Chitkara, MD &amp; Partner, BCG</p>
4:30pm - 4.45pm	Summing Up	GIFS Partner - Mr. Shubhashis Dey, Director (Climate Policy and Finance Program), Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation
4.45pm - 6.00pm	Networking Tea	

*The journey "Gender Mainstreaming 4  
Green" begins.....*

**AN INITIATIVE BY:**