

# MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN ENERGY PROJECTS

## Why mainstream gender in energy projects?

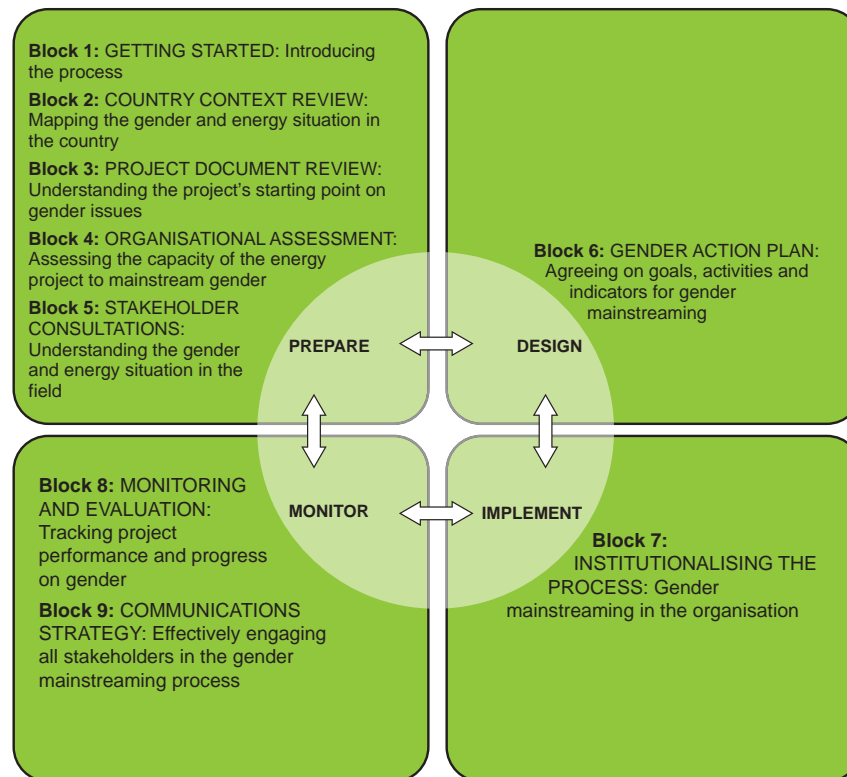
Incorporating gender concerns into energy projects can maximise the benefits of energy projects for both women and men, and increase the sustainability of energy initiatives.

- Access to affordable clean energy is essential for meeting the Millennium Development Goals; it can make a significant difference in women's health, labour burdens, time use, safety and security, and also increase possibilities for education and income generation.
- Energy is a critical input in the daily lives of women, who need energy for their household chores, such as cooking; for productive uses, to contribute to household income; and for rural industry uses, such as milling and food processing.
- Women play key roles in energy use and supply, so energy projects will not be as effective without targeting both women and men.
- Energy projects can contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment by involving women throughout the value chain and in decision-making roles from which they have traditionally been excluded.



This technical brief is based on 'Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Projects: A Practical Handbook', which was prepared by ENERGIA, and which provides guidance and practical tools to assist energy projects in undertaking gender mainstreaming systematically. It draws on experiences from energy projects in Asia and Africa to "demystify" gender mainstreaming in the energy sector, both for energy project practitioners and for gender experts.

This technical brief has been jointly produced by ENERGIA and Practical Action Sri Lanka, with financial support from Sida.



Gender concerns can be systematically integrated into energy projects and programmes in four major stages: Preparation, Design, Implementation and Monitoring, divided over nine blocks.

The actions outlined in these blocks can be adapted for use at any stage in the project cycle. Each step builds on and reinforces the previous ones, but can also be carried out as a separate activity.



Figure 1: Stages in mainstreaming gender concerns in energy projects

# PREPARATION

## Block 1 – Getting Started: Introducing the process

Conduct an orientation workshop on mainstreaming gender in a project for the project staff, and possibly include partner organisations and other stakeholders. An orientation workshop can provide an assessment of staff perceptions on gender issues, raise their awareness on basic concepts of gender and energy, share good practices and lessons learned, present initial ideas on mainstreaming gender, and help the project staff identify opportunities and gaps in addressing gender concerns. This orientation facilitates the gender mainstreaming process, promotes understanding of the implementation steps (to be carried out later), facilitates the identification of project partners (or possible partners) and, most importantly, creates ownership in the process right from the beginning.

## Block 2 - Country Context Review: Mapping the gender and energy situation in the country

Explore the context (including national policies) that the project is operating within, and the key gender and energy issues in the country. A background review on gender in the country can be carried out by an external consultant with inputs from staff. Sources of information for the review could include: the internet; national policy documents on poverty, gender and energy; major government reports; interviews with experts and project and government staff; reports and documents by regional banks, gender development institutions and networks (including the ENERGIA publications database); and sub-regional energy access planning documents. At the end of the review, a short report should be generated that maps out the gender issues and policies in the country and identifies the entry points to address gender and energy challenges. This stage can also be used for identifying potential partners, resources and opportunities for gender mainstreaming in the specific energy sub-sector.

The country context review In Botswana showed the Botswana Power Corporation that 52% of all rural households in Botswana are female-headed, while an Energy Department's survey showed that female-

headed households connect to the grid at half the rate of male-headed households. This was a large missed market that BPC is now trying to exploit with targeted action.

## Block 3 - Project Document Review: Understanding the project's starting point on gender issues

Analyse what the project documents say about gender to determine what the project is trying to achieve from a gender standpoint and what strategies are in place to achieve this, then identify entry points for introducing gender work in the project. Documents that should be reviewed include project descriptions, logical frameworks and annual plans, gender statements of the organisation or project, progress reports, and implementation documents. Through this review process, and discussions with project teams, the gender goals and issues in the project and its documents can be identified.

In Tanzania, the review showed that the project document did recognise women as target beneficiaries, especially related to entrepreneurship. A gender gap in the document was that in describing the programme activities, the document included no words related to women or gender.

## Block 4 - Organisational Assessment: Assessing the capacity of the energy project to mainstream gender

Identify the organisation's and project staff's capacities on gender, and existing gaps in capacities that will need to be addressed. An empirical baseline should also be created to set targets and measure progress. The assessment can be carried out by an external consultant, but self-assessments and inputs from energy project staff are essential. Areas for inquiry include: project frameworks, existing gender capacities, the level of gender-consciousness in the workplace, and the gender balance of staff.

Tools that can be used to carry out this assessment include briefings, interviews, workshops and focus group discussions with project staff, management, and partner organisations, as well as self-assessment questionnaires. In addition, a gender balance analysis of the organisation and the project could be carried out, as well as a Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to assess the capacity of the project and the organisation to plan and implement gender activities.

Based on an organisational assessment, SCODE in Kenya agreed to undertake a number of actions, such as developing a gender policy, supporting partner organisations' capacity development on gender, and engendering the content of the SCODE website.



## Block 5 - Stakeholder Consultations: Understanding the gender and energy situation in the field

Ensure that the project captures and addresses the energy and other needs of both women and men in the target groups, while also assessing the energy situation on the ground for realistic and practical fieldwork and project objectives. Which target groups should be consulted during fieldwork (energy consumers, suppliers, policy makers, etc.)? What baseline situation should change, and which indicators could measure this progress? Fieldwork should aim to identify men's and women's perceptions of the proposed interventions and what features they would like in the technology, as well as the practicality of project strategies and opportunities for income generation and employment for women. The groups interviewed and the questions to ask will depend on the type of intervention; for example, for a lighting project, the fieldwork should consider a range of lighting devices and types of problems, and how they may differ between male and female users.

Some relevant gender analytic tools include: 1) Sexual Division of Labour Matrix, 2) Access and Control over Resources and Benefits, 3) Gendered Value Chain Analysis, 4) Participation and Decision-making, and 5) Needs, Priorities, Challenges

and Perspectives. Traditional gender analytical tools need to be adapted for use in the energy sector to provide guidance on the links between energy services and achieving gender goals.

The installation of a biodiesel water pump by the Enhancing Renewable Energy Options (EREO) Project in Sri Lanka has drastically reduced the number of women's trips taken and time spent to fetch water. Women save about one and a half hours per day. This project intervention was shaped after a mapping of women's daily schedule revealed that one of the greatest needs of the women in the community was improved access to drinking water.

Approaches to gender-sensitive data collection include: 1) incorporating gender-sensitive questions into planned project surveys and fieldwork, 2) conducting interviews or workshops with project field staff, 3) undertaking a stand-alone gender and energy baseline survey, and 4) using participatory rapid appraisal tools (e.g. time use studies, focus group discussions with target groups, and spatial maps – such as resource maps).

### Gender-sensitive fieldwork techniques:

1. Ensure an appropriate composition of field teams (in terms of the number of men and women members, ability to speak local languages, familiarity with basic gender analysis and local cultural norms, and training in gender-sensitive data collection techniques)
2. Prepare the team for fieldwork (introduce gender approach as a priority, and train the team in basic concepts, data collection tools, and gender-sensitive fieldwork techniques)
3. Make use of local contact persons and opinion leaders (both men and women) and relevant government and development institutions
4. Ensure that all relevant stakeholders are interviewed, including male and female members of groups and households
5. Conduct women's meetings at convenient times and places

The data collection tools and sample size chosen will vary based on the research questions, the availability of time and resources, and team capacity.

Findings from this process can be used to identify activities for development of a Gender Action Plan.

# DESIGN

## Block 6 - Gender Action Plan: Agreeing on goals, activities and indicators for gender mainstreaming

A Gender Action Plan (GAP) is a document that articulates what a project wants to achieve from a gender standpoint, what activities it will undertake towards this, and how it will monitor its progress. Developing the GAP is an iterative process, initiated through planning, feedback and validation workshops with project staff and management. The first step is to prioritise the gender goals of the energy project.

A common problem in energy projects is that there is often no link between references to 'women' or 'gender' in the project, and actual outcomes and activities in the project document or the indicators for tracking. In the GAP workshops, project staff can analyse project activities from a gender perspective, and identify gender outcomes and activities needed to achieve the gender goal identified. A starting point can be past and current experiences of the project staff in working with women and men. Frequently, existing best practices can be improved and made more systematic, by transferring good practices in one activity to others, providing assistance and mentoring to staff, and establishing effective and consistent monitoring. Challenges encountered in the field can be the basis for designing actions to overcome these constraints.

Some typical areas of project-level implementation interventions in GAPs in ENERGIA-assisted energy projects include:

- Increasing women's voice and participation
- Product design by both women and men
- Promotion to both women and men
- Training of both women and men
- Encouraging income-earning energy uses by both women and men
- Strengthening women's roles and incomes as providers of energy services
- Research and studies to contribute to future planning

Prioritising gender goals of the energy project:

- Improve welfare and reduce poverty through energy access?
- Increase women's and men's incomes, productivity and livelihoods?
- Empower women in decision-making and non-traditional roles?
- Raise project sustainability and effectiveness in meeting energy targets?

A feature of many energy project GAPs is partnership with other agencies in other development sectors, such as entrepreneurship and social services, that have experience and expertise in working with women as well as men. Energy projects cannot always provide all of the development elements and staff capacity needed for gender mainstreaming, and may need to partner with other agencies and organisations that can help them meet the project's energy, gender and development objectives. This strategy can also be a way of strengthening gender capacity within the energy project management and staff, by learning from other gender-conscious approaches.

# IMPLEMENT

## Block 7 - Institutionalising the Process: Gender mainstreaming in the organisation

Gender mainstreaming efforts are not likely to be sustainable unless an overall enabling framework is established within the organisation. In GAP workshops and discussions, project staff can identify capacity needs and gaps, and list actions to fill these, which can be included in the Gender Action Plan.

**Integrating gender concerns within project frameworks** – An organisational gender policy and vision, adopted by the governing board of the organisation or project, gives the project a mandate for gender mainstreaming. Project planning documents should clearly include commitments and deliverables on gender, to ensure that attention is paid to gender issues in planning, resource allocation, and monitoring. Publications, project manuals, and fieldwork guides should include and address the needs of both men and women, where relevant. A sex-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation system allows for measuring progress and for feedback as a basis for learning.

**Staffing up for gender mainstreaming** – A gender focal point needs to have a clear mandate for mainstreaming gender and building staff capacity, along with the necessary budget. The

project should enlist partner organisations with gender expertise, have a gender balance within its own organisation, and establish targets for management support and incentives for staff to mainstream gender.

**Capacity building of project staff and stakeholders** – Gender training can target energy project staff and management, field teams, gender, social and technical experts, the gender focal point, and project stakeholders. Ideally, gender training will be carried out as part of overall planned capacity building in the energy project and as part of regular training and orientation for all staff. It should be well funded and use participatory methods and tools.

**Ensuring a gender-conscious workplace** - Practical strategies to make an organisation a gender-sensitive place to work can be critical in encouraging more women to apply for jobs and to remain with the energy project or organisation. These issues are typically handled by the human resources department of an organisation.

**Prioritising institutionalisation actions** – Actions should be undertaken according to a realistic plan, with staggered activities over several years. Some actions may need to be carried out quickly in order to implement the GAP (such as establishing gender expertise within the organisation), while others may take longer to implement and involve changes in organisational policies.

During the Asia Regional Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Projects in July 2010, a best practice example was given of how the Rural Energy Development Project in Nepal uses positive discrimination in staff recruitment and training, including :

- Offering an incentive to a woman if she has a small baby (to help pay for a caretaker)
- Providing for a 50% quota of women in training programmes
- Encouraging women to participate in technical training
- Giving extra points to women when recruiting staff

A separate ENERGIA – Practical Action technical brief is available on ‘Institutionalising Gender Mainstreaming Processes in Energy Organisations’.

## MONITOR

### Block 8 - Monitoring and Evaluation: Tracking project performance and progress on gender

A monitoring plan should include gender-sensitive indicators (quantitative or qualitative), along with a plan on how, when and by whom these indicators will be captured, and how the management will be apprised of the results. A useful first step is to review and engender the existing project indicators, and the simplest approach is to disaggregate indicators and set targets by sex where relevant, e.g. male/female, male-headed household/female-headed household, or women-owned/men-owned business. Still, existing project logical frameworks may need to be revisited and revised to include additional or different activities to support women’s participation in, and benefits from, the energy project.

Indicators should include quantifiable targets wherever possible – e.g. number of women and men trained, percent of women-owned and men-owned businesses receiving electricity connections, number of women’s and men’s proposals accepted by management committees. Qualitative indicators can also be very useful, as long as they are measurable: e.g. percent of



staff who believe managers encourage gender analysis in their work, or percent of women who are aware of the project's services and benefits.

### Quantitative indicators in biogas programmes in Nepal and Pakistan

Expected outcomes	Examples of targets
Reaching women through a biogas programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of women reached in users' training</li> <li>• 20% of women owning a biogas plant</li> <li>• At least 90% of biogas users, women and men, are able to operate the plants</li> </ul>
Engaging women in supply side functions in a biogas programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 10% of masons are women</li> <li>• Women represent at least 50% of staff in national biogas development programme</li> <li>• At least 50% of promoters are women</li> </ul>
Increasing women's income	Number of women and men who receive training in veterinary services; or with enterprise services, targeting one household, one enterprise

One question that often arises is how to set targets for women's participation in an energy project. Is 50-50 achievable? Is 10% enough? Government mandates can legitimise targets; for example, constitutions in several East African countries endorse a 30% target for inclusion of women in decision-making bodies. Fieldwork can also provide guidance on what targets are realistic and achievable.

Ultimately, the energy project would like to know if project activities are having a positive effect on the lives and welfare of both women and men. This would require baseline surveys to measure, in a gender-sensitive manner, factors such as energy access and use, reduced domestic burdens, improved health, economic empowerment, social empowerment, and energy sustainability. The Millennium Development Goals have been agreed on as an international framework for measuring the impacts of development, and include indicators of welfare that can be the basis for impact monitoring in an energy project. Most countries are currently tracking these indicators on a regular basis and this information is usually easily available.



## Block 9 - Communications Strategy: Effectively engaging all stakeholders in the gender mainstreaming process

A communications strategy needs to be developed at the start of the project cycle, and used throughout all phases of it. The communications strategy helps convey the right message to the right people, making use of appropriate communication channels. It is important that all stakeholders appreciate the processes, and desired and expected outcomes, through appropriate and timely communications.

### Who are the target groups and what are their information needs?

A first step in developing an effective communications strategy is to determine the various target groups for communication and understand their information needs. It is important to remember that these target groups have different levels of power and influence.

## What is the purpose of communications?

What is the objective of the communications strategy? Will it be external (e.g. for donors, policy makers), or internal (e.g. for project staff, beneficiaries)? External communications will tend to be directed towards objectives like advocacy for and replication of the gender mainstreaming approach (including building awareness of the subject), while internal communications will be linked more to capacity building and securing commitment to the gender mainstreaming approach.

## What strategy to use for communications?

Some strategies that have proven to be successful in the past include:

- **Developing fact-based arguments** that relate specifically to energy project goals and that will minimise limitations and promote driving forces. What energy and development problems will gender equality contribute to solving? What are the gender goals and how will they be measured? What is the “added value” of gender mainstreaming? And what are the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders?
- **Consulting and involving the project team**, decision-makers and partners throughout the gender mainstreaming exercise and in developing a GAP. Stakeholders can be active at different stages in the policy planning and implementation processes.



- **Gender-sensitisation training of energy project implementers and decision-makers**, to increase their understanding and their skills for effective implementation. Specific gender training, coaching, and networking can also be useful for staff, partners, and beneficiaries.
- **Enrolment of gender allies and networks** at the national and international level and in sponsoring agencies, in support of gender mainstreaming in the energy project, through networking, advocacy, and resource mobilisation.

## What are the means of communication?

The main areas of communication are speech (e.g. in forums, workshops, TV interviews, and informal talks), written publications (case studies, magazines, flyers, newspapers and reports), images, which can have an immediate and longer-lasting impact on the viewer than spoken or written words (photos, illustrations, videos), and the internet (websites and social media), where it is necessary to make the message short and clear and use catchy titles. In addition, the organisation and project partners may have existing communication channels that can be used effectively.

In Tanzania, the gender team made good use of the Swahili and English newsletters that TaTEDO published to give updates about the gender mainstreaming project. This helped raise awareness about gender mainstreaming, its process and the results. In the Pakistan biogas programme, staff meetings were used to update the organisation on gender mainstreaming activities.



## Signs of effective gender mainstreaming practices in energy projects



- Women empowered through their involvement in project activities, and through additional education about energy options and technologies.
- Supportive policies that reflect and address the distinct energy needs and conditions faced by men and women.
- A well formulated energy needs assessment, undertaken prior to project design, ensuring the use of a realistic approach that takes into account gender differences.
- Full participation of intended beneficiaries, including women, in all aspects of energy project problem identification, design, financing, community mobilisation and implementation.
- Energy projects that address women's energy needs and take into account the types of value-added productive activities typically undertaken by women.
- Marketing strategies that evaluate the marketability of products, in terms of quality, affordability and competing alternatives.
- Decentralised, gender-sensitive credit mechanisms provided, where appropriate, to distribute the financial costs of improved energy services over extended time frames.
- Capacity building and training provided, to strengthen women at all levels of energy policymaking and planning.

Source: UNDP and ENERGIA 2004. *Gender and Energy for Sustainable Development: A Toolkit and Resource Guide*



ENERGIA, the International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy



Practical Action (Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan Programme)