

# **Mainstreaming Equality between Women and Men**

**Handbook on Gender Perspectives  
in Energy Sector Development**

**Infrastructure Division  
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**Sida**

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION AGENCY

Department for Infrastructure  
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# **Handbook on Gender Perspectives in Energy Sector Development**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **Sida's policy**

Equality between women and men is one of Sida's overall objectives.

The rationale is:

- **Social Justice and Human Rights.** Equitable development implies that development resources and benefits are equitably distributed between women and men.
- **Effectiveness.** A gender analysis increases the effectiveness and quality of project planning. A project based on a full set of information has a better chance of meeting its objectives than one based on an incomplete set of facts.

### **Platform For Action**

The Platform For Action (PFA), an international strategy for promoting equality between women and men, was developed and endorsed by national governments at the Fourth UN Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. All Sida partner countries have adopted the PFA. Key paragraphs related to the energy sector and sustainable development can be found in annex 1.

### **This handbook**

This handbook should be used to assist people involved in Sida supported projects to mainstream gender perspectives into energy projects.

## **2. Basic Concepts**

### **Gender**

The term gender refers to economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. Gender is one of the most fundamental organising principles in all societies. Men and women have different roles in the labour market, in the community and in the household. They also have different access to and control over resources and decision-making.

### **Equality between women and men**

Gender awareness is important not only because of differences between men and women in what they do, but also because of inequality between them. Women have generally less access to resources, opportunities and decision-making than men. Equality between women and men, or gender equality, means that both sexes have equal rights, possibilities and obligations. A gender perspective in development programmes makes an equitable development possible and increases the quality of development programmes.

### **Mainstreaming**

At the UN Conference on Women in Beijing, "mainstreaming" was adopted as the main international strategy for achieving equality between women and men.

A mainstreaming strategy means that:

- The resources, opportunities and benefits from the development process shall be equally distributed. This requires that equality concerns are integrated into the analyses and formulation of policies and programmes, and on the impact of planned interventions on women and men, before final decisions are taken on goals, strategies, activities, resources and budgets.
- The interests, needs and experiences of women and men are included in the definition of development approaches, policies and programmes.

### **Basic prerequisites**

There are two basic prerequisites for mainstreaming a perspective on equality between women and men.

- \* a focus on how the project affects the life situation for women and men (directly or indirectly).
- \* a focus on how the project can increase equality between women and men rather than a focus on women as a target group.

### **3. Gender Perspectives in Energy Sector Development**

Gender-related differences and inequalities influence the outcomes of energy policy, energy planning and energy projects.

Formulation of energy policy, strategies and decisions on energy investments affects people, men as well as women, differently. For example, a policy that focuses on investments in electrification in urban areas will benefit one group of people while a policy that focuses on investments in the household sector will benefit another group. And the effects of an investment in a big power producing plant will be different for different groups of people than of investments in rural electrification through solar-systems. Important areas to consider are:

#### **Tariffs and price policies**

Changes in tariffs have different impact on women and men. For example, the burden of an increase price for kerosene is most often borne by the woman who is responsible for cooking. She will either have to find the means to pay more or find a cheaper substitute, most probably involving more time and labour (for example woodfuel).

#### **Rural energy**

Attention to rural energy programmes, which are often directly related to women's needs and interests, in national energy planning in terms of budget allocated, is minimal compared to staffing and investment in other areas of energy provision such as electrification or development of petroleum refining capacity. Despite the fact that biomass fuels used in cooking account for more than 80 % of total fuel use in many developing countries, efforts to improve the technology for efficiency and for health reasons account for less than 10 % of government energy spending.

#### **Decision power**

The household sector is the largest consumer of energy resources. Women are the primary providers and users of fuel within the household. Women are also significant producers of goods and services, often in the informal sector, using fuel intensive production processes.

But women often lack:

- control over the resources required to access fuel and to invest in new fuel-efficient technologies.
- opportunities to participate in decision-making and planning for new infrastructure investments.

### **Construction of energy infrastructure**

Construction of energy sector infrastructure have different impacts on male and female community members. Where communities are displaced by flooding or physical plant construction, access to land and water is changed or quality of air and water resources deteriorates. Since women generally are the providers of food and water to the household they will be more affected if land conditions change or water supply is disrupted.

### **Employment opportunities**

Women traditionally have not sought professional employment in the energy sector or have limited access to infrastructure operation and maintenance job opportunities. Women often lack the basic technical skills to be able to compete with men and discriminatory attitudes increases this disadvantage.

### **Conclusion**

Increased awareness of gender equality among policy- and decision-makers increases the possibility of a fair and efficient energy policy. Energy investments and policies can be used to promote sustainable economic growth, also in the informal sector, and to involve women in the development and adaptation of fuel-efficient technologies most suitable to their needs. Giving women, as well as men, access to training and a chance to participate in projects can change the inequality situation.



## **4. Energy Development Cooperation**

What can be done generally to increase equality between women and men in development cooperation within the energy sector?

### **Promote awareness**

- Promote gender equality in policy dialogue at all levels.
- Promote awareness and understanding of the importance of gender equality in relation to energy in general discussions.
- Ensure that all promotional materials of the Infrastructure Division mention Sida's equality goal.
- Hold seminars for Sida staff, consultants, partners.

### **Sector analyses**

- Include the requirement for a gender analysis in the Terms of Reference for the sector analysis and specify the types of information and discussion required.
- Include someone with the skill and responsibility to undertake the gender analysis in the team.
- Consult with women's organisations and the government mechanism for gender equality on critical issues and concerns.

### **Project identification**

- Require the potential partner requesting the assistance to address the gender equality issues in the project request.
- Ensure that the issues on equality between men and women are addressed in the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) and the Project Document and that this includes a description on how to address these issues in the project implementation.

### **Procurement of consultancy services**

- Include explicit and concrete attention to gender aspects in the Terms of Reference.
- Request in Tender Invitations that the tender shall include a discussion on how the consultant will address the gender equality perspective.

### **Monitoring**

- Agree with partners or implementing institutions on the key variables for sex-disaggregated data collection and for monitoring the impact of projects on equality.

### **Annual review**

- Address the objective of equality between women and men in the Annual review.
- Prepare for the discussion: review whether targets have been met, identifying reasons and agree on measures to be taken with partners.

### **Evaluation**

- Formulate clear and specific directions on gender equality issues for evaluation terms of reference and ensure that the evaluation team includes a member with specific and demonstrated expertise on gender equality. Request the team leader to take a specific responsibility for mainstreaming gender equality.

### **Swedish resource base**

- Identify and draw on the experience of Swedish organisations that have been concerned with working with gender equality issues in relation to these issues e.g. renewable energy sources, environmental impact of energy sector activities, community organisation and consultation, employment experiences in public utilities, support for women's career advancement from professional institutions.
- Take initiatives to ensure that Swedish consultants and suppliers/contractors understand Sida's equality goal and to develop awareness and competence on equality between women and men.

## **5. Sida supported Energy Projects**

What can be done to increase the equality between women and men in the different types of projects Sida supports?

### **Support to regulatory authorities and formulation of energy policies, laws and regulations**

- Assist the regulatory authority to address gender equality issues in studies and data used as basis for policy decisions.
- Assist the authority to analyse the impact on women and men of energy policies and investment choices on women and men.
- Assist the authority to identify the impacts of commercialisation and deregulation on costs of energy, and the effect of possible cost increases on women and men.
- Encourage women's increased participation as decision-makers in policy formulation and implementation.
- Assist the authority to examine how the regulatory systems can be used to promote economic growth in sectors of importance to women producers.

### **Organisational development, capacity building, corporatization and privatisation**

- Assist institutions to strengthen their capacity to assess the impact of energy sector investments on women and men through incorporation of gender analysis in feasibility studies, Environmental Impact Assessments and consultative processes.
- Assist institutions to assess the potential for women, as well as men, within affected communities to benefit from energy investments, through employment opportunities in construction, operation and maintenance of these investments. Assist institutions to analyse barriers to women's equal participation (such as lack of separate sanitation facilities, attitudes of construction crews, level of skills and experience..) and formulate strategies to overcome these constraints.
- Enhance equitable employment and promotion opportunities for women through assisting institutions to analyse the existing gender balance in employment and the barriers to equal participation by women, and to formulate objectives and targets for recruitment, training and advancement of women as well as men both administrative and technical fields.
- Encourage institutions to use gender as one analytic tool when making demand forecasts and in their customer relations, in order to reveal gender-determined differences in needs, demands and priorities.

- Encourage institutions to pursue research on gender-based interests and differences with respect to energy consumption and the impact of energy infrastructure investments.

### **Energy-efficiency improvements**

- Incorporate the knowledge and priority concerns of women producers and consumers of energy resources (particularly as consumers of scarce bio-mass resources) when seeking to adopt new technologies to improve energy efficiency. Adoption rates and overall effectiveness of investments can be enhanced by extending demand-side management techniques to specifically include women's voices.

### **Studies and construction/rehabilitation of hydro power projects, substations, transmission and distribution**

- Ensure that all studies on possible investment projects include gender analysis as an integral part and that all consultancy teams include a gender equality specialist.
- Enhance equitable employment and training opportunities for women.

### **Rural energy projects**

- Enhance the capacity to consult with and incorporate the knowledge built of women and men in studies aiming at improving the energy situation in local settings.
- Encourage women as well as men to participate in the planning and design of projects.
- Encourage and give women the possibility to participate in selling energy services, electricity distribution cooperatives, operating and maintaining equipment etc.

## Commitments in the Beijing *Platform for Action*

### Actions to be taken by Governments, at all levels, including municipal authorities, as appropriate:

- Para. 253 (d) Take appropriate measures to reduce risks to women from identified environmental hazards at home, at work and in other environments, including appropriate application of clean technologies, taking into account the precautionary approach agreed to in the Rio Declaration on Environmental Development;
- Para. 253 (e) take measures to integrate a gender perspective in the design and implementation of, among other things, environmentally sound and sustainable resource management mechanisms, production techniques and infrastructure development in rural and urban areas;
- Para. 253 (f) Take measures to empower women as producers and consumers so that they can take effective environmental actions, along with men, in their homes, communities and workplaces:
- Para. 253 (g) Promote the participation of local communities, particularly women, in identification of public service needs, spatial planning and the provision and design of urban infrastructure.
- Para. 256 (j) Identify and promote environmentally sound technologies that have been designed, developed and improved in consultation with women and that are appropriate to both women and men;
- Para. 256 (k) Support the development of women's equal access to housing, infrastructure, safe water and sustainable and affordable energy technologies, such as wind, solar, bio-mass and other renewable resources, through participatory needs assessments, energy planning and policy formulation at the local and national levels.

### Actions to be taken by Governments and international organisations and private sector institutions, as appropriate:

- Para. 254 (d) Establish strategies and mechanisms to increase the proportion of women, particularly at grass-roots levels, involved as decision-makers, planners, managers, scientists and technical advisers and as beneficiaries in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes for natural resource management and environmental protection and conservation.

Para. 252 In addressing the lack of adequate recognition and support for women's contribution to conservation and management of natural resources and safeguarding the environment, Government and other actors should promote and active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, including, as appropriate , an analysis of the effects on women and men, respectively , before decisions are taken.

## **Commitments in the Agenda 21**

A specific chapter (24) recognising women's role in environmental management and conservation was included in Agenda 21 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development - Rio 1992 and Principle 20 as follows:

"Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development."





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