

# Gender and Energy Access in the context of Scaling-Up Renewable Energy Program (SREP)

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## Background

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Energising Development (EnDev) and the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) organized a Roundtable on Energy Access and Gender on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in The Hague. The meeting offered a platform for new pilot countries to the Scaling-Up Renewable Energy Program (SREP) under the CIF to explore opportunities for integrating energy access and gender considerations in their investment plans.

This event was organized back-to-back with the SREP New Countries Workshop, organized by the CIF on February 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The CIF workshop included a session on Mainstreaming Gender into SREP Investment Plans and Projects, designed to address key considerations and entry points in renewable energy policy and project design. The session also allowed for examples of good practices and potential pitfalls to be shared with the new pilot countries.

The present document summarizes some of the most salient elements discussed on the topics of gender and energy access. It also identifies the main feedback and requests for support shared by the [new] pilot projects and highlights key resources for supporting pilot countries in their goal towards mainstreaming gender in their SREP investment plans.

## Women and energy access

Energy policies and programs are considered to be gender neutral and expected to contribute immediate and equal benefits for women and men. However, this is not the case.

Women and men have different social roles and are engaged in different economic sectors and activities, which shapes their energy needs. Hence, women and men require different energy policy and project approaches. For example, women tend to work as entrepreneur in the informal sector and most of their economic activities relate to services provision which rely on caloric energy (i.e. for cooking, pottery making, agro-processing, etc.). Electricity is not necessarily the most appropriate energy source for these activities, however, it remains the main focus of attention in energy policies and projects.

Moreover, the number of people without access to electricity (1.3 billion) pales in comparison to the number still relying on traditional biomass for cooking and heating (2.8 billion). The negative impacts of this practice are particularly felt by women and girls, who are responsible for collecting firewood and tending the fire for cooking.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately energy policies tend to focus most of their attention in energy

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<sup>1</sup> Impacts on women and girls range from reduction in their availability to attend school and engage in economic activities, exposure to attacks from wild animals and sexual violence, and health implications (due to carrying of heavy loads or exposure to smoke).

generation, without much consideration to ensuring access or even addressing reliance on biomass at national level, in spite of its negative impacts on development.

Women and men also tend to have different access to resources and credit, which in turn affects their access to modern energy sources. Hence, issues such as affordability (whether of monthly tariffs, connection costs or price of household energy technologies) or subsidies (residential or social subsidies vs. industry sector) will have a differentiated impact on male and female headed households, with the latter reporting higher difficulties to afford modern energy sources.

Women already have an important role to play as energy managers, either through the collection of or the efficient use of energy sources. For example, women make up 50% of solar home-system buyers in developing countries and have proven to be successful energy entrepreneurs, utilizing their social networks to position renewable energy technologies in local markets. In spite of the above, women are still viewed as passive beneficiaries of energy policies and interventions, making it harder for them to join in the new green economy and benefit from the renewable energy value chain.

Most research and experiences mainstreaming gender into energy projects have taken place in small-scale energy projects. However, this does not mean large infrastructure projects are gender neutral; quite the opposite. Expropriation and relocation as a consequence of energy infrastructure (for generation or transmission) do have a differentiated impact on women and men. For example, compensation may be provided only to the land title owner and not to the family as a unit, retraining or compensation for lack of income may be based only on remunerated work, while women tend to work on subsistence activities, to mention a few. Hence, compensation and reparation plans need to incorporate gender considerations.

#### **Why consider gender in energy access?**

**Practical reasons:** Women and men have different roles and needs. They require different policy and project approaches.

**Sustainability:** Long-term development is only possible, if all parts of a society are empowered to improve their livelihoods. Gender equality is central to sustainable development.

**Identification of national priorities:** By understanding the different needs of women and men, countries can identify their national development priorities and the most appropriate [new] low-carbon technologies needed to support different economy sectors.

### **Gender mainstreaming in the energy sector**

Gender mainstreaming in the energy sector has gained strength particularly in the past decade, with more donor countries, agencies and multilateral banks calling on their beneficiaries to address the differentiated needs of women and men through their energy interventions. It is also within the last five years that specific methodologies for the energy sector have been developed or updated. A list of resources, including handbooks and guidelines for gender mainstreaming can be found in the final section of this document.

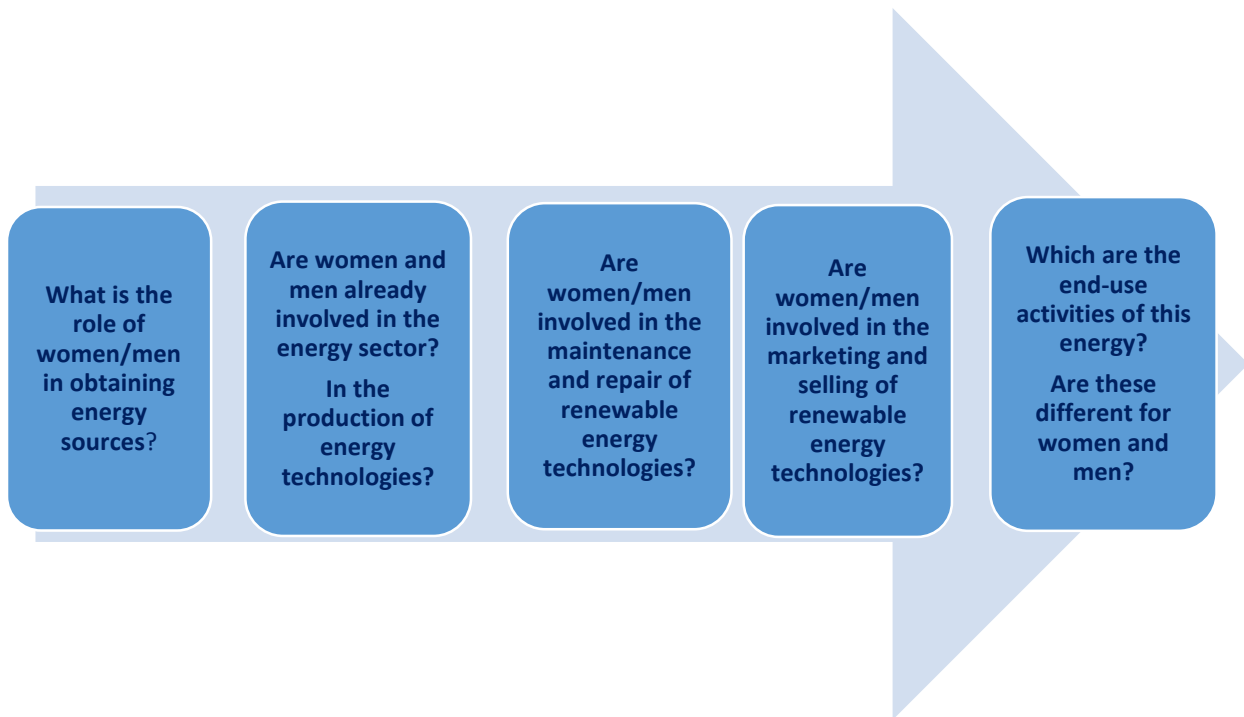
At the core of the gender mainstreaming efforts is the need to ensure that both women and men benefit equality from energy policies and projects by eliminating or reducing inequalities.

**Gender mainstreaming in energy initiatives helps to:**

- Assess the project’s relevance for women and men (diagnostic)
- Agree on the gender perspective a project wants to achieve (objective and gender strategy)
- Design specific activities to achieve these objectives
- Create consensus among different stakeholders about the methodology to be used
- Design a gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation strategy

Women in the [renewable] energy value chain

Women have an important role to play in the energy value chain besides been users of energy sources. A simple visualization on women’s [potential] role in the value chain could support policy makers and project managers to increase women’s participation in the energy sector.



The box below shows a set of examples of gender responsive activities in different energy intervention:

<b>Electrification projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensitization of field teams to understand and identify gender considerations in the field</li><li>• Invest in recruiting of women staff</li><li>• Invest in women’s inclusion as technicians, including line installation</li><li>• Establishment of credit lines/revolving funds to support [new] entrepreneurships</li><li>• Special tariffs for poor/women headed households</li></ul>
<b>Household solar technologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training of women as solar technicians: assembly, installation, repair</li><li>• Supporting women as sales agents: group shops, retailers, etc.</li><li>• Linking women with micro-credit opportunities or pre-financing their initial stock</li><li>• Leadership, training skills and peer coaching/support</li></ul>

<b>Biogas projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring women are trained as users (both energy and use of bio-slurry use)</li> <li>• Train women and men to construct and manage biogas constructing companies</li> <li>• Include women as community promoters and sell agents</li> <li>• Additionally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Link women with adult literacy projects</li> <li>– Support families to invest in girls education</li> <li>– Support women’s entrepreneurship</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### Gender in the renewable energy sector in Nepal: learning from pilot country experiences

Nepal has a strong national policy commitment towards gender and social inclusion (GESI), which guides the government’s efforts to ensure an alignment in the inclusion of gender considerations from national level policies to local level renewable energy policies. Gender mainstreaming is considered an integral part of the renewable energy program and project, as it enhances livelihoods and ensures both development and sustainability of energy systems. An operational framework has been developed to guide gender initiatives and fostering the intersections between gender responsive institutions, GESI friendly renewable energy technologies and the provision of energy services catering to women and men’s energy needs.

<p><b>Strategies for gender inclusion in the renewable energy sector:<sup>2</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive discrimination in subsidy in RETs as well as its productive use (MSME &amp; IGA)</li> <li>• Adoption of social mobilization process to address targeted group demand and ensure meaningful participation</li> <li>• Research and development (R&amp;D) to design and promote gender friendly RET</li> <li>• Institutionalize GESI segregated database system, regular monitoring mechanism/reporting, review/evaluation</li> <li>• Positive discrimination in selecting FIs for ensuring credit access/facility to the target groups</li> <li>• Promote GESI responsive RET policy, strategy, periodic plan, rules and regulations and program and budget</li> <li>• Promote AEPC as GESI responsive institution</li> </ul>
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The Nepal experience exemplifies how a strong political commitment towards gender equality can be translated into concrete initiatives that produce large benefits to both women and men.

### Tools and methodologies for gender mainstreaming in the energy sector<sup>3</sup>

The Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme (RECP) is supported by the EU Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility (EUEI PDF). RECP has been designed to provide technical assistance for enhancing energy access in developing countries while supporting poverty reduction and seeking gender

<sup>2</sup> Laudari, R. (2015). Gender Mainstreaming in Renewable Energy Sector in Nepal (including SREP). Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC). Presentation. SREP Pilot Country Meeting. February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The Hague, the Netherlands.

<sup>3</sup> All documents referenced here can be found in the resource section.

equality. RECP has developed a series of briefing notes and checklists for gender mainstreaming in different renewable energy technologies.

ENERGIA, the International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy (ENERGIA) has close to 20 years working towards gender equality in the energy sector. ENERGIA is well recognized for the production of the first training manuals designed to target energy policy makers and practitioners, and for adapting gender audit methodologies to the energy sector. ENERGIA's handbook (2011) documents the network's experience working with renewable energy projects and offers a series of tools for project developers to mainstream gender into their projects. In 2014 a guide for gender mainstreaming in energy policies, institutions and projects was developed with the support of IUCN and OLADE (the Latin American Energy Organization), compiling and updating the most recent methods available for the energy sector.

### Feedback from Pilot Country Representatives and Way Forward

Representatives from Pilot Countries participating in the February meetings expressed their interest to address gender in their national investment plans. They acknowledged the need for technical expertise to support them achieve this goal. The above is also true for countries with years of experience mainstreaming gender in the energy sector, as the scale and scope of the projects to be implemented under SREP may require additional technical support.

Requests from Pilot Country representatives can be summarized as follows:

- In order to include gender considerations in the investment strategy plans, it is necessary to ensure gender and energy access experts are part of the technical support provided during the inception mission.
- Further technical training for project preparation and investment plan addressing gender considerations would be a welcome step.
- Funding for supporting gender expertise (at international and national levels) through implementation phase of SREP investment plans and for financially supporting the implementation of gender responsive initiatives should be made available to pilot countries.

The CIF approved in 2014 a Gender Action Plan (GAP) in 2014 for 2015-2016. As per this GAP and in response to the requests from pilot country representatives, the CIF Administrative Unit will expected to:

- Development of gender guidelines targeting specific technologies, particularly those addressed by new pilot countries.
- Identify concrete manners to make institutional support more effective, as each of the MDBs has a gender expert to support the CIF work.<sup>4</sup>
- Leverage knowledge across MDBs and different pilot countries.
- Undertake an analytical study of energy and gender and establish a community of practice around SREP.
- Develop a roster of international gender experts capable of supporting additional work on specific areas or pillars of the CIF.

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<sup>4</sup> At present it is necessary to present a request to MDB representatives and CIF Administrative Unit for specific support to gender responsive activities.

## Resources

### Documents

Aguilar, L. et al (2012). Gender Review of the CIF. Full Report. CTF-SCF/TFC.9/Inf. 5. Joint Meeting of the CTF and SCF Trust Fund Committees. CIF. Istanbul. Available at: [https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/sites/climateinvestmentfunds.org/files/CTF\\_SCF\\_Inf.5\\_CIF\\_Gender\\_Review\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/sites/climateinvestmentfunds.org/files/CTF_SCF_Inf.5_CIF_Gender_Review_Full_Report.pdf)

Cecelski, E. and Dutta, S. (2011). Mainstreaming Gender in Energy Projects: A Practical Handbook. ENERGIA. Available at: [http://energia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/01.-Mainstreaming\\_gender\\_in\\_energy\\_projects\\_A\\_practical\\_Hand\\_book.pdf](http://energia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/01.-Mainstreaming_gender_in_energy_projects_A_practical_Hand_book.pdf)

CIF. (2014). CIF Gender Action Plan. CTF-SCF/TFC.12/7. Joint Meeting of the CTF and SCF Trust Fund Committees. CIF. Montego Bay. Available at: [https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/sites/climateinvestmentfunds.org/files/CTF\\_SCF\\_12\\_7\\_Gender\\_Action\\_Plan\\_.pdf](https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/sites/climateinvestmentfunds.org/files/CTF_SCF_12_7_Gender_Action_Plan_.pdf)

Dutta, S. (2013). Gender Briefing Notes. Produced by ENERGIA for EU Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility (EUEI PDF). Available at: <http://www.euei-pdf.org/our-work>

ESMAP (2013) Integrating Gender Considerations into Energy Operations. Knowledge Series 014/13. World Bank Group. Washington D.C. Available at: <http://www.esmap.org/node/2743>

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EUEI PDF (2013). Gender Integration Checklist. EUEI PDF Project Management. Available at: <http://www.euei-pdf.org/our-work>

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EUEI PDF (2013). Gender Integration Checklist. Rural Energy Agency. Available at: <http://www.euei-pdf.org/our-work>

Pearl-Martinez, R. (2014). Women at the Forefront of the Clean Energy Future. White Paper- Initiative Gender Equality for Climate Change Opportunities (GECCO). IUCN-USAID. Washington D.C. Available at: [https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/women\\_at\\_the\\_forefront\\_of\\_the\\_clean\\_energy\\_future\\_1.20.15.pdf](https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/women_at_the_forefront_of_the_clean_energy_future_1.20.15.pdf)

Rojas, A. and Siles, J. (2014). Guia sobre Genero y Energia para Capacitadoras(es) y Gestoras(es) de Politicas Publicas y Proyectos. ENERGIA, OLADE and IUCN. (Spanish) Available at: [http://energia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/13.-Guia\\_sobre\\_genero\\_y\\_energia.pdf](http://energia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/13.-Guia_sobre_genero_y_energia.pdf)

Rojas, A., Schmitt, F. and Aguilar, L. (2012). Guidelines on Renewable Energy Technologies for Women in Rural and Informal Urban Areas. ENERGIA and IUCN. Available at: [https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/guidelines\\_on\\_renewable\\_energy\\_technologies\\_for\\_women\\_in\\_rural\\_and\\_informal\\_urban\\_areas.pdf](https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/guidelines_on_renewable_energy_technologies_for_women_in_rural_and_informal_urban_areas.pdf)

Recommended websites on gender and energy

ENERGIA, the International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy (ENERGIA): [www.energia.org](http://www.energia.org)

Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP): [www.esmap.org](http://www.esmap.org)

EU-Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme (EU-RECP): [www.euei-pdf.org](http://www.euei-pdf.org)

IUCN Global Gender Office (IUCN GGO): [www.genderandenviroment.org](http://www.genderandenviroment.org)