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|  |  Technical Note |
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|  Gender Equality in Energy Sector CooperationdS |
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**Norad’s Department for Economic Development, Gender and Governance**

**Section for Rights and Gender Equality**

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**Norad Technical Note**

This note is part of the Department’s ongoing work.

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Norad’s Project Manager: LIRE / Kari Trædal Thorsen

lire-post@norad.no

For information on key resources and available capacity for further assistance, see <http://www.norad.no/en/thematic-areas/energy/gender-in-energy>

**Norad**

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

P.O. Box 8034 Dep, NO-0030 OSLO

Ruseløkkveien 26, Oslo, Norway

Phone: +47 22 24 20 30 Fax: +47 22 24 20 31

www.norad.no

Purpose of the Technical Note

This Note is meant to increase the understanding of energy decision-makers about the relevance of gender issues in the energy sector, and how those issues could be addressed to ensure that they are considered appropriately in policy dialogues and in the design of interventions. The Note is related to a series of briefs[[1]](#footnote-1) on gender issues in the energy sector developed by Norad based on initial experiences with gender mainstreaming in partner countries over the last two years.

Gender mainstreaming in this context is the systematic process of assessing the implications for women and men of energy sector development cooperation. It is the method of ensuring that women's as well as men's concerns and experiences are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs. Policies are an essential first step in gender mainstreaming, but in themselves, they are insufficient to transform organisational practices, procedures and structures. Changes are required within programs to enable women to participate as fully as men. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is gender equality.

The Note presents rationales for action to promote gender equality in the energy sector, and will assist the Norwegian embassies in conducting policy dialogues with relevant actors and partners. The Note and briefs are expected to result in consideration and integration of gender issues in Clean energy and Oil for Development, and may be used as a guide for:

* Communicating the Norwegian position and rationale for gender mainstreaming in Norway’s energy sector cooperation
* Discussing programmatic priorities with national partners
* Strategic discussions and entry points for possible joint positions with like-minded donors
* Assessments of proposals and projects/programs

**A strategic mainstreaming approach**

Norway is committed to mainstreaming gender in its energy sector cooperation. There are a number of effective strategies for translating regional and national policy mandates on gender and energy into practical actions, and thereby help the sector meet national policy mandates, including:

* Raising the visibility of gender issues in the energy sector through studies, policy dialogues and assessments of proposals
* Promoting linkages between gender and the energy institutions and mechanisms within countries
* Mitigating negative impacts and increasing access to decision making in relation to management of natural resources
* Creating employment opportunities for women in the energy sector
* Supporting and mentoring women in the sector
* Assisting interested energy agencies to develop Gender Action Plans, including gender training and integration of gender throughout the project cycle.

**Clean energy, gender and the development agenda**

The Clean Energy for Development initiative aims to increase access to clean energy and at the same time reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in order to contribute to sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. The majority of the assistance provided by Norway under this initiative is focused on the electricity sector, including transmission, distribution, generation, policy, education and training. This work is making a contribution to global efforts to expand energy access for all, which is crucial for meeting global commitments to eliminate poverty.

Paying attention to both women’s and men’s roles and needs can contribute to expanding energy access, and meeting energy sector cooperation objectives, by making energy projects more efficient and sustainable. Gender mainstreaming can also help the energy sector to enhance its development benefits, link better with other development sectors, and make a larger contribution to the development cooperation objectives of Norway and its partners, including poverty reduction, economic growth, sustainable environmental management, health and education for all, transparency and accountability, and human rights.

**Gender policy in Norway’s development cooperation**

Norway places a strong emphasis on women and gender equality in its foreign policy and development cooperation, as seen in:

* White Paper No 25 to the Norwegian Parliament: Fair distribution is key to development (2012-2013)

<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2012-2013/meld-st-25-20122013.html?id=721514>

* The 2012 UN Initiative on Sustainable Energy for All’s (SE4ALL) development objective on gender equality.

http://sustainableenergyforall.org/images/content/SEFA-ActionAgenda.pdf

* White Paper No. 11 to the Norwegian Parliament: On Equal Terms: Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in International Development Policy (2007-2008)

http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/2156814/PDFS/STM200720080011000EN\_PDFS.pdf

* The Action Plan for Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (2007-2013)

<http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/Utvikling/Kvinner%20og%20likestilling/Handlingsplan_kvinner_Eng0510.pdf>

* Norway’s Strategic Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (2006). <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/nap/Norway_1325_Action_Plan_English.pdf>

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| **Key quotes from the policy documents***“In the Government’s view, women’s rights and gender equality should be included as readily in our energy programmes as they are in our health programmes; it should be equally self-evident to include these considerations in our infrastructure programmes as it is in our education programmes.” Pp 26 the White Paper No. 11 to the Norwegian Parliament: On Equal Terms: Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in International Development Policy (2007-2008)**“In its oil and energy cooperation, Norway will contribute to the creation of jobs and livelihoods for both women and men in connection with the oil industry and in the production and distribution of clean energy.” Pp 32 of The Action Plan for Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (2007-2013)**“Access to energy is a necessary precondition to achieving many development goals that extend far beyond the energy sector— eradicating poverty, increasing food production, providing clean water, improving public health, enhancing education, creating economic opportunity, and empowering women”. Pp 5 of the Sustainable Energy for All A Global Action Agenda* |

**Global, regional and national policy commitments**

Many partner countries have committed to international human rights instruments:

* 1951 The ILO Conventions on working women's rights
* 1979 The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
* 1995 The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)
* 2000 the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
* UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (2006)
* 2008 The Human Rights Council resolution on «human rights and climate change»

**Policy rationale for gender issues in energy sector cooperation**

**Institutional capacity**

Despite commitments to gender equality, these policies have not been widely translated into practice in energy sector cooperation. In some countries, gender has been identified by national government as a cross-cutting issue, with a requirement that gender should be included in all new policies, and the energy sector, which has lagged, is required to come into compliance. Some countries, such as Mozambique and Uganda, are requesting support for this. In Uganda, the Ministry of Finance is developing a monitoring system to ensure that the required inclusion of gender in all national policies is actually implemented, recognizing that budget allocations have the power to transform gender inequalities.

Many energy agencies in partner countries are already engaged with gender issues in the field and at the policy level. But the engagement is not systematic, and may be hampered by heavy workloads. Energy staff may have some experience in working with both women and men, but lack gender-specific training, tools and institutional support for implementation and monitoring. All energy agencies are under pressure to deliver energy access to underserved populations, and many recognise that understanding gender issues is important for reaching those who currently lack access to energy. Increasing their institutional capacity to mainstream gender is often a priority for energy agencies once they begin to address gender issues.

Women are often represented among energy agency staff, but they do not always find gender balance or family-friendly human resource policies. Some countries are addressing gender balance through constitutional mandates: for example, the new constitution in Kenya requires that no gender should occupy more than two-thirds of boardroom seats in State-owned companies or in firms where the State’s stake is more than half. Discriminatory attitudes and difficult working conditions can present obstacles for women’s entry into energy institutions. When given the opportunity to speak out, women working in energy institutions in Asia and Africa describe obstacles to advancement being harassment and lack of essential facilities. Attention is clearly needed to remove barriers to women’s entry into this sector. Family-friendly human resource policies have been shown to improve recruitment of both male and female staff in utilities in Europe, and studies in the United States have shown that companies that have more women in management are also more profitable. Credit Suisse recently reported that public companies with at least 3 female board members performed significantly better (measured by ROE – Return on Earnings) than those without women. Investing in women’s training and education, and overcoming barriers to women’s participation, can improve a company’s bottom line.

**Employment in the energy sector**

Women’s participation in energy sector labour markets has been low in most countries. Energy sector employment has not been considered suitable work for women, due to conditions potentially involving heavy physical labour, fieldwork in remote locations, and exposure to male harassment. Lack of childcare facilities at the workplace can also present a barrier, as working women often have to make arrangements to manage double responsibilities for family care and paid work. Nonetheless, employment in the energy sector has the potential to empower women and strengthen their economic independence, while training and recruitment of women can address skills shortages in the sector.

Rural electricity construction projects now primarily employ men, but do offer an opportunity for off-farm employment in rural areas that has been shown to be an important route out of poverty for rural women. Although there are physical and cultural obstacles to women’s employment in construction work, in many countries women already undertake heavy physical activities such as load carrying, ditch digging, and other tasks related to the construction industry and road building. Moreover, all work in the energy sector is not physically demanding. Recent advances in the sciences, technology and communications have opened up new possibilities for women’s employment in the sector as energy professionals and technicians, as well as in the areas of information technologies, banking, public relations, research, training, and human resource management. In Uganda, one concessionaire cited a preference for women as better branch office managers. In a Norad-supported electrification project in Zanzibar, equal numbers of women and men were trained as surveyors and tested, and due to exam results all of the women were hired, with nearly half of them continuing to work for the utility fifteen years later.

Increasing opportunities for women to establish modern energy businesses can also provide an important means to correct gender disparities. Women have shown themselves to be effective entrepreneurs, and can acquire the skills needed to engage in energy-related enterprises. New approaches that include training and microcredit, and partnering with formal and informal women’s organizations, can help overcome traditional constraints (Eg. credit access) on women’s participation in the energy sector and help them take advantage of their strengths.

Measures to encourage women’s equal opportunities, training, education and employment in the energy sector can increase the local employment benefits provided to communities through energy sector development, and allow companies to take advantage of the full range of workers and skills available, thereby achieving greater efficiency, which strengthens the economy and the sector.

**Environmental and livelihoods impacts**

The local impacts of new energy development can be considerable, and tend to affect women’s and men’s livelihoods differently. Land issues are critical, with way leaves and resettlement compensation paid to (mostly male) property owners, even though women are often tenants and provide most of the agricultural labour. Environmental impacts on water, land, and forest resources and disruption of natural ecosystems have a direct effect on women’s informal livelihoods, and can increase their unpaid work burdens. Energy-related construction projects that bring in male crews also create risks for HIV/AIDS and sexual exploitation and violence that affect both women and men. In stakeholder consultations on energy development, however, women are too often merely passive participants.

Environmental Impact Assessments and action strategies do not always set targets that are differentiated by sex or monitored for results that impact men and women differently. Resources are often lacking in energy projects to promote women’s participation as stakeholders in Environmental Impact Assessments and Requests for Proposals, or for specific actions to address negative impacts on women. Setting up gender-disaggregated impact monitoring indicators and establishing a monitoring mechanism was an important step identified by the Ugandan transmission company. Gender indicators can be included in the bidding process and contractors contracts. A World Bank transmission project has also prioritized having a budget for women-friendly actions in communities along transmission lines, to ensure sustainability.

**Increasing connectivity and energy access**

Increased energy access can have many benefits for women, particularly in terms of labour-saving, health, education, information and political participation. However women and men tend to have different energy needs and roles in the household, different access to information and credit, and different roles in decision-making. They therefore may face different constraints with regard to access, and respond to different promotional messages and incentives.

Meeting the initial capital costs for connection and energy equipment is a challenge for many women, due to their unequal access to credit. Without land ownership, women have less collateral and are viewed as less reliable borrowers, even though studies show that women may have a better repayment record than men. Private companies and investors risk missing out on an important market if female consumers are not specifically targeted. Through gender analysis, the Botswana Power Corporation found that even though 52% of households were headed by women, female-headed households were connecting to the grid at only half the rate of male-headed households, so the BPC is undertaking women-targeted marketing. In Laos, a World Bank project managed to increase the connection rate overall from 81% to 97%, and the connection rate of female-headed households from 63% to 90%, by providing connection subsidies for single-parent households and women-friendly meeting times for promotions. Still, even connected households may still lack electricity in areas related to women’s work, for example in kitchens located in outbuildings that are not wired for electricity. At the same time, female-owned businesses, especially in the informal sector, face significant constraints in access to electricity. A study done by IFC (The International Finance Corporation) found that women-owned businesses faced longer delays in connection than male-owned businesses.

Some governments have chosen to provide free or low-cost connections for health clinics, grain mills, schools, street lighting, and water pumping, which are critical social services for women’s health, labour saving, and social and political participation. These can all be potential elements of a gendered approach to increasing connectivity and energy access by the energy sector, contributing significantly to meeting MDGs.

**Cooking energy**

Some utilities have begun to address women’s greatest energy need, cooking energy, through integrated household energy programs. In general, cooking energy receives far less attention in national energy policy and in development assistance than electricity. For example a World Bank ESMAP report shows that investments in cooking energy amounted to only about 5% of the World Bank’s energy portfolio in the period 2000-2008. Investments have not been commensurate with the importance of solid fuels in total fuel consumption (over 90% in poor countries) and its impact on energy poverty and health, including indoor air pollution, respiratory diseases, as well as the burdens of carrying heavy loads of firewood. Both market-based and public support is relevant in commercialization of improved stoves. With micro-finance, for example, poor women can gradually afford improved stoves. Partnerships among donors and institutions working in energy, petroleum, health, forestry, gender, rural development and climate change sectors are needed to leverage expertise and funding due to the multi-dimensional nature of household energy needs.

**Governance and civil society**

Good governance requires that responsible institutions are able to implement and enforce a sound policy and legal framework, and that they are held accountable to the citizens of the country. Norway has a comparative advantage in demonstrating sound models of resource and revenue management in the hydropower and petroleum sectors, though in a different context than is found in developing countries. Civil society actors can hold institutions and companies accountable for the negative effects and impacts when there is lack of compliance with legislation and procedures. Good governance requires women’s participation in these efforts along with men’s, and targeted strategies are needed to reach more women with information.

Norway is supporting a civil society coalition in Mozambique to strengthen members’ capacities to monitor petroleum development and participate in government processes under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. This includes providing complementary training and technical advice on gender issues. Similar coalitions could be supported in other energy sectors, including hydropower development.

**Requesting Assistance from Norad**

Norad provides demand-driven technical assistance and capacity development to Embassies and national partners seeking to mainstream gender in energy sector cooperation. Requests for assistance can be made to the Section for Rights and Gender Equality (LIRE).

To follow-up requests, Norad has entered into a frame agreement with ENERGIA, a leading international network with substantive experience on implementing gender approaches and activities in the energy and petroleum sectors.

Requests for in-country assistance are received and implemented as follows:

* Submission of a draft concept note by Embassies and national partners with basic information on the needs identified, proposed activities, duration and expected results.
* In dialogue with the Embassies, national partners, Norad’s Energy Section and ENERGIA, LIRE translates the concept note into a Terms of Reference (ToR) for ENERGIA.
* ENERGIA can be assigned to analyse, identify entry points, develop a gender action plan, and to provide technical capacity building support in the implementation of the gender action plan in close collaboration with the Embassies and national partners.
* Results based monitoring and reporting on gender mainstreaming in policy dialogue and programs on country level is done by the Embassy and national partners with assistance from Norad.

**Contact information**

For more information and to request the assistance for gender mainstreaming in energy sector cooperation, please contact:

Kari Marie Trædal Thorsen

Senior Adviser, Department for Economic Development, Gender and Governance

Section for Rights and Gender Equality

Email: kmt@norad.no

Telephone: +47 23 98 01 66

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1. *Two Technical Notes*: Gender Equality in Energy Sector Cooperation and Gender Equality in Petroleum Sector Cooperation. *Five Country Experience Briefs*: Gender in Norway’s Energy and Petroleum Cooperation in Mozambique; Gender in Norway’s Rural Electrification Cooperation in Uganda; Gender in Norway’s Transmission Cooperation in Uganda; Gender in Norway’s Petroleum Cooperation in Uganda; and Gender in Norway’s Energy Cooperation in Uganda. See <http://www.norad.no/en/thematic-areas/energy/gender-in-energy>

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)