**UNIT 11: THE GENDER ACTION PLAN**

***Aim of the unit:***

To introduce the Gender Action Plan as a methodology for gender mainstreaming.

***Learning objectives:***

After this unit, the participant should be able to:

* Explain the concept of a Gender Action Plan
* Define the contents of a Gender Action Plan
* Present a case for a Gender Action Plan as the basis for gender mainstreaming in energy sector organisations.

***Time schedule:***

In total: approximately 1 hour;

Study of the theory: 45 minutes

Discussion point: 15 minutes;

***Key concepts and ideas introduced in this unit:***

* Gender Action Plan
* Gender Audits & Gender Budgets
* Gender Organisational Assessment

***Topics in this Unit:***

Defining a Gender Action Plan

Developing a Gender Action Plan

Conditions for a Gender-Aware Energy Policy

**THE GENDER ACTION PLAN**

**What is a Gender Action Plan (GAP)?**

A GAP is a plan for gender mainstreaming. It can be used at all levels: policy, programmes, and within organisations for building capacity to mainstream gender. In this unit we focus primarily on gender mainstreaming in energy policy for the Ministry of Energy and other energy sector agencies to create a gender-aware energy policy. The unit outlines the elements of a GAP. These elements are described in more detail in individual units in the manual.

A GAP consists of:

* **Rationale**  
  This section sets out the reasons for gender mainstreaming in energy policy. The rationale can be based on the contribution a gender aware energy policy can make to meet a range of national policy goals. Energy policy generally serves a number of broad national goals such as economic growth and poverty reduction, as well as energy sector specific goals such as energy access for all and energy security. Countries which have signed international agreements on women’s empowerment, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, will also have national gender goals. Gender mainstreaming in the energy sector can also contribute to these goals. Energy sector organisations, such as utilities, will have goals relevant to their mandate which gender mainstreaming can contribute to. For example, the motivation for gender mainstreaming in the electricity utility could be that there is a need to increase connection rates which could be achieved by targeting women and women headed households.   
  A gender needs assessment of the energy sector[[1]](#footnote-1) can be used to identify specific gender goals, for example, to address the gender gap in employment in the energy sector. A Gender Organisational Assessment of the lead organisation, such as the MoE or Petroleum Corporation, can be included at this stage and? an empirical baseline can be established to set targets and to measure progress with gender mainstreaming.

**Case 1: The National Development Policy framework in Uganda**

The National Gender Policy (1997) of the Government of Uganda forms the political framework for addressing gender issues and to increase gender equality in all aspects of the economy. Article 4.1 points out that the overall goal of the National Gender Policy is to mainstream gender concerns in the national development process in order to improve the social, legal/civic, political, economic and cultural conditions of the people in Uganda in particular women. The National Gender Policy is a legal document binding for the government, its agencies and institutions. It is a part of the National Development Policy framework.

The aim of the gender policy is to guide and direct planning and resource allocation at National, District and Sectoral levels. It emphasizes government’s commitment to gender responsive planning and is designed to ensure integration of gender perspectives in all mainstream areas of development.

(Source: Energia, 2011)

* **Gender Goals**[[2]](#footnote-2)  
  Gender goals fall into different categories based on the underlying reason for that goal. There are three types of goals which focus on the intended beneficiary: welfare (reducing drudgery, meeting practical needs? and improving health), productivity (income generation) and empowerment/equity/equality (participation, decision making, self-confidence). A fourth type sees taking a gender approach as having benefits for organisational efficiency, particularly in being able to have more successful policy outcomes.   
  Within a government, even within a department of a ministry, several rationales for gender mainstreaming in energy policy can exist simultaneously. Also different stakeholders in a policy formulation process can participate with different (sometimes conflicting) rationales. What is important is that these rationales are clearly stated in policies and programmes.
* **Implementation**   
  Implementation is how policy is translated into practice. The implementation stage includes the translation of policy into workable detail using a range of policy instruments, including the formulation of laws, regulations, programmes and projects[[3]](#footnote-3), which are then operationalised. Gender mainstreaming at this stage has a twin focus. Firstly, ensuring that the policy instruments are gender-aware and contain gender goals. There can be a twin-track approach here: (i) women and men’s concerns are integrated into all policies and projects; and (ii) there are specific instruments aimed at empowering women. Secondly, ensuring that the implementation process is gender-sensitive, for example, by ensuring that there is gender balance in the teams and that women and men in target communities are equally participating in project decision-making. The aim of focusing on the implementation process is to successfully implement gender-focused policy instruments and to institutionalize the capacity in energy sector organizations to do so sustainably. A Gender Organisational Assessment of partner institutions can be included at this stage.
* **Indicators & targets[[4]](#footnote-4)**  
  Indicators can be used to measure progress in reaching a goal over time in a specific situation or condition. Indicators are a tool for both monitoring and evaluation in policy and implementation. They enable us to track performance and to take corrective action if need be.  
  Gender indicators are linked to gender goals. They are intended to measure progress in reaching gender goals over time. Gender indicators can also be used for monitoring and measuring progress on gender mainstreaming in policies and processes.  
  Indicators wherever possible can include quantifiable targets which can make the tracking process easier. Targets make goals concrete. Gender-sensitive targets consider the situation and needs of both men and women.  
  Indicators and targets are important for monitoring and evaluation.
* **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**[[5]](#footnote-5)  
  Monitoring is a continuous steering process to allow an assessment of progress towards achieving gender goals. This component is the primary responsibility of the Gender Focal Point (GFP).   
  Evaluation is an intermittent process at pre-defined moments in the policy/project cycle. Usually evaluation is held mid-term and at the end of the cycle. At appropriate moments the GFP and her/his team might want to make a self-evaluation when a particular mile-stone has been achieved. At the end of a policy/project cycle an evaluation is made of the policy or project. There can be an evaluation made by the organisation itself and/or an evaluation by an external consultant or team. The two types of evaluation would look at different aspects of the policy or project. The external evaluation is likely to be a requirement when there has been donor funding involved.  
  Both monitoring and evaluation processes use indicators, targets and a framework. Gender-aware monitoring and evaluation frameworks use gender analytical tools to define the methodology used.
* **Timeline & budget**A timeline sets milestones for the implementation of the GAP. It can also allocate responsibilities for implementation.It is probably self-evident that a budget is necessary for implementing the GAP. The budget should include a contingency to cover any unexpected events. However, the case will have to be made to the appropriate body within the organisation for a budget to both develop and implement the GAP. It is possible that the Ministry of Gender might have a budget to at least help with the development of the GAP. Implementation could be supported by an international development agency.

Table 1 gives some examples of a gender-aware energy policy, together with policy instruments and gender goals, which could be developed as the outcome of a Gender Action Plan.

**Developing a GAP**

The Ministry of Energy’s Gender Focal Point should be responsible for developing the GAP together with a gender and energy team. The composition of this team will vary depending on the focus of the GAP. For example, if the GAP focuses on the MoE’s internal capacity building for gender mainstreaming, that is it consists only of an organisational assessment, this might be considered a purely internal matter so the team consists of key individuals from the MoE. However, if the GAP focuses on gender equity in energy access, other GFPs from other energy sector organisations, such as the Electricity Utility and the Petroleum Commission, could be involved. Other energy sector organisations can develop their own GAP which should be synchronised with the MoE’s to help create greater impact. In this respect, it might be helpful if the MoE’s Gender Focal Point was a member of the gender team.

Developing the GAP can be seen as a twin-track approach of mainstreaming gender into policies and processes. In both cases it should be a consultative process. Consultation can take place at different levels with different stakeholders. It can start with the GFP making a presentation to senior management on the rationale for a GAP. At this stage there will not be a GAP document. The idea is to get management buy-in for the development and implementation of a GAP including the agreement to release resources and to sanction surveying and interviewing staff as part of the organisational assessment.

The basis for gender mainstreaming in policy is a gender audit[[6]](#footnote-6) (not to be confused with gender budgets – see below). The approach used is primarily participatory and is led by a national team of experts. A gender audit identifies specific ways in which gender issues are, or are not, addressed in existing national energy policy and critical gender gaps in existing national energy policy formulation and implementation processes. In other words, an audit identifies gender gaps. The gender audits all provide in-depth analysis of energy planning, budgets, the institutional capacity of ministries to implement gender-mainstreaming strategies, and the links between gender, energy and the national objectives for poverty reduction strategies and meeting the MDGs. Validation workshops help to reach consensus and ownership of the audit findings within the energy ministry and other energy sector organisations. These workshops discuss recommendations and agree on future actions with specific targets, time frames and budget estimates that are needed to engender the policies. The methodology of gender audits in the energy sector has been spearheaded by Energia which has built up a considerable body of experience in the carrying out such audits.

Consultation with women and men as energy end-users would help create a more bottom-up planning approach to formulating an energy policy than the more generally applied top-down approach which currently exists. Consultation for example through participatory workshop can help reflect women and men’s priorities. Such participation in itself can be empowering for women, although it has to be kept in mind that women may need capacity building to enable them to participate in such dialogues in a meaningful way. Men also need to be sensitized to allow women space to speak. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods can be particularly useful in capturing gender information: they emphasize local knowledge and enable women and men to make their own appraisal, analysis, plans and policy recommendations[[7]](#footnote-7). PRA can provide quick feedback on support for policies and project effectiveness. However PRA methods do require skilled facilitators. Table 2 gives the findings from a consultation workshop held in Liberia with a mixed group of rural and urban women and men to identify what they considered were gender needs and gaps.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Table 2 Findings from a consultation workshop to identify gender needs and gaps in the energy sector, Liberia[[8]](#footnote-8).** | |
| **PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED** | **SOLUTIONS PROPOSED** |
| • Rural women go through more stress than their male counterparts  • Decentralization of training and support for grassroots citizens (districts and clan levels) needed  • Increase in the cost of energy-from production to consumer or end users.  • The unavailability of electricity causes insecurity  • Lack of knowledge or skills to develop the appropriate technology for sustainability  • Lack of electricity  • Poor energy production  • Lack of female interest in energy technology  • Lack of safety in cooking with firewood  • Cost  • Institutional breakdown  • Short service  • State regulation  • Delivery and Maternal Mortality | • Training should be decentralized to grass roots level  • Empowerment for rural women to manage their stress  • Collaboration with stakeholders for policy influencing  • Capacity building of communities, identifying appropriate resource, etc.  • The provision of sustainable energy by making use of river water  • Train and develop the capacity of Liberian women  • Government should provide electricity to all its citizens  • Government should set a standard for all energy providers  • Modern fuels should be accessible and affordable  • Capacity building of females in the energy industry and in use of energy technologies |

A gender organisational assessment (GOA) is the basis for gender mainstreaming in processes. A GOA provides a critical evaluation from a gender perspective of the strengths and weaknesses of an institution’s systems and operations, as well as an assessment of existing constraints and opportunities within an organization, to comply with political commitments to gender mainstreaming at the level of the organization, work unit and individuals. A key output of the GOA is the establishment of provisions to support gender mainstreaming in the organisation, such as a gender structure, a gender strategy, an engendered monitoring and evaluation system, engendered reporting, gender trainings, technical training of women, key performance indicators for staff on gender mainstreaming, an engendered communication strategy, etc.

The output from these different consultative processes can then form the basis of recommendations for a GAP.

**Conditions for a Gender-Aware Energy Policy**

A number of conditions have been identified by Energia as being important for enabling the creation of a gender-aware energy policy through a GAP. That is not to say that you cannot create a gender-aware policy if some or all of the conditions do not exist, only that it is likely to require greater effort.

**Legislation on gender equality and political commitment**

The existence of gender equality legislation provides the political basis for engendering policy. Legal issues relate to the integration of gender equality in the constitution and the legal treatment of men and women as equal before the law. Linked to gender equality legislation is the political commitment to gender mainstreaming: putting pledges into practice. The existence of a National Gender Policy is an indicator of the political commitment towards achieving gender equality. A National Gender Policy should encourage gender-mainstreaming in all governmental levels and sectors. Commitment to international conventions on gender equality, such as the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action, can also play an important role in ensuring that governments act to mainstream gender in energy policy. A good test of the extent of political commitment beyond mere word is to see how much money is allocated to gender mainstreaming both within the national budget and with the MoE’s budget.

**Awareness by energy sector policy- and decision-makers of need for and benefits of gender mainstreaming**

Raising awareness of the different energy needs of women and men can be a critical first step for gender mainstreaming. Only when people are aware of something can they form an opinion on the subject. Policymakers rely on information either they collect themselves – from newspapers, scientific articles, etc. – or that is provided for them by others to make good decisions. As was indicated above, the GFP needs to raise the awareness of policy and decision makers within the MoE to initiate a GAP development.

The presence of active civil society organizations, such as NGOs, can also be helpful in raising awareness about gender and energy issues through advocacy activities.

**Sex-disaggregated data**

The collection of sex-disaggregated data, as well as data disaggregated by other socioeconomic variable, allows decision-makers, energy institutions, and development agencies to better understand who is using energy, for what and how. The data collected should be as comprehensive as possible since it can form the base line for monitoring and evaluation of energy policies not only by the MoE, but also a range of other organisations. At a very minimum there should be data collected on women and men’s time use for household and productive activities and rest, as well as information on women’s access and control over resources, technologies, and decision-making relative to men. Such understanding is critical to assessing needs, examining policy alternatives, formulating effective policies and programmes, monitoring progress, and evaluating results. The data should be analysed using gender analytical tools.

**Support from Ministry of Gender/Women and other organisations working on gender mainstreaming**

Support from within the national gender machinery in governments, for example a Ministry for Women’s Affairs or a Gender Ministry can help the GFP develop the GAP by providing resources and expertise. As was pointed out above, an active civil society, for example, NGOs conducting gender and energy advocacy, can help formulate and implement a GAP. International development agencies can also provide support for gender mainstreaming.

**Increased women’s participation in energy sector**

Increased women’s participation in the energy sector can be at two levels: (i) more consultation with women about their energy needs and challenges in meeting these needs; and (ii) more women in technical positions.

Attracting more women professionals in the energy sector and improving their senior or technical positions can help introduce a gender dimension into energy policies (although this does not guarantee gender-responsive policies, since women too can be gender blind). Creating mechanisms for the meaningful participation of women’s groups and gender experts in the policy formulation process can also help.

**Increased gender awareness and support by men**

**Box 1 Gender budgets**

Several African countries have adopted gender budgeting as a strategy to accelerate promotion of gender equality and pro-poor, equitable development. South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Mauritius, are among the countries that have undertaken comprehensive gender budgeting initiatives. Ethiopia has started with a Gender Budget Analysis; a plan has been elaborated to use the outcomes of the analysis for formulating a gender responsive budget. Burkina Faso has started with building the capacities of government’s technicians on gender budgeting, the process is underway. Gender Budgeting Initiatives in Africa differ in their scope and actors. All these countries looked mainly at the expenditure side of the budgets.

Actors:

• The Rwanda Gender Budgeting Initiative is a Government Initiative which is part of the country’s national strategic plan to promote gender equality and development.

* In Tanzania, a national NGO, the Tanzania Gender Network Programme (TGNP), initiated the gender budgeting.
* In South Africa, (the first country in Africa engaged in gender budgeting), the initiative was taken by the Parliament, post-apartheid.

• In Uganda, the Forum for Women in Development (FOWODE) mainly made up of Women Parliamentarians, initiated the gender budgeting work.

• In Burkina Faso and Ethiopia, the gender budgeting is an initiative of the government supported by development partners.

Source: Diop, N (no date given), “Gender Budgeting for African Development”

In the energy sector, there is a gender imbalance in terms of the organisations’ staff profiles: men tend to dominate the technical positions and women are less visible higher up in the organisational hierarchy. In part this can be attributed to the small number of women who graduate with appropriate qualifications suitable for a career in the energy sector, such as science, engineering and economics. While there are actions underway to encourage more women to take up these subjects[[9]](#footnote-9) it will be some time before there are sufficient numbers of women graduating with the appropriate qualifications for us to approach gender equality, therefore, men will have to become more gender-aware and –sensitive in their behaviour. In particular, at all levels, men need to be sensitized to allow women space to speak.

**Gender budgets**

The concept of a gender budget was mentioned above in the context of gender audits. In principle, public expenditures on social services and infrastructure are allocated on a gender-neutral basis. In practice, however, men and women have different energy needs and they use and benefit from energy services differently; energy budget allocations may not reflect those differences. One approach to ensuring that the needs of women as well as men are met is for government budgets to be gender disaggregated. Gender budgeting is a tool that can be used to break down and identify the differentiated impacts of public revenue allocations and expenditures as they affect men and women. Any analysis should look not only at the complex content of national budgets (inputs, outputs, and outcomes) but also the negotiation processes used to arrive at final budget decisions. In this respect, gender budgeting gives governments the opportunity to redirect public policies and expenditure to promote gender equality.

A number of African countries have adopted gender budgeting such as South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda (see Box 1). Conducting a gender budget exercise calls for highly specialised skills which are considered to be beyond many citizens especially in developing countries where literacy and numeracy levels are low (particularly for women). There are examples of civil society organisations, including in Africa[[10]](#footnote-10), developing methods to enable such groups to undertake gender budget analysis.

**The GAP Document**

**Discussion Point**

In the text some conditions for enabling gender mainstreaming in the energy sector to succeed are identified. Do you think we have the conditions in place in our country?

The GAP document should be around 10 to 15 pages. If it is too long, policy and decision makers will not read it. Detailed information can be included in appendices. The GAP should be presented and approved by the Minister/Board. Once approved it should be circulated as widely as possible. There should be reporting back to those who helped develop the GAP.

The GAP is a stand-alone document which sets out the methodology for gender mainstreaming in the energy sector. On the other hand it should not be seen as separate to the existing national energy policy but as an integral part of the policy. Elements of the GAP will be integrated into the policy instruments for operationalizing energy policy. Other energy sector agencies may integrate aspects of the GAP into their own gender mainstreaming policy. This can create a synergy for enabling gender mainstreaming throughout the sector in a more comprehensive way.

The GFP should report regularly to the Minister/Board on progress with implementing the GAP as well as proposals for up-dating energy policy. Indeed the GAP is dynamic – it will change over time – goals will be reached – new issues will emerge.

**Summary**

A GAP is a methodology for gender mainstreaming. It gives focus and a strategy which addresses policy content, instruments and processes. It is not a ‘one off’ activity but a continuous process which is developed and monitored using as wide a range of stakeholders as possible.

**Table 1 Examples of Elements of a Gender-aware Energy Policy, Policy Instruments and Possible Gender Goals.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Energy Policy** | **Policy Strategy** | **Rationale for gender mainstreaming** | **Gender-aware Energy Policy** | **Possible gender inclusive policy instruments** | **Examples of types of Gender Goals which could be reached as policy output/outcome** |
| To increase energy access | Encourage establishment of decentralised energy service companies (ESCOs) particularly to serve rural areas | * Energy technology tends to be dominated by males. * Information on energy technology usually targeted to males. * Due to traditional land tenure practices, most women lack collateral for loans to form enterprises. | To increase energy access through ESCOs run by women and men. | * Providing targeted training for women and men on decentralised energy technologies * Providing targeted training for women and men for developing a business plan * Establishing women-friendly credit facilities for establishing ESCOs | **productivity** (income generation; improved working conditions including reduced hours)  **women’s empowerment** (self-confidence in working with technology & running a formal sector business) |
| To promote the use of low carbon fuels | Promoting energy efficient stoves can help address women’s health and time poverty issues related to using traditional biomass fuels | * Men and boys as well as women and girls are affected by indoor air pollution (IAP) from using high carbon fuels –extent depends on level of exposure * Collecting fuel wood increases women’s time poverty * In some cultures men are also involved in fuel wood collection * Men usually decide about household equipment purchase including stoves | To promote the use of low carbon fuels to:  (i) reduce effects of IAP on women, men, girls and boys.  (ii) reduce (men and) women’s drudgery in fuelwood collection  (ii) reduce (men and) women’s time poverty due to fuelwood collection | * Designing energy efficient stoves in consultation with women who will use them * Raising men’s awareness of the multiple benefits of energy efficient stoves | **welfare** (reducing drudgery and time poverty; improving health) |
| To stimulate the use of LPG for cooking, especially in urban areas | Construction of new transport and storage infrastructure | Demand-side issues also need to be addressed:   * Women do most of the cooking. need to be consulted and informed in order to increase LPG use. * Men usually decide about household equipment purchase, including stoves & fuels. * Women and men are both concerned about safety issues. | Promote the use of LPG to women and men as a cleaner and more efficient cooking fuel, that will:   * Increase women’s productivity and wellbeing * Save time, effort and money * Improve the health of family members | * Focus awareness campaigns on women as the main users, include men as decision-makers. * Target women’s needs and concerns in developing and assessing equipment and distribution networks | **welfare** (reducing drudgery and time poverty; improving health) |
| To minimise damage from petroleum development and operations | Petroleum Operators who cause damage or relocation of legal land users are required to compensate the holders of title to the assets and the persons relocated.  Proponents of petroleum operations are required to undertake environmental impact studies with public participation, and to develop and monitor Environmental Management Plans, audited by the Ministry | * Attention focused on male heads of households, assuming incorrectly that women’s needs are included * Women’s household and productive needs for fuelwood, water and forest products are usually unidentified and neglected * Women are usually not equally involved in family decision-making and compensation for relocation and suffer from the loss of their resource bases and social networks | * Gender differences explicitly identified and addressed in the effects of petroleum operations on communities, livelihoods and commercial activities, and in measures for prevention, control, mitigation, rehabilitation and compensation | * Require explicit attention to gender differences in assessments, studies, consultations and compensation plans * Require women’s participation in consultations, community development projects and monitoring local impacts | **women’s empowerment**  (women’s self-confidence and skills built through participatory processes) |

1. See Unit “Identifying Gender Needs and Gaps in the Energy Sector” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Unit “Gender Goals”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Energia has produced a detailed handbook for developing a Gender Action Plan at the project level: *Mainstreaming Gender in Energy Projects: A Practical Handbook* which can be downloaded for free from www.energia.org. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Unit “Indicators” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Unit “Monitoring and Evaluation” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See the Unit “Gender Audits”. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A brief description of PRA tools can be found in an annex to the Unit “Identifying Gender Needs and Gaps in the Energy Sector”. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Report of “*an Interactive Workshop on Women's Empowerment to Identify Needs and Gaps in Access to Energy, Energy Use and Benefits for Women”*, held in Monrovia, Liberia 22 November 2011. http://www.norad.no/en/thematic-areas/energy/gender-in-energy/. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Since 2009 Norad has had a higher education programme to contribute to building capacity for the for petroleum and renewable energy sectors by providing support at the master’s level in higher education institutions in the South. One of the objectives is to enhance gender equality in all programme activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See for example: http://www.zwrcn.org.zw/southern-africa-gender-budgeting-network/61-southern-africa-gender-budgeting.html [↑](#footnote-ref-10)