

# HOW TO CLOSE GENDER GAPS WITH RESULTS-BASED FINANCING IN ENERGY PROJECTS

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## WHY?

- Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5). SDG7, which calls to “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, modern energy for all,” is integral to the achievement of SDG 5.
- Energy is an essential component of women’s daily lives, from household chores such as cooking and heating, to agricultural uses, education, and personal safety. Although energy is critical for women’s lives, energy poverty—defined as the absence of choice in accessing adequate, affordable, reliable, high quality, and safe energy services to support economic and human development—still disproportionately affects women.
- Household air pollution resulting from cooking and heating kills millions of people every year. Currently, 53 percent of people in low- and middle-income countries rely on polluting fuels for cooking, which include kerosene, coal, and biomass. Because women and girls are typically the most exposed due to uneven distribution of household work, access to clean, efficient fuel and technologies reduces their contact with harmful smoke from open fires and protects their health.
- Time spent on fuelwood collection can range from one to six hours a day in parts of India and Nepal. In Africa and Asia, the amount of fuel available has declined, so to find fuel women must go ever-longer distances. Fuel collection leaves little time for other tasks.
- Energy for cooking is often overlooked as if it were of secondary importance to other energy uses.
- The energy sector remains one of the least gender diverse sectors. Energy projects have the capacity to improve quality of life in communities. However, when projects do not take different needs of men and women into account from the beginning, they may also bring unintended risks and harms for women or perpetuate inequality.
- Women are an integral part of the value chain across the whole energy sector, from producing and distributing household energy, to employment in the electrification workforce, to entrepreneurship. Yet they are not being employed in the sector at the same rate as men and also have overall lower rates of entrepreneurship in clean energy.
- Better lighting improves the productivity of many household activities and helps create entrepreneurship opportunities for women.
- Better lighting has benefits for public safety and therefore enables free movement. When women and girls no longer need to use unlit latrines or walk for hours to collect firewood, their exposure to risks of physical and sexual attacks decreases. Better lighting also improves women’s and girls’ education outcomes.

## RBF and Energy: Project Entry Points

- Any type of disbursement (payments of output-based aid, subsidies, etc.) can be linked to indicators related to gender gaps, and to incentivize stakeholders.
- Projects can link disbursement to compliance with activities identified and defined as part of the gender analysis of the project (e.g., balancing a microgrid through subsidized electricity rates for productive activities at certain times during the day, or provision of key services such as lighting to increase safety). Targets to close identified gender gaps can appear as part of disbursement linked indicators (DLIs).
- RBF has a comparative advantage in the ability to specifically target population and service providers through its physical verification, especially those otherwise underserved in projects.
- Results-based funding projects typically have a high-quality M&E and have the resources to obtain gender disaggregated data and closely track progress.
- Disbursing can be based on meeting the quotas for women within new job markets and developing training for these skills.
- RBF/Output-Based Aid mechanisms that are friendly and accessible to women-led households can be developed.
- Financing mechanisms for female-headed households and energy services provision can be targeted.
- Financing mechanisms for appliances and lighting needed in schools, health posts, social centers and water delivery services can be targeted.
- Disbursement can be made contingent on training in gender data collection (including in M&E units in all public energy institutions) and increased coordination of M&E activities concerning gender.
- Targets related to utility outreach initiatives (health risk management, prevention of gender-based

## Project Example | India Energy Efficiency Scale-up Program (PforR)

The **gender gaps analysis** identified is limited employment for and outreach to women in the programs of the borrower, the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (ESSL). The borrower was to set up a sustainable development unit tasked with the development and implementation of a gender strategy. The establishment of this unit is a Disbursement Linked Indicator.

The **action that supports closing the gender gap**, apart from sensitization through orientation and training of ESSL, was advertising positions with a preference for women candidates at different levels, managerial, technical, and administrative.

The **results framework** tracks how many of the newly created jobs go to women, with an expected increase from 16 percent (2017) out of 366 to 25 percent (2022) out of 500. The program also monitors the number of female beneficiaries of LED bulbs sold under the program.

*Project link in Gender Tag portal*

- violence, joint land titling, and support of women's self-help groups) can be created.
  - Household surveys can drill deeper where needed and collect useful insights. For example, understanding intra-household decision-making about appliance purchases and use, or stimulating demand. This way, RBF pilots can circumvent the common pitfall of falsely assuming that having beneficiaries that are 50 percent male and 50 percent female shows equity.
  - Impact evaluations involve a detailed description of the beneficiary households and allow for further estimations of gender-related development impacts. This can help upcoming projects set much more concrete targets related to energy use.
- HOW?**  
**Project Preparation**
- What to do at PCN stage?* Decide whether a pilot will be addressing a gender disparity in the energy sector at this stage. At this point, the task team should also consider whether project M&E plans are commensurate with the intended impact. It is not realistic for GPRBA pilots to have a large project preparation and M&E budget that is out of proportion vis-à-vis recipient-executed grants and their overall impact.
  - Start with identifying the gap. This is the moment to find out the unmet needs of men and women, and what contributes to different outcomes for them in the context of the energy sector. Consider whether there are significant differences between women as a group as well (by ethnicity, by age, etc.).
  - To identify the gender gaps, consult these useful resources: The World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2016–2023, Regional Gender Action Plans (RGAPs), Systematic Country Diagnostics (SCD) and Country Partnership Frameworks (CPF), Global Practice (GP) Follow-Up Notes to the Gender Strategy.
  - Analyze the context: i) Who does what? What do women and men do, and where and when do these activities take place? (Activities); ii) How, with what? (Assets); iii) Who has what? (Property); iii) Who is responsible for what? (Obligations); iv) Who has the right to what? (Claims, rights); v) Who controls what? (Income, expenses); vi) Who decides what? (Power); vii) Who receives what? (Distribution); viii) Who wins and who loses? (Redistribution); ix) Why – What is the basis of the situation? (Rules, norms, customs).
  - Allocate funds to gaps analysis related to women during project preparation.
  - Focus on services and outputs that are particularly beneficial to women and girls (e.g., clean cooking,

**Figure 1: Following the Project Cycle:**



energy for reproductive use, accessing better jobs in the energy sector, more female-headed households connected to the grid) and think backwards how to get there. Are there opportunities to incentivize women?

- Conduct a rapid gender review of the proposed operation, prepare a social analysis, and plan for implementation support. Allocate funds for additional gaps analysis related to women if needed during midterm review.
- Consider how to build capacity for implementing the activities that would respond to the identified challenges.
- When thinking through a project component and activity beneficiaries, such as ways to increase energy access, do not simply set the target of ensuring that 50 percent of the beneficiaries will be female. This would not measure progress in closing a meaningful gap between men and women in the energy sector, and disbursing based on reaching this indicator would fall flat. Instead, the financing can bring results if the indicator also conveys a concrete improvement, such as an increase in *use* or *receipt* of services. The project should clarify how the desired result (receipt of services) is narrowing the gender gap in the sector.
- *Other good practice:* Plan to allocate funds to gaps analysis related to women during project preparation.
- Do not assume that household composition is unitary, with resources, benefits and responsibilities shared equitably. Projects that fail to consider intrahousehold power dynamics can perpetuate inefficiencies and poor governance.
- Take into account how the project can benefit women-owned enterprises.
- Plan to measure how the outcomes for each gender are changing (as opposed to just “head-counting,” e.g., how many women attended trainings).
- Consult the Global Practice Gender Expert at PCN stage and the GPRBA gender strategy.
- Include women on equal footing with men in all consultations and communication plans to reflect the social realities, and create mitigation mechanisms to promote health risk management.
- Together with the counterparts, require projects to think about sexual and gender-based violence in the project cycle, including the development of

reporting mechanisms for when violence against women and girls does occur, to prevent and combat these types of violence.

- If gender-based violence was identified as an issue for the project, components could include, for instance: training programs on healthy conflict resolution or healthy parenting, or mechanisms for governments to enhance more systematic provision of quality services (health, legal, judicial, education) for survivors. Use the Good Practice Guidance Note for Addressing GBV in Investment Project Financing to assess the GBV risk of the project and include actions to mitigate the risk. When possible, go beyond risk mitigation and include transformative actions to prevent and respond to GBV.
- Obtain gender disaggregated data or set up mechanisms for its collection.
- Involve a gender expert in all the phases of the project cycle.

### Implementation

- As with any RBF project implementation, teams working to close gender gaps should think of the purpose of monitoring and information systems, invest upfront in verification, and be adaptive and flexible in order to address realities on the ground and correct course where needed.
- Designated officers can be trained to collect and analyze data at regular intervals (every six months), enabling Bank teams to review predicted impacts, as well as examination of the effectiveness of mitigation measures (such as how many women/girls are benefiting, are attendance targets being met, etc.).
- Restructuring is the opportunity to make sure that no group is being left behind, and—just as importantly—to consider whether the project is actually working towards narrowing a gap between men and women in the sector.
- Examine if new gender disparities emerged during implementation and reflect them in midterm review. If the release of performance-based funds is conditional on performance, the risk is that those who were already doing quite well will receive even more money. If not mitigated, financing can have regressive effects on gender equity. Revisit, for example, gender equity in allocation of project resources, issues of illiteracy, *unpaid care work* and elder care, GBV.
- Consider complementary services to maximize the impact of electrification projects (social marketing

## Questions to Consider during Project Preparation

- Who provides energy for the household?
- Is the service delivered benefiting men and women differently?
- Would a large-scale project benefit women, or would they be unaffected?
- Who uses energy productively (for producing goods and services) and who reproductively (cooking, washing and other household chores)?
- Are women accessing jobs in the sector at the same rate as men?
- What energy source is used for what?
- How is the usage is prioritized?
- Do school-aged girls need to utilize the household energy?
- What is the impact of energy use or energy access on women's time use?
- What legislation exists, and is it gender-blind?
- Do female engineers employed in the energy sector have lower salaries and are they less likely to get promoted?
- Is the closing of gender gaps clearly linked to the Results Framework?
- *Always go beyond Safeguards. Design actions that aim higher than mitigating unanticipated consequences of the intervention.*

### Gender-Based Violence

- Do women and girls have access to safe and reliable energy that does not place additional labor, time and health burden on them? Does this make them less vulnerable to violence? Does the threat of violence affect women's choice of sources of energy?
- Are specific activities included in the project that will provide women safe access to cleaner energy?
- Given the threat caused by dark and poorly lit spaces, how can lighting be strategically placed to make women and girls always feel safe?
- Does labor influx required by the project increase the risk of violence against women and girls?
- Will there be a sustained labor influx, potentially interrupting the social cohesion of the community?

for electric household appliances, savings groups, credit facilities).

- Look for further opportunities to promote alternative (clean) energy sources—gas, clean cookstoves etc., and female entrepreneurship in the sector.
- Ensure that gender inequalities are taken into account in the project implementation (e.g. lesser participation, illiteracy, time).

- Ensure women's participation in project implementation (when applicable).
- Ensure that women and girls are benefiting with the project.
- Ensure women's participation in governance structures.
- Monitor the GBV risk and mitigation strategies.
- Ensure gender and gender-based violence technical expertise on the team.

### Examples of Objectives

- Increase women's participation in energy sector policy development and project planning processes
- Increase women's participation in the energy sector work force, especially in "green" jobs
- Increase women's access to the benefits of energy services

### **M&E: Selecting targets and indicators that help close gender gaps**

Try to think beyond sex-disaggregation. Include indicators that will show closing of concrete gaps between women and men. Some examples include:

- Tracking the time spent studying in the evenings for both boys and girls

- Number of women board members in energy companies
- Number of senior jobs created, percentage of which were staffed by women compared to baseline
- The energy authority carries out (Number) specific measures to implement state regulations on equal opportunities for men and women at the workplace
- Number of institutions (networks, NGOs) that implement pilot projects to provide women with livelihoods based on energy use
- Percentage of women's employment at an electrical utility in STEM jobs
- Number of female-headed and/or female-owned companies awarded contracts for work

Verification agents can be trained to ask additional questions, such as:

- What was the impact of interventions on women's workload, time use, access and control of income, decision making? (including ongoing projects)
- Is the service making an impact on dynamics between men and women/boys and girls in the household?
- Will it continue to have this same impact six months and 12 months from now?
- Who makes the decision about how the energy source is being used?

- What is the household members' current information about new forms of energy?

### Project Completion

- All data collected need to be gender-disaggregated.
- Upon completion, an impact evaluation is recommended to collect useful data for lessons learned with regards to closing gender gaps.
- There is growing evidence from other sectors that combining different RBF interventions within the same program can generate better results than using any one intervention alone. It would be helpful for GPRBA to accumulate the lessons on whether this is also the case when attempting to close gender gaps.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective*. 2019. IRENA.
- *Gender Equality in The Geothermal Energy Sector: Road to Sustainability*. 2019. World Bank.
- *Getting to Gender Equality in Electricity Infrastructure*. 2018. World Bank Group.
- *Accelerating SDG 7 Achievement, Policy Brief 12 Energy and Gender*. 2018. United Nations.
- *Making the case for Gender Equality in Large-Scale Renewable Energy Infrastructure Development*. 2018. USAID and IUCN.

## Project Example | Ethiopia Electrification Program (ELEAP) (PforR)

- The **gender gaps analysis** investigated the links between the gender of the head of the household and access to electricity and energy technologies. The analysis also outlined inequalities between men and women across areas such as education (especially STEM), income, employment, access to finance, and entrepreneurship. It showed that women spend significant parts of their day on unpaid tasks of collecting firewood, and the female employment in the electricity sector is low.
- **The actions that support closing the gender gap included** capacity building in the Ethiopian Electric Utility with a focus on gender mainstreaming for the senior management, and reviewing current and annual training plans. A plan was made to foster women's interest in careers in the electricity sector, and steps were taken to help close gender gaps in employment in the sector through affirmative action measures and internships. Additional actions focus on the gender gaps in management-level positions and showcasing women's careers and contributions to the electricity sector. Provision of childcare has been identified as a competitive advantage and a strategic priority to attract and retain female staff. Assistance was set to be provided to do an initial baseline assessment for the EEU to provide childcare. Focus was to be placed on exploring how electricity services (off-grid and on-grid) can reduce the time and labor burden of women and how to enhance and create income-generating opportunities for women.
- **The results framework tracks** households connected to the grid under the program that are female-headed, and women in STEM: Percentage women's employment at EEU.

*Project link in Gender Tag portal*

- *Levers of Change: How Global Trends impact Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Access to Sustainable Energy*. 2018. Sustainable Energy for All, ENERGIA, and UKAID.
- *Super-clean cookstove, innovative financing in Lao PDR project promise results for women and climate*. 2018. ESMAP.
- *Energy Access and Gender – Getting the Balance Right*. 2017. World Bank Group and ENERGIA.
- *Focus on Gender in Energy and Extractive Operations – A Source Book for Task Team Leaders*. 2016. World Bank Group.
- *Results-Based Financing in the Energy Sector: An Analytical Guide*. 2015. ESMAP.
- *Ethiopia: Lessons Learned Electricity Access Rural Expansion Program*. 2015. GPOBA.
- World Bank. *Violence Against Women Resource Guide*. <https://www.vawresourceguide.org/>
- World Bank – Gender Website. <https://worldbankgroup.sharepoint.com/sites/Gender/Pages/Home.aspx>.
- World Bank. *Good Practice Guidance Note for Addressing GBV in Investment Project Financing Involving Major Civil Works*.





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