

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Efforts and Benefits of Mainstreaming Gender in the SADC Renewable Energy Sector



Initiatives at Regional and National Levels

Gender-Responsive Institutional Frameworks

Universal access to sustainable energy is one of the key targets set by African leaders in the visionary strategy of the African Union, titled *Agenda 2063*. Among the Sustainable Development Goals agreed by African and other leaders at the United Nations, Goal 5 is Gender Equality and Goal 7 is Affordable and Clean Energy. These global goals are known officially as “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. At regional level, the SADC Treaty seeks gender parity, and SADC’s strategic plan, the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020 presents the target of attaining gender parity at all levels and ensuring gender mainstreaming in all sectors. The RISDP identifies gender and energy as a critical area of regional development and integration, in line with the United Nations initiative on Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All).

Gender, Poverty and Energy Nexus

The existing SADC energy policy framework is comprehensive and places emphasis on the availability of sufficient, reliable and least costly energy services. This addresses the broader SADC objectives, which include investment attraction and promoting competitiveness and trade as a means for eradicating poverty, aligned with the environmentally sustainable use of energy resources.

With regard to gender equity responsiveness of the renewable energy policies and institutional frameworks, although a nexus of gender, poverty and energy has been established, the early stage of development of policies on renewable energy has affected the formulation of gender equity laws to promote women’s access to renewable energy in the region. The legal and policy framework in southern Africa does not reflect a strong consideration for mainstreaming gender in energy policies and programming or the renewable energy agenda.

Gender equity and equality are a main area of focus in the integration agenda and SADC Member States have supported the fundamental principle that both women and men must be engaged in decision-making at all

levels and in all areas of socio-economic development in line with the SADC Treaty.

Gender equality frameworks such as the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development have the objective “to provide for the empowerment of women, to eliminate discrimination and to achieve gender equality and equity through the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programs and projects.” The Protocol contains Articles on economic justice and the empowerment of women that are relevant to the energy sector.

SADC Renewable Energy Frameworks

In the past decade most SADC Member States have initiated specific renewable energy programs that combine awareness raising, capacity building and research and development with some activities for deployment of renewable energy technologies. This has resulted in varying degrees of progress for the key issues such as energy efficiency, cleaner fuels, the promotion of renewable energy and the enhancement of regional energy integration through the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP).

The main policy instruments concerning energy in the SADC region are:

- ❖ SADC Protocol on Energy (1998);
- ❖ SADC Energy Cooperation Policy and Strategy (1996);
- ❖ SADC Energy Action Plan (1997) and (2000);
- ❖ SADC Regional Energy Access Strategy and Action Plan (2010);
- ❖ SADC Renewable Energy and Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2030).

The Protocol on Energy acknowledges the important roles of women and men in the implementation of energy programs and urges Member States to “ensure that the development and use of energy takes cognisance of the gender realities of the region.” Under Guidelines for Cooperation, the Protocol also recognises that the gender dimension is one of the key socio-economic issues that the region’s energy policy should address. This is in addition to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the SADC Treaty that directly seek to facilitate the empowerment of women and positively influence gender-balanced interests. The promotion of community participation in policy formulation and implementation with special attention on the gender dimension is highlighted in the SADC Energy Protocol.

This intervention is intended to inform the development and implementation of the Renewable Energy Strategy and Action Plan that gives effect to the revised RISDP framework for 2015-2020.

The SADC Energy Protocol and its Activity Plans, and the revised RISDP are the main policies that are referred to for Renewable Energy governance and implementation. Other frameworks that are being developed for full implementation, are the:

- ❖ Regional Energy Access Strategy and Action Plan (REASAP);
- ❖ SADC Biofuel Decision Making Tool and;
- ❖ Framework for Sustainable Biofuels.

SADC also completed the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Master Plan: Energy Sector Plan in 2012.

In April 2015, SADC approved the Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap, which identifies energy as a key enabler of an inclusive process to industrialize the region that involves women as well as men.

Frameworks at National Level

Only three countries have renewable energy policies -- South Africa, Zambia, and Namibia. This lack of policy development in the region suggests that women are critically absent in the policy formulation and implementation sphere of the renewable energy drive currently taking place. Furthermore, there may be an inherent male-centred approach to energy development due to the technical nature of the subject, which is not overtly awake to the inclusion of women-centred approaches in its models. The Table shows the renewable energy instruments that SADC Member States have in place at national level.

Renewable Energy Instruments in SADC Member States

Country	National Energy Policy	Energy Master Plan	Renewable Energy Policy	Renewable Energy Strategy	RE Master Plan/Action Plan	Integration of RE into Rural Electrification
Angola	✓					
Botswana	✓	✓				✓
DRC	✓					
Lesotho	✓					
Madagascar	✓					
Malawi	✓					
Mauritius	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Mozambique						
Namibia	✓		✓			✓
Seychelles	✓					
South Africa	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Swaziland						
Tanzania	✓					✓
Zambia	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Zimbabwe	✓	✓				✓

SADC Directorate of Infrastructure and Services, Energy Division

SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

The 34th SADC Energy Ministers meeting in July 2015 in South Africa has already set the motion towards renewable energy by making a landmark decision to establish the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE). The centre will be strategically important in promoting the uptake of renewable energy sources and technologies in southern Africa.

The objective is to build a strong evidence base of the benefits of mainstreaming gender in the sector that will be useful to SADC Member States and other players in the energy sector as they move towards implementing their commitments to ensure that gender is mainstreamed at all levels and in all programming in line with regional, continental and global targets.

CASE STUDY

RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICY IN WEST AFRICA

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has developed a forward-looking policy that prioritizes gender and women-centred approaches in all facets of energy and renewable energy development in the region.

ECOWAS considers gender equality an engine of regional integration and a development objective of paramount importance, seeking to transform “West Africa into a fair and safe community in which men and women have equal opportunities to participate, decide, control and take advantage of all development initiatives.”

The ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy (EREP):

- ❖ Identifies participation by women and support to gender equality as a guiding principle for its implementation, including the application of participatory approaches.
- ❖ Has adopted a concrete target on cooking energy (at par with electricity), “to universalize dissemination of high-efficiency cook stoves (35%) to the urban population by 2020.”
- ❖ Sets a penetration target of 100% by 2020, when all other stoves will be removed from the market and their manufacture banned.

EREP requires that each Member State ensures gender mainstreaming through a Gender Action Plan as part of the National Renewable Energy Policy with objectives, outcomes, activities, etc. Countries are expected to undertake advocacy to include gender policy and vision in the institutional framework, and the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficient (ECREEE) has been mandated to develop guidelines to mainstream gender in the National Renewable Energy Policies. In national budgets, a minimum budget is to be set for renewable energy initiatives for gender/women.

The policy, regulatory and institutional framework around gender mainstreaming in the energy sector is gaining momentum in the ECOWAS region. This is because in order to address the energy access challenge, ECOWAS has taken practical steps to empower women and men on an equitable basis by involving both parties to contribute equally towards solutions to the energy poverty crisis.

Energy and Gender Linkages in ECOWAS Country Policies

	National Energy Policy	Renewable Energy Policy	Energy Efficiency Policy	Gender Dimension in	National Gender Policy Energy Policies	Energy Linkage in Gender Policy
Benin	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Burkina Faso	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Cabo Verde	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Cote d'Ivoire	✓	✗	✗		✓	✗
Gambia	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Ghana	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	
Guinée	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Guinée Bissau		✗	✗		✓	
Liberia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Mali	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Nigeria	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Senegal	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Sierra Leone	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	
Togo	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

ECREEE www.ecreee.org

Conclusion

Women are disproportionately affected by challenges associated with access to modern sources of energy compared to men. This has affected development processes, including energy, as sustainable development cannot be achieved without full and equal participation of women as well as men, both in law and practice. There is need for the SADC region to develop mechanisms for addressing inequalities in the energy sector and expanding the role of women in developing and implementing energy solutions.

The SADC region has already made the political decision and commitment to mainstream gender equality and empowerment of women in regional policy as indicated in the RISDP, reflected in the Strategic Implementation Framework on Gender and Development

(SIF) backed by the SADC Gender Policy and a range of other regional and international commitments. However, the legal and policy framework in most SADC Member States does not reflect a strong consideration for mainstreaming gender in energy policies and programming or the renewable energy agenda.

It is this transition from political will to concrete actions that presents the challenge to be addressed in energy projects in southern Africa as there is often no link between references to women or gender in the policy and institutional framework governing the sector in the region. Since it has been established that a gender approach leads to greater energy efficiency, the new SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE) should be positioned as a catalysts for gender parity and gender-appropriate

responses for capacity building, resource assessment and allocation, knowledge management and investment promotion for the attainment of regional integration through access to green energy solutions.

Strategically placing women at the centre of renewable energy and energy access in the region will ensure success in the mandate of providing a response to the needs of the SADC Member States with respect to the development and implementation of renewable energy and energy-efficiency technology in line with continental and international trends.

As the main institution responsible for renewable energy in SADC, SACREEE should consider staffing for gender mainstreaming, gender desks and appointments of gender focal points with clear mandates for mainstreaming gender and building staff capacity, accompanied by the necessary budgets.

Since a main aim of SACREEE is that of providing a response to the needs of the SADC Member States with respect to the development and implementation of renewable energy and energy efficiency technology while adapting to international commitments, it is essential that these institutions position themselves for practical production of the gender-appropriate responses in their mandate to implement policy management, capacity building, resource assessment and allocation, knowledge management and investment promotion for the attainment of regional integration through access to green energy solutions.

Regional Context

As SACREEE firms up activities, it is encouraged to adopt a deliberate stance on staffing for gender mainstreaming. SADC can build on the work of ECREEE whose policy definitions in West Africa have led to a dialogue whose results stretch beyond policy declarations to create awareness and a shared understanding of the dynamics of the gendered face of energy. Staffing for gender mainstreaming will ensure that gender concerns are integrated within project policies and frameworks of this key institution.

An organisational gender policy and vision adopted by the governing body of SACREEE will give the projects a clear mandate for gender mainstreaming. Project planning documents will clearly include commitments and deliverables on gender to

ensure that attention is given to gender issues in planning, resource allocation, and monitoring, as well as in training manuals, reports and other publications. This type of institutional planning has the capacity of then stimulating a contextual regional review of the renewable energy situation and how men and women are accessing the different products on offer to combat energy deficiencies in the various member states.

Political Dialogue

SACREEE and related institutions are encouraged to spearhead a political dialogue involving all the relevant ministries in the Member States, stakeholders from the public and private sectors, including women and men. The dialogue could be a platform to discuss issues related to gender and energy as well as exchange of experiences and lessons from SADC Member States and to define a clear policy and strategic framework for mainstreaming gender in the renewable energy sector.

The development and adoption of a Gender Action Plan on renewable energy will demonstrate commitment to the practical implementation of the renewable energy agenda and avoid the drawback of placing gender merely as a crosscutting issue without ownership of the responsibility to implement gender-responsive strategies at secretariat level. This will provide the SADC Secretariat with clear direction on support for Member States to address gender equality and renewable energy issues and concerns in policies and programs, and facilitate social inclusion of sustainable energy for all citizens of the region.

Resource Allocation and Monitoring

As the development of the Gender Action Plan takes places, it is critical that the framework clearly defines a method for resource allocation and budget for the mainstreaming exercise. Gender mainstreaming efforts are not likely to be sustainable unless an overall budgetary allocation is made in favour of the whole exercise. Consultations, strategy mapping exercises and the production of white papers require a budget. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track implementation of the Gender Action Plan at regional and national levels will have to be developed to track progress and document success stories to inform future strategic plans.

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