

# RENEWABLE ENERGY

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

## SADC Gender and Renewable Energy Network

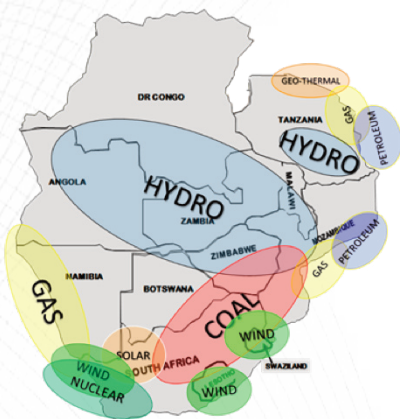
The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has vast energy potential from solar, wind, nuclear, hydro, thermal, gas and petroleum resources among the 16 Member States. This energy potential in the region is a major input needed to thrust economies towards industrial growth and development (SADC/SARDC 2016).

Renewable energies in particular, such as hydro, wind, solar and biomass can be major contributors to sustainable development in the region. In this regard, SADC developed the Regional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan (REEESAP). The REEESAP, which spans the period 2016-2030, provides a framework for SADC Member States to develop renewable energy strategies, leading to a greater uptake of renewable energy as well as mobilization of financial resources in the sector.

The SADC Gender and Renewable Energy Network offers a platform for stakeholders to share information and experiences to assist in the implementation and/or enactment of laws and policies that promote the mainstreaming of gender in the renewable energy sector. This means creating space for equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to sustainable development through active participation in this sector, including decision-making. Access to renewable energy should be seen as a liberating factor for women, a key enabling factor for participation in economic development, and a top priority for reforming the energy sector.

Most women and girls in southern Africa spend their time on basic tasks that are time-consuming, non-remunerative and highly laborious, such as collecting biomass fuels, without access to modern energy services. This further exacerbates gender inequalities as many women, especially in rural and peri-urban areas, are unable to access wage employment, education or business opportunities due to these responsibilities, and this also limits options for social and political interaction outside the household.

REEESAP acknowledges that access to energy is gendered and that women and girls are the primary users of household energy, often the most adversely affected by the lack of access to modern, clean, affordable and sustainable energy services. Women and girls constitute more than half the population of SADC Member States (*SADC Statistics Yearbook 2015*), and the Southern African Power Pool (2015) says that demand for energy in the SADC region has increased from 45,148 MW to 48,216 MW in 2015.



### SADC at a Glance – Gender and Renewable Energy

Population				
Women	Men	Growth Rate	Rural	Urban
156 065 602	149 941 822	2.41%	181 000 000	125 007 424
Rate of Urban Expansion		Access to Electricity		
6%		128 523 118		
Household Air Pollution				
People Affected		Deaths/Year	Child Deaths/Year	
212 072 843		153 229	68 818	
Renewable Energy				
Renewable Energy Sources		Generation capacity		
4 (Hydro, Wind, Solar, Biomass)		18 565 MW		

All data is for 2015

Source Population data from *SADC Statistics Yearbook 2015*; Access to electricity from REEESAP 2016; Household air pollution, *REN21 2015*; Renewable energy sources, *SADC Energy Monitor 2016*; Generation capacity, *SAPP Annual Report 2015*.

**THIS FACTSHEET** is the third in a series that focuses on gender and renewable energy in the SADC region. Factsheet 1 presents the effective practices, efforts and benefits of mainstreaming gender in the SADC renewable energy sector. Factsheet 2 looks at policy frameworks on gender and renewable energy in the SADC region while drawing on effective practices in implementation from West Africa. Factsheet 3 builds on the issues discussed to introduce the Gender and Renewable Energy Network. Such a network has the potential to be a key driver in accelerating the development, implementation and evaluation of gender and renewable energy policies, programs and projects at national and regional levels. Gender mainstreaming in the Renewable Energy sector will have a positive impact on the living conditions of people in the region who do not otherwise have access to energy.

### **SADC Gender and Renewable Energy Network**

The Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) through its gender and energy institutes and a project funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) spearheaded the establishment of the SADC Gender and Renewable Energy Network. The network strengthens contacts and communication among existing structures to generate deeper awareness of the benefits and experiences of mainstreaming gender in renewable energy policies and strategies at national and regional levels by identifying challenges and sharing solutions that can be addressed through policies, programs and projects.

The SADC Gender and Renewable Energy Network, established in April 2018, has started with 19 stakeholders from ministries of energy, gender, national energy regulatory authorities, the SADC secretariat gender unit and energy division, and regional research and energy institutions. The network at present comprises 11 women and 8 men, providing a platform to share information and experiences that may assist in the implementation and/or enactment of laws and policies that advance gender mainstreaming in the renewable energy sector.

Drawing on effective practices by the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), the SADC network is expected to initiate the development of a regional policy for gender mainstreaming in the renewable energy sector and an implementation strategy and action plan. It is envisaged that through these policy instruments, Member States will address existing barriers that may hinder the equal participation of women and men in improving renewable energy access in SADC Member States.

The development of gender analytical tools to be used by focal persons in program design and implementation as well as in monitoring and evaluation is also an important aspect which the network is expected to tackle.

The SADC Gender and Renewable Energy Network will support efforts by the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE) through its Gender Mainstreaming and Women in Sustainable Energy Program. The SACREEE program aims to contribute to increasing access to modern, affordable and reliable energy services, energy security, and environmental sustainability by tailoring national and regional policies, projects and programs to the energy needs of men and women, and fostering the economic empowerment of women through sustainable energy access.

### **Initiatives by Gender and Energy Focal Persons in SADC Member States**

Gender focal persons in SADC Member States, who make up the SADC Gender and Renewable Energy Network have influenced the mainstreaming of gender issues into government initiatives in order to improve access to renewable energy by women and men. According to the examples shown below, the number of people with access to electricity remains low, particularly in rural areas where the majority of the residents are women.

#### ***United Republic of Tanzania***

The Government of Tanzania through the Ministry of Energy has:

- promoted the use of solar energy for lighting health centres with priority to maternity services;
- facilitated the use of efficient cooking stoves to rural communities; and
- promoted access to modern energy services using renewable energy sources such as windmills to pump clean water, thus reducing the long-distance travel by women and children in fetching water, particularly in rural communities.

#### ***Malawi***

In Malawi, the work by Gender Focal Persons and other stakeholders has resulted in:

- the National Energy Policy of 2018 incorporating gender in energy sector interventions;
- establishment of training courses for renewable energy technologies and designing of software, driven by the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability & Social Welfare with UNDP funding. The training targets women engineers by offering 100 percent subsidy of fees. The training includes Renewable Energy Technologies Modelling; and,
- initiatives to increase access to electricity for both women and men.



### Eswatini

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy in Eswatini introduced:

- the Wood Efficient Cookstoves Project in order to reduce intake of household air pollution and injuries due to fire which were mainly affecting women and children. The project reduced frequency of firewood collection as the efficient cookstoves use less firewood and emit less harmful fumes/smoke.
- the installation of solar PV systems in a number of public institutions (health centre, border gate,

university campus, constituency centres (for security lighting), street lighting, blood banks etc.) which were previously affected by power outages as well as high electricity costs.

### Population with Access to Electricity

Member State of SADC	Rural %	Urban %
Eswatini	65	87
Malawi	3	42
Tanzania	49.3	97.3
Zambia	11.4	67.3

### CASE STUDY

### GENDER AND ENERGY NETWORK IN ZIMBABWE'S ENERGY SECTOR

The Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) has mobilized the promotion of gender in the national energy sector. ZWRCN notes that awareness of gender and energy in Zimbabwe has been lacking and civil society organizations lack capacity in energy lobbying and advocacy, hence the organization saw the need to establish a gender and energy network. The Gender and Energy Network in Zimbabwe was established in 2017 under the Green and Inclusive Energy (GIE) Partnership. The goal of the GIE is "A transition towards 100 percent Green and Inclusive Energy Systems that improve livelihoods, support social services and create economic opportunities and growth for all while mitigating climate change."

The Gender and Energy Network in Zimbabwe (GENEZ) has a membership of 15 organizations and seeks to empower women, children and youth through skills development workshops, training programs, awareness campaigns, increasing local participation in energy projects and campaigns. GENEZ lobbies for gender mainstreaming in national energy policies and strategies, through engaging experts in the gender, energy and other fields to articulate the issues and to advocate for change in relevant spaces.

The gender and energy network uses a multi-sectorial approach where civil society, financial and industrial stakeholders join hands on their respective roles and competences to coordinate action towards improving gender and energy access. Through the network, there has been an increase in the participation of women and children in energy-related programming, thus starting to bridge the gap between energy-related policy frameworks and implementation.

The network continues to lobby for acceleration in the use of renewable energy technologies and increased budgetary allocations to the energy sector, and is actively engaging civil society organizations, especially women's organizations. ZWRCN has produced a policy brief articulating gender issues in the renewable energy sector in Zimbabwe that offers insights into the barriers that curtail access to renewable energy as well as giving solutions to overcome them.

### CASE STUDY

### ECOWAS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON GENDER AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

ECOWAS established ECREEE to drive the development of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency technologies in the ECOWAS region of West Africa. ECOWAS considers gender equality as an engine of regional integration and a development objective of paramount importance, and has taken steps to mainstream renewable energy and gender into its regional activities and policies. ECOWAS established a technical committee to drive the implementation of the programs and to support its involvement in matters surrounding the future of renewable energy production and sustenance in West Africa.

The technical committee is a network of stakeholders who provide advice and recommendations to the ECREEE Secretariat. Key to their role is the provision of a channel for ECREEE to reach out to the key actors in promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency in the region. ECREEE has structured its stakeholder network in a reliable layout in which all responsible for contributing to gender and energy-related development are being involved in policy making and implementation.

In addition, a network of National Focal Institutions (NFIs) was established to serve as a liaison between the Secretariat and the energy and gender ministries from all ECOWAS Member States. Most activities of the Centre are implemented in cooperation with the NFIs or other entities of the public and private sector.

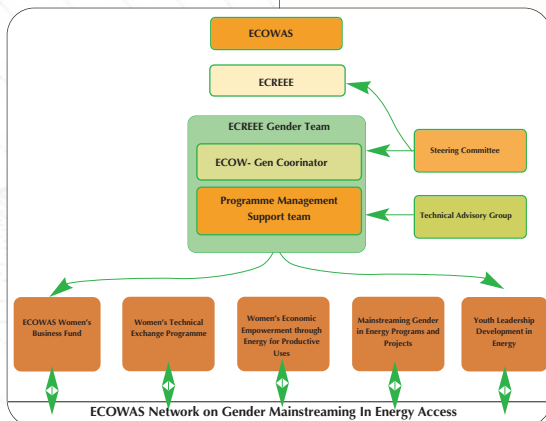
The structure of the ECREEE technical committee consists of:

- Three representatives from ECOWAS Commission (Energy, Environment, Private Sector Department);
- Two representatives from ECOWAS Member States (Energy, Environment);
- One representative from each contributing donor;
- One representative from Energy Enterprises/private sector in the region;
- One representative from Energy Training/Research Institutions/NGOs in the region;
- One representative each from the West African Power Pool (WAPP) and ECOWAS Regional Energy Regulatory Authority (ERERA);
- One representative from ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) or the ECOWAS Project Preparation and Development Unit (PPDU);
- Expert staff from ECREEE.

Under the ECOWAS Program on Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access, which was established by ECREEE in 2013 with a mandate to steer ECOWAS Member States in the direction of mainstreaming gender in policy formulation, legislative drafting, energy projects as well as program design and implementation, an ECOWAS Gender Network (ECOW-GENetwork) was established. The ECOWAS Network is an interactive online platform connecting gender and energy practitioners, as well as other stakeholders, with the objective to promote through knowledge sharing, a more cohesive, coordinated and effective approach to gender-responsive sustainable energy development in West Africa and in Africa. The network is open to all those who are interested to participate from West Africa and Africa

The ECOW-GENetwork works to:

- support information exchange and knowledge transfer on best practices in gender mainstreaming in energy access;
- facilitate collaboration between ECOWAS member states and countries outside the region;
- raise awareness and conduct advocacy for mainstreaming gender in energy development;
- contribute towards capacity-building efforts by targeting policy makers, project promoters and civil society groups.



## Conclusion

The implementation of gender mainstreaming must begin within stakeholder committees who have expertise in the relevant fields. The SADC region should be cognisant of the fact that a key indicator for measuring development is by assessing equality between women and men, as well as their access to renewable energy.

SADC has already made the political decision and commitment to mainstream gender equality and empowerment of women in regional policy, as indicated in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), which is reflected in the Strategic Implementation Framework on Gender and Development 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 (SARDC, 2017). The SADC Gender and Renewable Energy Network is, therefore, tasked with supporting implementation of the policies while further identifying issues that are hindering equal access to renewable energy technologies.

The Network is expected to consult women, men and youth at national and regional levels about how they intend to be part of development processes in the energy sector,

both as implementers and as beneficiaries. The SADC Gender and Energy Network is still young and structures are yet to be put in place for effective planning and coordination to allow various contributors to be part of the deliberations and decision-making processes.

Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender in the SADC Renewable Energy Sector should be developed, drawing on the experience of the network to assist Member States in the effective involvement of women and men in the planning, development and implementation of gender and renewable energy policies, programs and projects, and ensuring that gender is constantly on the main agenda of renewable energy initiatives. The guidelines are intended to ensure that women and men are not regarded solely as project beneficiaries, but as part of the sustainable development process. The SADC Gender and Energy Network can and should be expanded to include, in addition to Gender / Energy focal persons in SADC Member States:

- ❖ SADC Secretariat
- ❖ National energy institutions
- ❖ Regional energy bodies such as SAPP, SACREEE and RERA
- ❖ Financial institutions that have interest to invest in the energy sector
- ❖ NGOs working on energy and/or gender-related matters
- ❖ Universities, researchers, media and private sector.

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