



Photocredit: Pierre Kistler, Puits dans le village de Tounzourawa, zone de Dankassari, Niger

SDC GUIDANCE SHEET

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This thematic guidance sheet is one in a series written to support SDC staff in ensuring that gender issues are taken into account transversally in different thematic domains - in this case water. This guidance note illustrates key issues regarding gender in water such as:

Women and girls are responsible for water collection in 80% of households without access to water on premises.

Women are underrepresented as professionals in water management and governance, only seven percent of all ministers of water and natural resources are women and women are underrepresented at lower levels of decision making.

The purpose of this note is to guide reflections. It is not a checklist.



Water and gender – the guidance note at a glance

Key issues

The need to strengthen gender equality and women’s empowerment arises along the entire water cycle. The analytical part of this guidance note is therefore structured along the water cycle as enshrined in Sustainable Development Goal 6 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Gender equality is also relevant irrespective of whether water is treated from a development, humanitarian, peace or human rights perspective.

Water and gender are both priority themes for the SDC.

Concepts & frameworks:

SDG 6 of 2030 Agenda p. 3
 Nexus p. 3
 HRWS p. 4
 SDC’s work p. 4

Gender analysis

Understanding the current situation and identifying the challenges

Analysing:

- Gender-specific roles and division of labour in water
 e.g. engineering as a man’s domain, collecting water as a women’s
- Access to and control over water as a service and resource as well as access to opportunities deriving from water
 e.g. access to freshwater withdrawal rights, access to water jobs
- Participation, voice and leadership in decision-making over water
 e.g. representation of women in water user committees
- Gender-specific needs and interests related to water?
 e.g. women’s and girl’s needs for menstrual health management

Illustrations & examples:

Water, sanitation, hygiene p. 5
 Quality, treatment, reuse p. 6
 Efficiency, supply, scarcity p. 7
 IWRM & transboundary p. 8
 Ecosystems p. 10
 Means of implementation p. 11

Gender-responsive interventions

Deciding what to change and how

Choosing gender-responsive partners

Gender-responsive programme design – introducing measures to:

- Fight against limiting gender roles in the water sector
 e.g. provision of role models and mentorship for women engineers
- Remove obstacles to water as a service, resource and opportunity
 e.g. lobby against discriminatory land ownership laws that are related to freshwater withdrawal rights
- Empower women to participate, voice and lead in water governance
 e.g. reserve half the seats in water user committees for women
- Respond to gender-specific needs related to water
 e.g. provide for dignified disposal of menstrual health products

Gender-responsive resource allocation

Illustrations & examples:

Partners p. 12
 Programme design p. 12
 Resource allocation p. 14

Gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation

Ensuring that progress is measured

Inclusion of gender in the theory of change, gender-specific targets and indicators, sex-disaggregated targets and indicators etc.

Illustrations & examples:

Monitoring & evaluation p. 15

This guidance note illustrates key issues regarding gender in water. The purpose of this note is to guide reflections. It is not a checklist. For tools and in-depth reading on water and gender, please refer to the reference section.

Links to further information:

Tools & further reading p. 16

The Water Cycle in the Sustainable Development Goals



The targets of SDG 6 cover the whole water cycle in an integrated manner (6.1 – 6.6). SDG 6 also includes targets on the means of implementation (6.a and 6.b).

Water concepts, definitions and normative frameworks

The water cycle and 2030 Agenda

Human survival, various household activities, agriculture and fisheries, industrial production, energy generation as well as all ecosystems depend on water resources. At the same time inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure, insufficient water-use efficiency (for instance in agriculture) and inadequate industrial and municipal wastewater treatment negatively impact the availability of water resources both in terms of quality and quantity. Unsustainable practices have an impact far beyond where they originate because a) global water resources are limited, b) water crosses borders and c) multiple uses and users depend on the same water cycle. Therefore, “it is essential to look at the water cycle in its entirety, including all uses and users.”¹ The international community has recognised this by including Sustainable Development Goal 6, which covers the entire water cycle, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹ UN-Water 2016

Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are integrated, interlinked and indivisible, which reflects the reality of water management. While there is one SDG on water (SDG 6), all 17 SDGs depend on water and vice versa.² The connection between water (SDG 6) and gender equality (SDG 5) is one illustration of this.³ For instance, progress on access to safe and affordable drinking water (6.1.) reduces the disproportionate burden of unpaid work and care on women and girls (SDG 5.4) as they carry the primary responsibility for collecting water and caring for family members who have fallen ill from water-related diseases. At the same time, women’s participation and leadership (SDG 5.5) are key to ensure that particular attention is paid to women and girls in sanitation and hygiene management (SDG 6.2.).

² UN-Water, 2018

³ Other examples are target 3.3 on water borne diseases, target 11.5 on water-related disasters and target 15.1 on freshwater ecosystems, or the connection between water and energy generation (SDG 7), agriculture (SDG 2), climate change (SDG 13), etc. (UN-Water, 2016)

Water in humanitarian crises

Access to drinking water and sanitation are among the most pressing needs in a humanitarian context. Functioning water infrastructure is a prerequisite for recovery, reconstruction and transition to sustainable development as water is indispensable for human health and virtually all economic activities.

Natural disasters and violent conflicts are not gender-neutral in their impact. They can both exacerbate existing inequalities or contribute to breaking limiting gender stereotypes out of necessity.

Water and peace

Failure to manage water resources sustainably and equitably results in social tensions, economic losses and environmental degradation, thus threatening peace and stability. At the same time, cooperation around the sustainable management of water resources is a powerful instrument to

ensure peace and stability. Even in a fragile context, trust built around water cooperation can underpin broader peacebuilding efforts. Despite the fact that women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, reconciliation and economic recovery in post-conflict situations leads to more sustainable results, women still remain underrepresented.⁴

The human right to water and sanitation

Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation are human rights. The human right to water and sanitation (HRWS) was first recognised by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) in 2010. Since then, the HRWS has been treated at the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the UNGA on a biannual basis. Recent resolutions of the HRC and the UNGA on the HRWS have recognised the right to sanitation as a distinct right and called upon

4 UN-Women, 2018

states to promote women's leadership and participation in decision-making on water and sanitation management. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as well as several other human rights treaties⁵ also contain references to safe drinking water and sanitation.

The SDC's work on water

The SDC's work on water is guided by the HRWS, SDG 6, the principle of leaving no one behind⁶, the SDC/HA Operational Concept 2017-2020 Water and Sanitation (WASH)⁷ and the Swiss Lines of Action on Water and Peace.⁸ In its humanitarian work, water is one of the four priority themes for the SDC. Accelerating the implementation of SDG 6 is at the core of the SDC's de-

5 CRC, CRPD, ILO Convention No. 161 of 1985 and several regional instruments (OHCHR 2019)

6 SDC guidance note on leaving no one behind – A note specifically on this topic and water will be published in summer 2019

7 SDC 2016

8 FDFA 2015

velopment cooperation activities on water, with a particular focus on transboundary cooperation and financing through its Blue Peace programme.⁹ Blue Peace reduces tensions over water resources with concrete measures at the political and technical level, which contributes to peace and stability.¹⁰

This note is structured along SDG 6, which covers the entire water cycle. The link to the SDC's work in humanitarian contexts and on water and peace (Blue Peace) is straightforward: SDG 6 explicitly calls for access to water and sanitation for all. 'For all' includes those caught in humanitarian crises and the principle of leaving no one behind, which is at the core of the 2030 Agenda and poses that the needs of the most vulnerable must be put first. SDG 6 also calls for transboundary cooperation, which is at the core of the SDC's Blue Peace activities.

9 SDC 2019

10 For guiding documents on the SDC's work on gender please consult the Gender Shareweb



Photocredit: Aga Khan Foundation, IHHI project

Gender analysis – What are the gender inequalities and obstacles in your context?

“Gender analysis is a systematic analytical tool used to identify, understand and explain the different roles, needs and opportunities of men and women and the relations between them.”¹¹ The gender analytical framework used by the SDC assesses gender equality through four lenses:

1. Gender roles and division of labour
2. Access to and control over services and resources
3. Participation, voice and leadership
4. Women’s and men’s needs and interests

The following section illustrates the application of this analysis framework to water programmes along the entire water cycle as set out in SDG 6.



Access to water, sanitation and hygiene

The SDC strives to ensure universal access to safely managed drinking water and adequate sanitation services that are accessible when needed and affordable to all, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable.

Gender analysis – illustrative questions:

→ Gender roles and division of labour:

What are the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the provision and use of water and sanitation services? How is the labour divided? Who decides on the spending on water and sanitation services?

e.g. burden of unpaid work and care related to fetching water and caring for sick children

→ Access to and control over services and resources:

Do women and men have equal access to water and sanitation services? Are there gender-specific obstacles to accessing water and sanitation services? Can women and men equally participate in the economy of the provision of services?

e.g. women entrepreneurs or engineers have opportunities to participate in the provision of services, thus receiving an income

→ Women’s and men’s participation:

How are women and men involved in the design and implementation of the water and sanitation project? Are they equally represented and do they have equal power and influence?

e.g. equal voice in stakeholder consultations

→ Women’s and men’s needs and interests:

What are the gender-specific practical needs in terms of water and sanitation services? Are there cultural obstacles to the expression of these needs? How does access to water and sanitation services affect women and men?

e.g. availability of sanitary pads and the stigma on menstrual health management

Inappropriately designed programmes where women and children have not been involved can result in water and sanitation facilities not being used, or used incorrectly, which puts communities at risk of disease outbreaks, i.e. when sanitary facilities are too far away or unsuitable and women therefore resort to open defecation at night.¹² Outbreaks of diseases, in turn, add to the burden of women and girls as the traditional carers of sick family members. Girls may drop out of school due to unsuitable sanitary facilities, such as mixed toilets or no provision for the safe disposal of sanitary materials.¹³ Limited access to culturally appropriate sanitary pads and methods for their safe disposal, washing and drying may negatively affect women’s mobility and participation in the workforce. These gender-specific challenges also apply in a humanitarian context. Natural disasters and violent crises such as conflict and upheaval are not gender-neutral in their impact. While they may challenge traditional gender roles (i.e. women taking over the

breadwinner’s role) they often exacerbate existing gender inequalities, be it in terms of time burden, socio-economic vulnerability, access to and control over resources, participation, access to services including reproductive health services or access to safety. One in five women or girls are likely to become the victim of sexual violence in humanitarian settings.¹⁴ The collection of water – traditionally the responsibility of women and children in many cultures – becomes more time-consuming and strenuous in the aftermath of a disaster or during conflict as water points may be located further away. The risk of sexual and gender-based violence is exacerbated by isolated and unsafe locations of water points or sanitation facilities, a lack of lighting, locks, privacy and separate sanitation facilities for women and men, as well as tensions with host communities over water resources.

11 SDC ‘How to Do a Gender Analysis’

12 WHO/IASC, 2006

13 Unicef 2016

14 UN-Women, 2016

Spotlight on menstrual health management (MHM):

Target 6.2 of SDG 6 on sanitation and hygiene explicitly calls for particular attention to women and girls to underline the urgency of targeted action. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by a lack of sanitation and hygiene.¹⁵

In Nepal managing menstruation hygienically and with dignity is difficult due to the lack of suitable sanitary installations and waste disposal solutions. Traditionally MHM is a subject that is taboo in Nepalese society, even between mothers and their daughters. As a consequence Nepalese women and girls suffer from health complications associated with unhygienic menstrual management and from the stigma associated with menstruation. In the western part of Nepal women and girls are banished to separate huts or animal sheds during menstruation under the practice of 'chhaupadi', with sometimes fatal consequences due to pneumonia or suffocation. In February 2017 the Swiss NGO Water and Sanitation Consortium, in collaboration with the Regional Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee organised a regional workshop on MHM in schools that resulted in the Dang Declaration. This declaration with 15 key points for effective MHM was subsequently taken up by the national workshop, organised by the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation in collaboration with the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and partners of the Water and Sanitation Consortium. The momentum created by these workshops raised awareness among government officials and led to the formation of an MHM Practitioner Alliance, various MHM-related campaigns, the drafting of an MHM-related national policy and MHM infrastructure projects such as gender-friendly toilets and water access in schools.¹⁶

15 OHCHR 2014

16 Swiss Water and Sanitation Consortium 2017, WSSCC 2018



Photocredit: Swiss NGO Water Consortium, 2018



Water quality, wastewater treatment and safe reuse

The SDC supports the improvement of water quality by reducing water pollution along the whole water cycle and across all sectors.

Gender analysis – illustrative questions:

→ **Gender roles and division of labour:** What are the roles and responsibilities of women and men in improving water quality, wastewater treatment and safe reuse?

e.g. overrepresentation of women in informal, unpaid wastewater management and underrepresentation in formal, lucrative wastewater management

→ **Access to and control over services and resources:** Who in the target area has control over water resources and the sources of pollution? Do women and men have equal access and control over the resources and information needed

for and generated by improved water quality, wastewater treatment and safe reuse?

e.g. insufficient access to information may result in negative health implications for women involved in informal reuse

→ **Women's and men's participation:** What is the influence and power of women and men in standard setting on water

quality and wastewater treatment? Do they have equal rights, opportunities and capacities to participate in and influence decision-making?

e.g. underrepresentation of women in government institutions with oversight of water quality

→ **Women's and men's needs and interests:** What is the impact of water pollution on women and men in terms of health, livelihood etc.?

e.g. health impact of water pollution on pregnant women

Water pollution increases the burden of unpaid work and care on women and girls. Lack of access to water of safe quality in close proximity to the household results in more time spent on collecting water or more time spent caring for family members that have fallen ill from consuming polluted water.¹⁷ Reducing pollution and improving water quality thus improves the lives of women and girls. At the same time, formal wastewater treatment and safe reuse also represent an employment opportunity.

17 UN-Women 2014

"The female share of the workforce in the formal wastewater treatment sector is quite marginal."¹⁸ This underrepresentation is more pronounced in the public and private sector than in the intergovernmental sector.¹⁹ The exclusion of women from those positions, due also to gender stereotypes, prevents them from sharing equally in the economic opportunities generated by wastewater treatment and safe reuse.

18 ILO 2017

19 Ibid.



Water-use efficiency, freshwater supply and water scarcity

The SDC promotes the efficient use of water and infrastructure at all levels and for all uses, notably to improve access to drinking water and sanitation, as well as food security.

Gender analysis – illustrative questions:

→ **Gender roles and division of labour:** What is the division of labour in the sectors which are targeted in the water-use efficiency programme?

e.g. division of labour in agriculture, the textile industry or beverage companies

→ **Access to and control over services and resources:** Do women and men have equal access to technical solutions to improve water-use efficiency?

e.g. financial resources to invest in new technologies to improve water-use efficiency

→ **Women's and men's participation:** Do women and men have equal rights, opportunities and capacities to participate in decision-making in ensuring sustainable freshwater withdrawals?

e.g. connection between decision-making power over water withdrawal and land ownership

→ **Women's and men's needs and interests:** How and to what extent does water scarcity impact the income of women and men?

e.g. impact on women smallholder farmers relying on rain vs. often male-dominated large-scale agriculture relying on irrigation systems

The impact of water scarcity on women's and men's livelihoods may differ due to different roles, unequal access to resources and unequal decision-making power. Ag-

riculture accounts for 69% of freshwater withdrawal worldwide²⁰ and is therefore a key target for water-use efficiency interventions. Worldwide more land is owned by men than women and in many countries women are legally discriminated against in land ownership and inheritance laws. Since decision-making power over freshwater withdrawals is often connected to land tenure, women are at a disadvantage. Furthermore, with no or only a small plot of land to use as collateral, women's access to credit to invest, for instance in new water-use efficiency technology, is difficult.²¹

20 FAO / AQUASTAT, 2014

21 World Bank 2017, IUCN 2018

Spotlight on the empowerment of women smallholder farmers in freshwater management

Seasonal rainfall variability exacerbated by climate change poses diverse challenges, including soil erosion from water streams during the rainy season and water scarcity during the dry season. These negative impacts, often affecting women smallholder farmers the most, can be reduced by better freshwater management.

The population of eastern Chad depends almost entirely on farming and pastoralism. The SDC project 'Storm-water management in the Sahel Region of Chad' builds weirs to reduce soil erosion, improve water management, replenish groundwater aquifers, expand the cultivable acreage and make more effective use of the land, thus improving food security. The vegetables and tree crops, farmed mostly by women, are particularly vulnerable to climatic hazards with a high rainfall variability and significant risk of drought. Therefore the project places particular emphasis on women's access to improved farming techniques and their empowerment in resource management. In its efforts to accelerate economically viable initiatives the project prioritises initiatives led by women. Results from the first two phases (2012–2018) show that the weirs can extend the cultivation season by several months and allow livestock to be watered throughout the year in certain low-lying areas. So far the improved infrastructure has benefited around 30,000 households (210,000 people), including approximately 12,000 households headed by women, and allowed them to double their annual income on average.



Photocredit: Boris Maver and Nonny Bamba, SDC



Integrated water resources management (IWRM) and transboundary cooperation

The SDC promotes the sustainable management of water, seeking to balance different uses and the interests of different users. The SDC seeks to reduce tensions around water resources, paying particular attention to transboundary cooperation and promoting water as an instrument for peace.

Gender analysis – illustrative questions:

→ Gender roles and division of labour:

What are the roles of women and men in water resources management? Are they limited due to gender stereotypes?

e.g. perception of engineering and hydrology as a male domain

→ Access to and control over services and resources:

Do women and men have equal access to the benefits of the productive use of water?

e.g. revenues from energy generation, agriculture, textile industry etc.

→ Women's and men's participation:

Are women and men equally represented and do they have the capacity and power to influence decisions on integrated water resources management, including transboundary cooperation?

e.g. underrepresentation of women in river basin organisations

→ **Women's and men's needs and interests:** Are the needs and interests of women or male-dominated sectors and activities taken into account in an equitable manner when water management decisions are taken?

e.g. water management decisions that may lead to economic gains in the formal economy but increase the amount of unpaid work for women in terms of collecting water or caring for sick children

Integrated water resources management (IWRM) provides a framework to ensure that water resources are managed in an equitable, sustainable and efficient manner. Women's empowerment and attention to women's specific needs are integral to IWRM principles.²² However, gender is among those aspects of IWRM with the lowest implementation rate.²³ While there has been some progress in the recognition of the role of women in domestic water supply and sanitation, their role in the productive use and management of water resources is often overlooked. Furthermore, lack of political will, restrictive social norms and unequal power relations restrict

women's participation in water governance at the local, regional and international level. This is particularly pronounced in transboundary contexts.²⁴ Transboundary water governance is conventionally framed as a state-to-state matter that is decided between high-ranking representatives from the ministries of water, infrastructure and foreign affairs. Women are underrepresented in high-ranking government positions, and this is even more pronounced when they are already underrepresented in the sector as whole as is the case in water and infrastructure. Also, most institutions involved in transboundary water governance are not gender-sensitive. As a result women in decision-making positions in conventional transboundary cooperation are rare.²⁵

²² IWRM principles aka Dublin principles, 1992

²³ UN-Water, 2018

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ IUCN 2018

Spotlight on women in water governance in transboundary contexts

Gender inequality is prevalent in transboundary water governance at national, regional and international levels. Notably, most institutions responsible for transboundary water governance are not gender-sensitive, despite international recognition of the importance of women's participation in decision-making and governance mechanisms.

If transboundary cooperation is framed as a multi-level governance process as opposed to a traditional state-to-state process women tend to have a greater voice. This multi-level governance approach is at the core of IUCN's Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE) programme, financed by the SDC. This process emphasises the basin level and integrates local needs, capacities and governance with the national and transboundary level. Reframing the dialogue around water diplomacy and water governance as a set of actions and agreements that occur at multiple levels allows a better understanding of all actors, including women, and enables them to drive change in water management.²⁶ Through BRIDGE's work in the Mesoamerican basins, the participation of women and young people in the Basin Commissions and in other regional activities has increased.²⁷ Not only do women have a greater voice if a multilevel-governance process is employed, but such a process has also proven to lead to strengthened transboundary cooperation overall.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ IUCN 2018, end of phase report

²⁸ IUCN 2018



Photocredit: IUCN Water Programme

Protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems

The SDC supports nature-based solutions for water management that rely on the protection, sustainable management and restoration of natural or modified ecosystems as a cost-effective alternative to conventional water infrastructure.

Gender analysis – illustrative questions:

→ **Gender roles and division of labour:** What is the division of labour between women and men in the protection of ecosystems and are there gender stereotypes?
e.g. perception of forestry as a male domain

→ **Access and control over services and resources:** Are the economic benefits of restoring water-related ecosystems equitably shared between women and men?
e.g. income generated by payment for watershed services approaches

→ **Women's and men's participation:** Are women's and men's knowledge and requests taken into account in an equitable manner in decisions on the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems?
e.g. women's or men's specific traditional, ancestral knowledge on plants etc.

→ **Women's and men's needs and interests:** For which benefits do men and women rely on ecosystem services? Are they the same?
e.g. household activities vs. income-generating activities

Water-related ecosystems have the ability to filter water, store water resources, regulate water flow and absorb shocks such as floods and droughts. The restoration and protection of water-related ecosystems is therefore key in ensuring the sustainability of water resources. Many communities have developed traditional, ancestral ap-

proaches for the protection and sustainable management of water-related ecosystems. Depending on the traditional gender roles, women or men may be the primary custodians of this traditional knowledge.²⁹ At the local level in particular, the knowledge and experience women may have due to their roles and responsibilities as the primary providers of water, food and energy at the household and community levels can provide a clear entry point to involve them in decision-making processes, including in peacebuilding situations.³⁰ To what extent women share in the economic benefits of water management, including payment for ecosystem services, is often closely linked to how well they are integrated in initial stakeholder consultations and whether they are included in decision-making bodies.³¹

29 UNESCO, 2017

30 UNEP/UN-Women/PBSO/UNDP 2013

31 Forest Trends 2018 (internal report)



Spotlight on women in the preservation of wetlands

A focus on women-headed households may not only be justified by their greater vulnerability, but also by their higher responsiveness to certain actions such as preserving ecosystems as a livelihood.

The miParamo project co-funded by the SDC was launched in 2016 and set up an investment scheme in ecosystem services in order to preserve the Andean wetland and improve the livelihoods of families living in the region. As of 2019 the project has managed to preserve 1,000 hectares of wetland and improve the lives of over 150 families, thus proving that conservation is socially acceptable and economically feasible. In the high Andean communities women play an important role in their communities and are as involved in agriculture as men. In their interventions, miParamo prioritises female-headed households. There are two reasons for this. First, these households tend to be more vulnerable and in greater need of new opportunities. Second, women tend to be more responsive to conservation as a livelihood. Not only has the project been successful in preserving wetlands, it has also contributed to women's empowerment. According to the project management, the fact that the Water Fund of Santander, the organisation running the project, is led by a woman with strong leadership and advocacy skills has played a key role in this success.³²

32 Correspondence with Goodstuff international



Photocredit: Storytelling transmedia miParamo, 2018



Means of implementation and the private sector as an implementing partner

International cooperation, capacity building and strengthened participation is at the core of the SDC's work. However, the SDC's work goes beyond the traditional framing of the means of implementation in SDG 6.a. & b as it considers the private sector a key partner in implementing SDG 6.

Gender analysis – illustrative questions:

→ Gender roles and division of labour:

What is the division of labour and role of women and men in the productive use of water in the private sector and how time intensive are the respective tasks?
e.g. *rice transplantation as a woman's domain*

→ Access to and control over services and resources:

Do women and men have equal access to the benefits of capacity building in the water sector?
e.g. *access to training programmes*

→ Participation, voice and leadership:

Does the cooperation approach promote equal participation of women and men?
e.g. *a multilevel-governance process that integrates the local, basin-level, national and transboundary economic, social and environmental priorities is more favourable to women's participation than a traditional approach that favours national level strategic economic outcomes*

→ Women's and men's needs and interests:

How are women's and men's interests taken into account in allocating the resources in international cooperation on water, sanitation and hygiene?
e.g. *resource allocation for menstrual health management*

gender relates to the way water interventions are implemented and how the resources are allocated – in other words, the means of implementation.

To understand the dynamics of gender and water it is key not only to analyse gender along the entire water cycle but also how

Spotlight on gender in water stewardship projects with the private sector

The private sector is increasingly engaging in water stewardship initiatives. The stewardship agenda, while currently focused on natural resources issues, is a good entry point for considering broader, water-related social issues such as the empowerment of women. A thorough gender analysis is key to ensuring water stewardship interventions benefit women. Without a gender analysis and gender-responsive interventions this project would have resulted in negative unintended consequences for women as their livelihoods were called into question.

In the province of Punjab in Pakistan, the Water Productivity (WAPRO) project funded by the SDC and conducted by HELVETAS in collaboration with Mars Food, aims to increase the productivity of water through the promotion of water stewardship for crop production. A thorough gender analysis brought key insights to light. Women were mainly involved in rice transplantation, a work that creates significant health hazards and, therefore, diverts part of their earnings to healthcare. With the adoption of new sowing methods and production technology like dry seeding, transplantation is no longer necessary. The consequences of this however are two-sided. On the one hand, the health hazards and the burden of healthcare costs have been eliminated. On the other hand, the future role of women in the rice value chain, the gender division of labour and women's livelihoods have been called into question as the tasks that were traditionally considered women's tasks have been eliminated. In response, the project put forward in stages other labour options for the women, for example weeding. In addition, new income-generating alternatives outside rice farming were explored, such as brick making in factories, producing crafts, collecting strawberries or peas, and livestock rearing. The starting point of this project was water-use efficiency; however as a result of a thorough gender analysis the increase in alternative labour options for women is now a key part of the project.

Gender-responsive interventions – What needs to change, what is the objective? How can this objective be addressed in your intervention?

Once gender inequalities and the gender-specific needs of women and men have been identified through a gender analysis, objectives must be set on what needs to change and how this can be addressed in the intervention.

Selection of partners

A gender-responsive partner organisation, as well as a gender-responsive programme and project staff are key for gender-responsive interventions. Selecting a gender-responsive partner or strengthening the gender responsiveness of a partner requires specific measures.

- Inclusion of gender-specific competencies as a selection criteria for partner organisations in the call for proposals *e.g. a proven track record in the promotion of equal representation of women in decision-making is required*
- Analysis of the gender responsiveness of potential partner organisations *e.g. do they have a gender policy? Do they have experience in implementing and reporting on gender-responsive interventions? Is gender responsiveness*

written into the staff's job descriptions? etc.

- Introduction of measures to remedy shortcomings if selecting a partner that is weak in gender-responsiveness *e.g. association of an additional partner with strong gender expertise, close accompaniment of the gender dimension to the project design*

Programme design

In order to ensure gender-responsive programme design the theory of change must explicitly outline how the situation of women and men will change as a result of the intervention. The specific measures to be taken to address gender inequality must be clearly outlined, the target groups explicitly identified and the respective indicators set. Examples of measures are listed below, following the same structure as in the gender analysis. Four points must be underlined: 1. Often, these measures are closely interlinked. For instance, a more systematic inclusion of women as active members of water user committees is a prerequisite to ensure that their specific needs are taken into account when water is allocated be-

tween different users. 2. Gender-responsive interventions do not necessarily equal measures targeted at women, even in those cases where the goal is to improve the situation of women specifically. For instance, challenging gender stereotypes regarding women's role in water management may require interventions specifically targeting men. 3. At first glance gender inequality may seem to be beyond the scope of a water programme, but looking closely there is almost always an opportunity and therefore an obligation to fight gender inequality. For instance the fact that women tend to be underrepresented in STEM³³ has an impact on gender inequalities in water. While it goes beyond the scope of a water programme to increase the number of women in STEM, a water programme can ensure that those women water engineers who do exist are empowered and gender-specific obstacles in their path are removed. 4. Gender-responsive programme design not only improves the lives of women, it also improves the overall performance of programmes.³⁴

³³ Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
³⁴ SDC 2018



Photocredit: Helvetas, Pakistan

Examples:

Overcoming limiting gender roles and division of labour

- E.g. Ensuring visibility of role models that challenge gender stereotypes, such as women engineers
- E.g. Training water experts and heads of water institutions on gender bias

Promoting equal access and control over services and resources

- E.g. Trainings specifically tailored to women or men to ensure equal access to information
- E.g. Ensure that recruitment favours the underrepresented gender among equally qualified candidates to ensure that women and men can take part equally in the economic opportunities that arise from improving water infrastructure
- E.g. Ensure that young women working in the water sector have access to informal and formal professional networks and mentorship programmes

Promoting equal participation, voice and leadership

- E.g. Reservation of a fixed proportion of seats with voting power for women in water user committees
- E.g. Actively contacting women eligible for leadership positions in water institutions to encourage them to apply
- E.g. Rules of procedure that allow women to have an equal voice in deliberations, especially when it is traditionally not their role to speak out
- E.g. Selection of a gender-sensitive chairperson to moderate meetings
- E.g. Ensuring availability of childcare during stakeholder consultations

Addressing women's and men's needs and interests

- E.g. Ensuring that a programme to improve access to water and sanitation and hygiene in schools includes provisions for the safe and dignified disposal of menstrual health products
- E.g. Ensuring that water and sanitation facilities are designed according to women's standard of safety
- E.g. Conducting separate stakeholder consultations for women and men to provide the opportunity for them to voice concerns and needs they may not in the presence of the other gender due to cultural norms

Spotlight on the inclusion of women in decision-making processes

The inclusion of women in decision-making processes is key to ensure that women's demands are met. Both programmes outlined below, from Kosovo and Tajikistan respectively, strived to ensure that women were included in decision-making processes. The two programmes took slightly different approaches to achieve this, demonstrating that a variety of measures may lead to results.

There is a pervasive exclusion of women from decision-making positions in the water sector in Kosovo. Despite management changes in 2015 no women were appointed to senior positions and executive staff and board members of Regional Water Councils (RWCs) continue to be dominated by men. The SDC's rural water and sanitation support programme aimed to systematically include women in programme activities as well as in decision-making processes. Initial implementation centered on encouraging women to participate at community level, and encouraging RWCs to actively include women in their customer outreach programmes. At a second stage, the programme developed contacts with interested NGOs, government departments, municipal units and RWC customer management teams to carry out public debates and discussions with women-only audiences across a number of RWCs. The programme also held an event to mark International Women's Day where over 250 women working in the water sector joined together to share experiences and discuss ways of improving the role of women in the sector. The women-only debates have led to better visibility for women's demands on water issues.

The Rasht Valley is one of the most conservative parts of Tajikistan. Many of its inhabitants hold deep-seated, restrictive views on gender, and inequality between women and men persists. However, the gender mainstreaming efforts of the SDC's health and habitat programme – which includes an important drinking-water supply and sanitation component – demonstrates that even in conservative regions progress on gender equality is possible. Through a combination of trainings on gender aimed at the entire community and by making the participation of women in meetings, trainings and demonstrations mandatory, the programme succeeded in ensuring that women were included in decision-making processes and were able to express their viewpoints. 35% of the participants in the community events were women, 61% participated in decisions on the maintenance of water-supply systems and 29% in decisions on sanitation, a remarkable advancement for a community where women's voices were traditionally silenced.



Copyright: AKF, DRR Tajikistan, 2018

Allocation of resources

The planned measures to ensure that water interventions are gender-responsive have to be matched by an equal commitment to gender responsiveness when it comes to resource allocation. While one budget line dedicated to women's empowerment is a step forward, it is much more important that the entire budget is gender-responsive.

For instance, the budget line allocated for safety measures at a water and sanitation facility should be sufficiently large to ensure that measures for women's safety can also be covered, or the budget for stakeholder consultations should include a budget for raising awareness about holding consultations with the gender that is less likely to

participate. Furthermore, if the programme includes the provision of financial services it is crucial to ensure that there are no gender-specific barriers such as obtaining the necessary approval from a husband, difficulties in providing identification or obstacles to travelling etc.

Monitoring and evaluation of gender in water

Monitoring and evaluating progress on gender equality in water, or lack thereof, is a crucial part of promoting gender equality in water. To this end specific measures to strengthen the gender responsiveness of monitoring and evaluation need to be introduced.

Examples:

- Include gender-specific targets and indicators
- Include sex-disaggregated targets and indicators
- Establish a sex-disaggregated baseline
- Allow for the monitoring not only of intended results but also unintended results
- Ensure that findings – both positive and negative – are fed back into the intervention design through gender-responsive processes
- Consider participative monitoring where both women and men are involved, not only as informants but also as actors in the process
- Plan and demand a gender audit
- Take into account the SDC's aggregated reference indicators (ARIs) and thematic reference indicators (TRIs)
- Take into account indicator systems for global goals such as SDG 6 on water and SDG 5 on gender



Copyright: Marc André Bünzli, SDC, Sudan 2011

Spotlight on the power of leading by example or 'How did you become the boss?'

Even in Switzerland there is still a long way to go towards gender equality in the water sector. While for instance the number of women engineers has increased, women engineers in leadership positions are still rare.³⁵ However, when Swiss female water experts are seen in leadership positions abroad this can have a significant impact on local communities' perception of gender roles, as this case study of a gender-responsive intervention shows:

Operation Lifeline Sudan was a large-scale humanitarian operation that operated under difficult circumstances during the second civil war in Sudan (1989-2005). In this context the SDC supported female pump mechanic teams set up by UN Water which operated successfully in the war-torn state of Eastern Equatoria. Although the position of women in South Sudan is traditionally very weak, there are plenty of women ready to step up and play a more important role in their communities and even in politics. The presence of female Swiss experts in leading positions directly encouraged these women. During a large community mobilisation event, five women arranged for a translator and asked a female Swiss expert "How did you manage to become the boss?" The importance of role models in these contexts, as in any others, cannot be underestimated. During the implementation of the sustainable water project (SWPSS) in South Sudan, women were systematically included in the water, sanitation and hygiene committees, thus providing an opportunity for women to gain influence, a voice and a certain position of power. A minimum of 50% women were required in the village water, sanitation and hygiene committees. Out of the 625 villagers trained in their respective functions in the committee since January 2015, 56% were women. The project also employed two hygiene promoters (both women) that empowered women in these committees to express their views. Women continue to be underrepresented in the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources. However, through the project three women now have computers and have received training in computer skills and English.

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