Pathways to Women’s Representation and Leadership in the Energy Sector

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The Current Situation & The Business Case for Diversity

22%: share of women in the conventional energy sector (IEA, 2020)

12%: share of women in leadership positions in energy (IEA, 2020)

32%: share of women in global renewable energy sector (IRENA, 2019)

45%: share of women working in RE who are in administrative jobs (IRENA, 2019)

Under-representation prevalent in both developed and developing economies

Greater Diversity = Good Business

• Higher financial returns
• Lower earnings risk
• Higher environmental, social, and governance scores

Global energy investments rising: USD2.8T in 2023, 1.7T to clean energy (IEA)
Cultural and Organizational Barriers

Gender stereotyping
Energy sector still viewed as a male domain

Work-life conflict
Women find it difficult to balance professional responsibilities with personal or family obligations

Smaller pipeline of female STEM graduates
Influenced by social and cultural norms, fewer girls pursue ‘technical’ fields

Limited access to finance
Women have limited access to formal credit/finance, limiting ability to participate in energy value chain

Gendered institutional culture
Gender bias, manifested in both subtle and overt ways, is entrenched in workplace

Limited or no access to advancement opportunities
Women have unequal access to education and training, networks, mentoring, and sponsoring opportunities

HR policies and practices are inflexible and gender-blind
Policies don't take into consideration women’s multiple roles and needs. Pay inequity is common.
Proven Pathways

1. Provide training and education opportunities

2. Break cultural and social norms in the workplace

3. Create networking and mentoring opportunities

4. Integrate GESI in energy policy and programming

5. Facilitate access to finance

6. Leverage partnerships
1. Provide training and education opportunities

- Promotion of STEM education
- Scholarships
- Tailored curricula
- Internships
- Technical training
- ‘Soft skills’ training
2. Break cultural and social norms in the workplace

- Assess current workplace culture
- Reframe goals and priorities
- Awareness-raising: leadership and employees
- Overarching gender equity policy
- Specific policies and measures, e.g. measures to ensure better work-life balance (flexible time, telework, longer parental leave, code of conduct, unconscious bias training, GBVH training)
- Role modeling
- Accountability mechanisms
3. Create mentoring and networking opportunities

- Networking: opportunity to share experiences, hear advice from peers and experts, establish contacts
- Mentors: provide advice on how to navigate an organization or sector
- Male allyship
- Reverse mentoring
4. Integrate GESI in energy policy and programming

• Energy policies
• Project design
• Project implementation
• Project monitoring

Photo credit: USAID Mongolia Energy Governance Activity
5. Facilitate access to finance

- Gender lens investing
- Educate financial institutions to respond to needs of women-owned/operated businesses
- Innovative financing mechanisms
- Support women-owned and led companies to access financing
6. Leverage partnerships

- Coordinated approaches = maximizes resources and expertise; common goals achieved