

ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER INTEGRATION IN ENERGY ACTIVITIES

A product of the USAID-NREL Partnership



August 2024

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ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER INTEGRATION IN ENERGY ACTIVITIES

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List of Acronyms

ENERGIA	International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy
ESMAP	World Bank Energy Sector Management Assistance Program
I-JEDI	International Jobs and Economic Development Impacts
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NREL	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
G-PST	Global Power sSystem Transformation Initiative
SEE Change	Self-Empowerment and Equity Change Initiative
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nation Environment Programme
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
wPOWER	Partnership on Women’s Entrepreneurship in Renewables
W-PST	Women in Power Systems Transformation Initiative

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1 Background

This Action Plan for Gender Integration was developed to address mainstreaming gender across the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) led activities. While the processes and intervention points mentioned are specific to the USAID-NREL portfolio of work they may also be applicable to other USAID Implementing Partner programs and more generally across clean energy development programming.

2 Context and Motivation

The strategic objectives of the USAID Climate Strategy 2022–2030¹ center on deploying clean and affordable energy technologies and systems that support secure and equitable economic growth in developing countries. Recognizing the need for comprehensive technical collaboration and assistance to support clean energy pathway development and the deployment of equitable and advanced clean energy systems across the globe, USAID is supporting NREL and other DOE national labs to provide both targeted and cross-cutting support to developing country partners around the world. This collaboration, called the USAID-NREL Partnership (“the Partnership”) allows USAID access to world-class U.S. technical expertise in advanced, clean, and climate-resilient energy systems via the U.S. Department of Energy national laboratory network, and to apply these resources strategically to advance the USAID Climate Strategy and other priorities in the energy and related sectors. The underlying goal of this effort is to ensure that the best U.S. technical expertise is being accessed to support global efforts to scale up advanced clean energy systems, decarbonize economies, and both combat and adapt to climate change in socially inclusive ways.

For the USAID-NREL Partnership, it is important for the clean energy objectives outlined above to be well aligned with USAID’s vision of “a prosperous and peaceful world in which women and girls, men and boys, and gender diverse individuals enjoy equal rights and agency; have equitable access to quality education and health care; accumulate and control their own assets; exercise their own voice; and live free from restrictive gender norms and violence.”² Since the 1970s, USAID has sought to strengthen the integration of gender concerns across all planning, programs, and policies, including, through its recently released 2023 Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy,³ that includes a section on “energy, mining, and infrastructure,” and the Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018,⁴ which codifies into law the mandate for gender analyses for all USAID activities.

Additionally, the 2022 National Gender Equity and Equality Strategy⁵ outlines the urgent need to address climate change as one of the key U.S. government priorities to achieve gender equality. Both USAID and the U.S. Department of Energy are required to implement this strategy to contribute to the U.S. government achieving the strategy’s objectives. Likewise, the updated U.S. government strategy to address gender-based violence⁶ also recognizes the need to address climate change, as it is interlinked with gender-based violence. Backing up the number of recent U.S. government initiatives outlined above is a commitment by USAID to invest \$2.6 billion in foreign assistance programs that promote gender equality as a means of furthering goals of climate resilience and economic growth, among others. This includes USAID’s Gender Equity and Equality Action Fund, which allocates \$100M annually for programs that advance women’s economic security. The Gender Equity and Equality Action Fund has a selected number of priorities driven by the White House Gender Policy Council, including addressing climate change, strengthening the care economy, and bridging the gender digital divide.

Advancing the status of women and girls is not only a matter of human rights, justice, and fairness—it is also a strategic imperative that reduces poverty and promotes sustainable economic growth, increases access to education, improves health outcomes, advances political stability, and fosters democracy. Women are key

¹ [USAID Climate Strategy 2022-2030](#), April 2022.

² [2023 Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy](#), March 2023

³ [2023 Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy](#), March 2023.

⁴ [S.3247 - Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018](#), January 2023.

⁵ [2022 National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#), December 2022.

⁶ [United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally 2022 Update](#), December 2022.

stakeholders in the clean energy transition and must be included in the global movement toward gender-transformative projects, programs, and policies that will accelerate universal energy access and address climate change more equitably.

3 Objective

The objective of the USAID-NREL Action Plan for Gender Integration is to assist NREL researchers and practitioners working across the USAID portfolio of activities implemented through the USAID-NREL Interagency Agreement to be more proactive in identifying and addressing critical gender gaps in particular country contexts and/or directing resources where they are most needed to empower women. Specifically, the aim of this Action Plan is to:

- **Increase gender integration** across USAID-NREL Interagency Agreement activities to enhance gender impacts and strengthen programs
- **Increase awareness and capacity** of NREL staff on gender integration approaches
- **Outline specific actions, roles, and responsibilities** of NREL and USAID team members
- **Leverage USAID and NREL’s thought leadership, capabilities, and convening power** to increase gender integration in the clean energy sector across the globe.

Improving the consistent use of gender integration approaches across the USAID-NREL Portfolio will have significant impact on the gender equality and social inclusion outcomes, as well as strengthen energy and climate outcomes by enhancing the effectiveness of the programmatic approaches. NREL can integrate gender across the activities in the USAID-NREL Portfolio in four ways:

1. **New activities** that are identified in partnership with NREL, USAID Missions, and implementing partners that can mobilize new funding for gender integration at the country or regional level. Moreover, with well-designed gender analyses, at the outset of planning for new activities, it is possible to identify gender issues and opportunities. Increased understanding of the benefits and opportunities to more explicitly consider gender might also open new avenues for funding from USAID, NREL, or other external funding partners. These could be cross-cutting efforts, such as new tools, training, research products, or piloting of new country-level activities.
2. **Activities in the pipeline** that allow for planning early on to consider ways in which gender can be meaningfully incorporated in the scoping and design of the activities. This could be a participatory approach that includes NREL, USAID Missions, and implementing partners to make sure that a gender expert is meaningfully included throughout the entire process, including a gender analysis to identify gaps and opportunities.
3. **Existing activities** that can be adapted to better incorporate gender considerations. This might include examining the approved scope and workplan with USAID Mission and implementing partners to identify specific interventions to be modified or added.
4. **Leverage current programs**, including building on existing gender and energy programs and strategies, like offerings from the USAID-NREL Women in Power System Transformation (PST),⁷ USAID’s Engendering Industries,⁸ Enhancing Equality for Energy in Southeast Asia,⁹ the Self-Empowerment and Equity (SEE) Change Initiative,¹⁰ and gender integration guidance from the USAID Climate Strategy 2022–2030,¹¹ and USAID’s Guide to Gender Analyses in the Energy Sector.¹² This would involve raising

⁷ [Women in Power System Transformation.](#)

⁸ [USAID Engendering Industries Overview.](#)

⁹ [Enhancing Equality for Energy in Southeast Asia Fact Sheet.](#)

¹⁰ [Self-Empowerment and Equity \(SEE\) Change Initiative Overview.](#)

¹¹ [USAID Climate Strategy 2022-2030.](#)

¹² [USAID’s Guide to Gender Analyses in the Energy Sector \(unpublished\).](#)

awareness and generating interest in these opportunities to begin to create a more diverse and empowered clean energy workforce.

4 Audience

The **audience** for the USAID-NREL Action Plan for Gender Integration is the NREL Activity Managers and team members who are providing technical support for USAID on design and implementation of bilateral and regional energy and climate activities. This action plan will also assist USAID staff and implementing partners in strengthening collaboration with NREL staff to ensure greater impact of the energy activities.

5 Why Gender Is Important to Consider in Energy Activities

Although women make up half of the workforce potential worldwide, they are typically underrepresented in the energy sector, for example in planning, policymaking, business, engineering, research, and management. This disparity exists even though women offer diverse perspectives, skill sets, and experiences that are proven to enhance ideation, problem solving, and the bottom line. When women are given equal opportunity to bring their unique skills and experiences to bear across key energy sector institutions, there is substantial opportunity to strengthen collective decision-making, accelerate innovation, and drive dynamic solutions to meet urgent global challenges. This goes beyond building technical skills, to fostering institutional change and personal agency, for holistic and sustained impacts. As more governments, private companies, and civil society organizations are pursuing gender-inclusive approaches to increase technical and managerial recruitment, retention, and advancement of women working in the energy sector, it is an opportune time to instill more impactful approaches within the USAID-NREL Partnership portfolio of work.

Gender inequality is a global issue, but it is most profound in developing countries, with much wider-reaching impacts. **It is an uphill climb, because most energy programs and policies are “gender-blind,” meaning that it is assumed that benefits will automatically flow equally to men and women if there are well-designed energy policies, programs, and initiatives in place. However, gender-blind energy interventions usually lead to unequal benefit-sharing between men and women and sometimes unintended negative consequences.** Even when the same energy source or appliance is available to women and men, socio-economic and socio-cultural dynamics interact to create differential use, benefits, and losses. This means that if planning and implementation processes in the energy sector do not take the different needs and concerns into account, projected benefits for women and men may not be realized.

The barriers for women in developing countries that are particularly acute include, but are not limited to, less access to capital, banking and assets; lower disposable incomes and less confidence that they will be treated fairly; lower education, literacy, and training; peer and community pressure and family objections; exclusion from formal processes, decision-making, and societal protections.

The USAID-NREL Partnership provides the opportunity for the U.S. government to meet its commitments around an inclusive clean energy transition in developing countries and explore new pathways for gender integration in a range of clean energy programs and approaches. Gender and energy interventions can have a profound impact on how energy systems of the future are designed and deployed and how building a clean and resilient energy future can uplift both women and men. Moreover, gender equality is a priority for many of our partners, and we can more intentionally help them meet their goals to incorporate women's empowerment components into their implementation approach. Key outcomes that the USAID-NREL Partnership can aim to achieve include:

- **Reducing gender disparities** in access to, control over, and benefits from reliable and affordable clean energy, while increasing the capability of women to realize their rights and influence over energy options and deployment
- **Increasing the understanding of impacts** on women/gender issues within the clean energy value chain and the incremental impacts of accelerated energy investments

- **Developing capacity and awareness** of gender issues in clean energy while increasing access and creating opportunities for women to influence decision-making

6 Roles and Responsibilities

The USAID-NREL Action Plan for Gender Integration is the first step in creating more intentional and impactful activities via gender integration across the USAID-NREL portfolio. With the necessary guidelines, tools, and best practices, it will be possible to start building an experience base at NREL to support the work being designed and implemented in the Missions across the portfolio. Table 1 indicates the different roles and responsibilities for NREL and USAID personnel in regard to gender integration into the portfolio.

Table 1. Roles and Responsibilities in Gender Mainstreaming for USAID-NREL

Role	Responsibilities
NREL Gender Strategist	Point person at NREL who is designated as the overall lead in providing guidance on how to integrate gender considerations across the project cycle. This person is the first point of contact for discussions, brainstorming, and training for NREL staff.
NREL Gender Experts	Individuals who are leading gender-focused programs, such as the Women in PST program, as well as in-house experts who may have prior experience in gender-mainstreaming. The gender experts can collaborate with the NREL Gender Strategist and NREL Activity Managers in ideation and design to bring in gender dimensions for activity implementation and other support needs.
USAID Gender Experts	<p>USAID has a strong track record of gender-mainstreaming in all technical areas, including energy. There are gender experts in the USAID Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub, as well as 200 gender advisors and point of contacts embedded in Missions and Operating Units throughout USAID. For NREL, USAID gender experts can provide the direction for the implementation of the USAID-NREL Action Plan for Gender Integration and serve as a resource for various aspects of planning and implementation.</p> <p>Thought leadership and support will be important for gender-mainstreaming in energy activities at headquarters, Missions, and in the regions where USAID is working with NREL. This could involve advocacy, awareness, and training on gender mainstreaming approaches and opportunities tied to the local or regional context.</p> <p>Encourage USAID-NREL Partnership leadership to support Activity Managers in conducting assessments and sharing lessons learned across activities to continually improve the gender-mainstreaming process over time.</p>
NREL Activity Managers	Gender inclusion across all aspects of the various activities in the USAID-NREL portfolio is an important goal for USAID and NREL, and all NREL Activity Managers are responsible for being more proactive in creating gender-informed projects. Activity Managers can work with the NREL Gender Strategist and in-house experts to identify and plan specific ways to integrate gender considerations into activities.
NREL Portfolio Manager	The Portfolio Manager is responsible for managing the relationship with the USAID leadership and ensuring that NREL activities are building out intentional and impactful approaches. The Manager will be the point person for initiating engagement with the Missions prior to the Activity start.
NREL Operations Manager	The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring that current and new staff on the USAID-NREL portfolio are aware of the Action Plan for Gender Integration, and that training is offered if needed. Also responsible for monitoring, evaluation, and learning tied to the Action Plan as well as budgeting for gender-related activities.

7 Gender Entry Points and Action Items in USAID-NREL Activity Planning and Implementation

There are several considerations for creating more gender-responsive USAID-NREL interventions. Analyzing gender roles and gender gaps within activities starts at the early stages with thoughtful program planning and follows through to design and implementation, along with evaluation. The activity cycle has multiple gender entry points that will help build broader support, strengthen activity impacts, and realize direct benefits for communities and other stakeholders. If women are constantly missing from the discussions, and their concerns are missing from the minds of people making the decisions and allocating budgets, then marginalization and exclusion will be the norm. For gender gaps to be addressed in a meaningful way, it is essential to take a holistic look at the full activity cycle.

Effective strategies for gender integration begin with a set of framing questions and considerations of the wide range of possible gender entry points for an activity. The NREL Gender Strategist will initiate and lead the discussions with NREL Activity Managers, NREL gender experts, and USAID team members to assess interest and understand what might be possible for key entry points and opportunities based on evidence and best practices to assess interest and understand what might be possible. After the preliminary discussions, it is the opportune time to figure out a detailed game plan tailored to the specific activity in line with the stage of the activity, funding, and local capacity and interest. The action framework below includes the basic components in an activity cycle to begin considering and ways to organize your thinking to understand potential gender differences, gaps, and opportunities that might be relevant for the USAID-NREL portfolio of activities.

Table 2. Gender Action Framework: Gender Entry Points and Action Items

<p>I. Internal Capacity Building: Gender 101 and Beyond</p> <p>It is important to build the capacity of NREL Activity Managers regarding gender integration to increase understanding of the different tactics and tools to create more impactful activities. To get started, the following can be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Have I attended an NREL-led gender training, taken the USAID Gender 101 Training, and reviewed the USAID Gender and the Energy Sector 101 slide deck? These training resources will provide Activity Managers and technical experts with an introduction to gender integration in energy, including the basic tenets of this USAID-NREL Action Plan for Gender Integration. Reach out to the NREL Gender Strategist and/or Portfolio Manager for more information.▪ Have I read through the USAID-NREL Action Plan for Gender Integration and suggested resources? Review this document and resources to get started in thinking about the possible gender aspects of your USAID energy sector work. See Annex 2 for a curated list of training and tools that might be helpful. In addition, try to learn about other gender-mainstreaming work, done by USAID or other development partners, in nearby countries/regions that could provide insights to the program design or open opportunities for collaboration.▪ Do I understand current USAID-NREL programs and offerings in this space? Activities such as Women in PST can provide “low-hanging fruit” options for Mission engagement in gender activities and allow for a light touch for Missions with gender activities as a starting point (especially for Missions that may be time- or resource-constrained or that may have limited interest). These activities can also provide immediate value and impact to help create interest and buy-in from the Mission in ongoing work and new gender activities, with associated funding.
<p>II. Gender Integration from the Onset: Activity Scoping and Design</p> <p>Gender considerations are best incorporated early on to set expectations and awareness with all stakeholders. Program design should be done collaboratively with the USAID Mission and implementing partners to incorporate gender considerations from the start of a project, if possible, to ensure an alignment of priorities, timeline, and budget. A gender-informed activity design, often guided by a gender analysis, will help ensure that the activity will address disparities and include actions to reduce gaps and inequalities from the get-go.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Have I met with the NREL Gender Strategist or gender expert(s) to discuss how gender considerations can be integrated into the activity I am leading/working on? Include the NREL Gender Strategist and/or expert(s)

to think through a gender analysis at the outset. A gender analysis will help inform planning meetings to discuss activity design early in the planning process, together with the activity team. This will help you identify and understand potential gender-related needs, opportunities related to the activity, and current activities that can be leveraged for Missions that may be time- or resource-constrained (to design new activities).

- **Have I had a discussion with my USAID contact on potential gender integration opportunities in my activity design?** This will set the stage for assessing USAID interest in integrating gender into the program design and getting a lay of the land for capacity and resources that might be available. The NREL Gender Strategist and/or Portfolio Manager will help with the development of slides and talking points for these discussions. The NREL Gender Strategist and/or Portfolio Manager can also be available to facilitate and guide this conversation. For instances in which the Mission does not seem open to a conversation with NREL on this topic, USAID Gender Division and/or Energy Division can facilitate the discussion and/or support building Mission interest. Reach out to the NREL Gender Strategist and/or Portfolio Manager for more information.
- **Are there potential gender advocates at the Mission or with the implementing partner that I can work with?** If there is a gender focal point in the field who may be the Mission Gender Advisor or the gender expert with the implementing partner, advocate for that person to be included in the NREL activity design. You can reach out to USAID gender experts who can advocate for the correct Mission contacts to be included. Teaming with experts in the country will give insight into the local context and may help expand your reach. Also, this creates a collaborative atmosphere with a diverse team that sets out the actions and resources for a gender-inclusive project early on.
- **Have I worked with USAID to get budget approval for gender activities, and do I have the right level of funding set aside to accomplish impactful and sustained gender integration?** Incorporate budget discussions in planning and design with realistic expectations. Benchmarked stand-alone gender funding set-asides (e.g., at a set percentage of 5%–10% of activity budget) for gender-specific activities such as women’s leadership, fellowships, or technical training can be an effective strategy. In cases where there are budget constraints, collaborating with activities such as [Women in PST](#) can support early integration of gender work with Mission buy-ins.
- **Have I conducted a gender analysis, and do I understand the local context and partner/stakeholder needs?** Identifying and collating information or data gaps on gender-related aspects of the activity, cultural norms, policies, and existing gender programs will help you identify gender integration components to include in your activity design. Implementing partners, local energy consultants, or on-the-ground lab staff can be a key resource in collecting this information. There may be prior analyses done in this space that you can leverage as well.
- **Have I had informed discussions with key stakeholders to ensure alignment and buy-in of gender-responsive tasks?** Ask partners about their ideas or goals for gender-related work and collaborate on activity design; this will develop trust with in-country partners who can be project advocates and build more visibility with partners and communities. If needed, include the NREL Gender Strategist and/or designated gender experts to help facilitate and guide these conversations. Outlining the activity with the stakeholders is a critical starting point, and if done well, can clearly define specific interventions and outcomes that could be expected related to different activities (e.g., integrating gender will look different when working with a regulator or ministry on tariff/policy design, than it would with a local distribution utility modeling the network). If budget allows, this could also include expanded stakeholder engagement and participation by local nongovernmental organizations, national gender divisions or experts, etc.

III. Getting To Work: Implementation

At the point of implementation, the NREL team should be familiar and on board with the goals of the plan identified in the design phase. Successful implementation includes ongoing assessment of progress, challenges, unexpected gender impacts (good or bad), and the need to pivot along the way if necessary. Depending on the type of activity, there will be different design features, tasks, and metrics that can lead to/measure gender and social inclusion benefits and challenges. For example, policy interventions will have very different gender dimensions than a renewable energy operational model, as compared to a sustainable transport initiative.

- **Have I incorporated gender-integrated activities throughout the work plan, including appropriate budget allocations, that reflect the gender analysis and other recommendations taken in Step II?** Work with the NREL Gender Strategist and/or expert, USAID Mission, Gender Division and Energy Division, and country partners to determine the best task opportunities. Some example task components include:
 - **Leveraging current activities at NREL:**
 - ◆ Programs such as [Women in PST](#) can provide easy entry options for Mission engagement in gender activities and allow for light-touch integration of Missions with gender activities as a starting point (especially for Missions that may be time- or resource-constrained or that may have limited interest).

These activities can also provide immediate value and impact to support building Mission interest in ongoing work and new gender Integration and Mission buy-in funding. Activities such as Women in PST might also be leveraged to provide similar offerings to other stakeholders, such as energy regulators and policymakers (beyond system operators and utilities). Reach out to the Women in PST activity lead and the USAID-NREL Portfolio Manager to discuss opportunities for Missions to participate in Women in PST activities.

→ **Leveraging current activities at USAID and other organizations:**

- ◆ (a) Expand awareness of training and tools offered by USAID and other development partners so as to leverage the wide range of support offered in the gender and energy space; (b) Strongly encourage NREL Activity Managers and USAID partners to enroll in [Engendering Industries](#) and [Self-Empowerment and Equity for Change](#), two training activities offered through USAID that focus on agency empowerment and leadership to create a more gender-inclusive energy sector.

→ **Opportunities for new activities:**

- ◆ **Training:** (a) Collaborate with partners to identify opportunities for training that can be targeted to support the upskilling of women (e.g., in traditionally male-dominated sectors or roles), or where women-dominated sectors (e.g., informal economies) have expressed a need or interest for a specific kind of training and encourage a wider awareness and participation by women; (b) Collaborate with partners and networks to link training programs to career opportunities. This ensures that women are encouraged to apply for jobs related to the energy project via intentional outreach, including providing job resources, mentorship opportunities, or a list of job postings.
- ◆ **Experiential Learning:** (a) Identifying programs for women to study in energy-related fields and/or management—for example, on-site internships, practitioner-level training visits, or NREL researchers providing virtual mentoring and technical assistance; (b) Coordinating with the NREL-led Women in PST for potential internship and fellowship opportunities for system operators.
- ◆ **Networking:** (a) Convene and host in-country fora that bring together partners to highlight and discuss the success and hurdles in gender-mainstreaming more openly; (b) Convene and support women energy practitioners, policymakers, and nongovernmental organizations to demonstrate the theory of change and impact of networks; and (c) Create opportunities for tapping into the network for presenting at conferences, participating on panels, and highlighting the contributions and breakthroughs made by women.
- ◆ **Partnerships:** Develop partnerships with local universities and other applicable organizations to improve and promote mentoring and apprenticeship programs to broaden the opportunities for female students in technical, policy, and business fields.
- ◆ **Financing:** (a) Support microfinancing opportunities that target women-owned businesses. Tap into more women-owned businesses to make the business culture more inclusive and responsive to a wider market. (b) Support more inclusive procurement practices, ensuring that women-owned businesses have access and necessary skills/services to respond to procurement notices. (c) Identify economic activities in which improved access to electricity for women can effectively support business development. See [Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's Energy Empowers East Africa Activity](#) for more ideas of support in this area.

- **Is there a diverse representation of technical experts and professionals with knowledge of gender considerations on my team?** Work toward diverse representation of gender and underrepresented groups on the USAID-NREL activity teams and ensure that there is gender expertise on the team. Serving as a good example of diverse representation will signal the importance of this topic with stakeholders and in-country partners.

Are women and underrepresented groups benefiting from my projects? Work toward women and underrepresented groups representing 40% or more of participants/beneficiaries from targeted technical assistance activities. Ensure women and men can equally access opportunities to upgrade their skills to access new technologies provided by the activity—considering particular social or legal restrictions that may prohibit women from participating. Communicate openly with partners where comfortable (e.g., “USAID-NREL hopes to work with our partner institutions to support the equal participation of women in our technical training programs.”) or collaborate with USAID staff to facilitate these discussions.

IV. Learn and Adapt: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Gender must be integrated into the activities' monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan and/or indicator selection to understand the outputs, outcomes, and impacts on gender equality, and determine the effectiveness of the implemented interventions. Your plan must identify how to measure progress and who and what is involved in measuring and meeting the

gender targets. Only if gender considerations are included in the activity design and activity objectives are they able to be tracked in the monitoring and evaluation of the activity success and impact. Moreover, it is important to ensure women and men equally participate in designing the indicators as well as in the monitoring and evaluation activities and decision-making processes.

- **How will I track my success?** In the planning phase, incorporate gender-responsive and sex-disaggregated metrics for the activities in the USAID-NREL portfolio that draw on well-established metrics used by USAID.
 - USAID standard gender indicators such as Gender-8 should be used and reported on, and sex-disaggregated data must be collected for all people-level indicators.
 - There are both quantitative indicators (e.g., percentage of women in management positions; number of jobs created; number of women-owned businesses involved; number of women graduating in technical fields; etc.) and qualitative indicators (e.g., improvements in women's agency and empowerment; changes in mindsets; obstacles being overcome; power dynamic shifts; etc.).
 - See an example of other custom indicators related to energy programming in the [USAID Gender-Sensitive Indicator Toolkit](#) (starting on page 24) or a list of standard gender indicators in the [ADS Chapter 205 Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle](#) on page 27 .
- **How will I convey my impact to USAID and others?** Design and deploy techniques to gather and track information to support the reporting on agreed-upon metrics and indicators. Capture stories of impact of gender-informed projects through first-person interviews with community members, Activity Managers, and development partners. Ensure that USAID-NREL midterm reviews, assessments, and reports include gender as a specific component, aligned with reporting out on targets and indicators.

How will others learn from the amazing work I am doing? Compile and share gaps and challenges and present in USAID-NREL activity review meetings as well as meetings in-country with other stakeholders. Encourage discussion and debate with team leads from NREL and USAID to track and monitor gender-related activity outcomes. Instill processes that ensure that women and men are included in discussions to design and monitor activities.

V. Build the Momentum: Scale-Up, Replication, and Sustainability

As an activity gets traction, there is always a discussion about how to scale up a successful approach to more communities, countries, or regions, and how to ensure longevity after initial funding runs out. However, it is important to consider the context and unique features to manage expectations and ensure that the activity retains the important features that make it a success. This would also be an opportunity to revisit the "activity design" elements and determine if there are additional opportunities to support gender goals as activities scale up. This might include, for example, examining existing NREL knowledge platforms and modeling tools to determine if there are gender dimensions that could be incorporated. A supportive business environment, including investment and policy incentives, that are beneficial for women and men can help a project developer expand into new service areas or communities that can leverage the USAID support.

How can I expand the reach of my activity? Partnerships are one way to expand the reach of an activity with sufficient attention given to knowledge sharing, training, and resource mobilization. NREL has strong technical capabilities to bring to an activity that can be complemented by other partners with more local knowledge, specialized expertise, relationships with local stakeholders, and access to other development partners. Partnerships can include local universities, research institutes, and the private sector to increase the reach of the activity.

Can others continue this work when we are done? In-country partners and stakeholder capacity building are a great way to ensure sustainability of your activity. That is why other steps such as stakeholder engagement and potential training activities are so important, as they will allow for buy-in and capacity building. Also, as activities evolve, it may be possible to build on the success of an activity by bringing in new donors or investors. Participate in donor coordination in-country meetings to examine how USAID-NREL activities can benefit from work being led by other partners.

8 Targeted Outcomes

Stemming from the Action Plan for Gender Integration, NREL hopes to achieve the following outcomes:

Table 3. Targeted Outcomes from Gender Integration Across USAID-NREL Portfolio

Targeted Outcome	Actions	Targeted Timeline	Outcome Lead
Evaluate and assess the USAID-NREL portfolio to include gender in the overall vision, mission, and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate gender into the Partnership Theory of Change and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan and ensure proper funding for overall gender-responsive activities Integrate gender into the strategic development of NREL's global technical platforms. For example, the International Jobs and Economic Development Impacts (I-JEDI) tool could be adapted to understand the gendered impacts of access to jobs and economic benefits and the other platforms could be similarly examined in light of gendered aspects.¹³ 	Ongoing; initial review completed by end of Q3 FY23	Gender Strategist -with support from Operations Manager and gender experts
Empower and build capacity internally within the USAID-NREL Portfolio Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be done through gender integration training, sharing of gender integration resources, and hands-on support from the Gender Strategist and gender experts. Provide opportunities for NREL technical staff and Activity Managers to benefit from lessons learned, best practices, and progress being made in the USAID-NREL program in gender-mainstreaming to raise awareness and build capacity across the portfolio. Work with the NREL communications team to highlight successes in gender integration in the clean energy sector USAID portfolio, while prioritizing gender-diverse representation in all external and internal communications products. 	Ongoing; initial training completed by end of Q3 FY23	Operations Manager -with support from Gender Strategist and gender experts
More careful gender integration within activity designs and work plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes planning and consultation with the Gender Strategist and experts, USAID, and in-country stakeholders, and conducting gender analyses for activities. This might require NREL, in partnership with USAID, to develop easy-to-use resources for Activity Managers to effectively integrate gender considerations and achieve gender goals (e.g., checklists, sample survey questions, suggested indicators, including training in staff onboarding, etc.). This will also include working closely with implementing partners to collaborate and assist in creating gender inclusive activities that address the identified gaps and improve the integration of gender into the design, implementation, monitoring, and scale up. 	Ongoing; work has already begun in this space as of Q2 FY23.	Gender Strategist -with support from Operations Manager and gender experts
Explore opportunities to build on and strengthen existing integration of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could include activities such as the Women in PST, Engendering Industries, and SEE Change Training. This also includes learning more about other gender-mainstreaming work, done by USAID or other development partners, in nearby countries/regions that could provide insights to the program design or open opportunities for collaboration. 	Ongoing; work has already begun in this space as of Q2 FY23	Gender Strategist -with support from Operations Manager and gender experts

¹³ <https://www.nrel.gov/analysis/jedi/international.html>

9 Monitoring for Results

NREL intends to measure progress of the Action Plan implementation and course correct if needed. This will be done through a few different mechanisms:

1. By administering a survey to all NREL Activity Managers and team members prior to the preliminary gender integration training and annually thereafter. This survey will look at the following aspects:
 - A. Self-report their level of knowledge in gender integration. We can look at whether this is increasing year over year or if we need to add additional staff capacity building in this regard.
 - B. Reflect on the number and demonstrated impact of projects that are incorporating gender components.
 - C. Get feedback on implementation of the Action Plan and see if there are areas we can improve upon or areas that need more attention
2. Annually, the Portfolio Operations Manager will review the number of projects that are incorporating gender integration components, level of funding allocated toward these projects, and number of NREL staff supporting USAID work that have undergone gender training and other capacity-building activities.
3. NREL will also utilize internal meetings, such as the USAID project quarterly meetings, to discuss lessons learned and share information about gender integration in project work.

Annexes: Additional Gender Integration Resources, Tools, and Terms

Annex 1: USAID-NREL Portfolio in Brief

USAID’s partnership with NREL is focused on accelerating the global clean energy transition, mitigating climate change, and promoting resilient and equitable energy system development in developing countries through: (1) country-specific technical assistance that might include activity design, system and resource modeling, policy analysis, partnership strategies, and training; and (2) toolkits offering state-of-the-art technical support on critical challenges and decision-making. Below is a summary list of the various activities and toolkits currently in the portfolio, and highlighted in green are country activities that are underway with the integration of gender considerations in different ways.

Portfolio Highlights With Integrated Gender Components (as of FY 2023):

- [Colombia: Collaborative Support for the Energy Transition](#). Advancing Colombia’s clean and equitable energy transition by providing training targeted to women, youth, and Indigenous communities in all aspects of renewable energy deployment in the Young Leaders Program. *Gender component: Training modules designed to ready Colombia's energy sector workforce to participate in the construction, operation, and grid integration of variable renewable energy tasks with an emphasis on gender diversity and women's involvement.*
- [Energy Empowers East Africa](#). Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory leads this activity. *Gender component: The objective of this work is to advance the role of women entrepreneurs as agents of change through productive use of electricity and the use of energy efficient appliances.*
- [Lao People’s Democratic Republic \(Lao PDR\): Electric vehicle expansion](#). NREL is providing technical assistance to the government to help Laos power the transport sector with available domestic electricity generation (predominantly hydropower) and reduce dependence on foreign fossil fuel imports. *Gender component: Exploring gender considerations in transport fleet electrification with an NREL-led training workshop in March 2023 on considerations and information needed to determine electrification of a vehicle and a fleet.*
- [Mexico: Sustainable Transportation Solutions](#). The activity supports municipal governments in Mexico with transport electrification tasks designed to reduce carbon output, provide equitable transport solutions that maintain the reliability and resiliency of the electricity grid, and stimulate economic growth. *Gender component: Extensive and inclusive stakeholder engagement throughout the process, including inclusion of nongovernmental and underrepresented groups. Inclusive thinking on transportation tasks that will benefit women and other groups.*
- [Pakistan: Power Sector Transformation](#). NREL, along with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and Argonne National Laboratory on a suite of grid expansion, electric vehicle deployment, and integrated energy-planning tasks to help the Government of Pakistan reform its power sector and increase sustainability, reliability, and affordability. *Gender component: Focus area was developed on “gender and women’s involvement in the power sector,” and the implementing partner is kicking off the gender work with the hiring of a gender focal person for the program.*
- [Cross-cutting: Women in PST initiative](#). A joint program with the [Global Power System Transformation Consortium](#) that addresses educational and professional barriers to women's entry and advancement in power system operation organizations and advances gender diversity, equity, and inclusion in the power sector.

Global Knowledge Platforms: There are four world-recognized Global Knowledge Platforms that were developed by NREL in partnership with USAID to help countries with policy, planning, and deployment support necessary in creating a clean energy future. These currently do not have gender-specific components.

- [Renewable Energy Data Explorer](#). An innovative web-based platform that provides renewable energy data, analytical tools, guidance resources, and technical assistance to developers, policymakers, and decision makers in developing countries.
- [Greening the Grid](#). A platform for curated information and guidance to support countries in PST and grid modernization, including: (1) concise and comprehensive overviews of emerging practices for addressing renewable energy development challenges through policy, market, and regulatory mechanisms; and (2) guidance on applying these mechanisms to develop robust renewable energy policies and practices.
- [The International Jobs and Economic Development Impacts](#). An economic model to estimate economic impacts from wind, solar, bioenergy, and geothermal energy tasks around the world. This can provide estimates of the employment, earnings, gross domestic product, and output from the construction and operation of renewable energy tasks and across the domestic supply chain.
- [Resilient Energy Platform](#). Provides curated resources, training materials, data, tools, and direct technical assistance in planning resilient, sustainable, and secure power systems. The platform allows decision makers to assess power sector vulnerabilities, identify resilience solutions, and make informed decisions to enhance power sector resilience at all scales.

Annex 2: Training and Tools for Gender-Mainstreaming

Several training options and toolkits have been developed over the past 20 years by USAID, United Nations Development Program, World Bank Energy Sector Management Assistance Program, ENERGIA, and many other development organizations. Below is a sampling of ways for NREL team members, USAID program officers, and implementing partners to gain a better understanding and learn about ongoing training opportunities and toolkits. NREL Activity Managers are encouraged to utilize these trainings and toolkit offerings to support holistic gender integration. In addition, some of these activities (e.g., Engendering Industries and SEE Change) will be integrated more intentionally in the USAID-NREL Portfolio to expand the number of USAID in-country partners that can benefit, as a complement to technical training that NREL is providing.

- [USAID Engendering Industries Workforce Gender Equality Accelerated Program](#) is a 6-to-12-month program that consists of organizational gender equality assessments, a virtual (10 week) or in-person (1 week) course, and 5 to 12 months of change management coaching that prepares managers to become agents of change within their organizations. USAID’s Engendering Industries works with companies across the world to expand women’s participation in male-dominated industries, such as energy. Through these activities, organizations use evidence-based gender equality tools and best practices, demand-driven coaching, male-engagement strategies, and social and behavior change communication to implement gender equality interventions at their organizations. Nearly 100 organizations in 40 countries partner with Engendering Industries through the Intensive and Accelerated Programs.

In 2022, three companies working with NREL in the Women in PST program (Colombia XM, Indonesia PLN, and Grid India) benefitted from participation in Engendering Industries, and we expect that connections to other NREL programs working with USAID will be expanded in 2023 and beyond.

- [SEE Change](#) is funded by USAID and focuses on evidence-based gender training and support services that help employees build positive mental habits, realize their leadership potential, and achieve their personal and professional goals. It is a program developed and run by Johns Hopkins University to help participants: (1) gain awareness of how thoughts and feelings influence behaviors; (2) reframe negative thoughts to develop positive mental habits and a growth mindset; and (3) set realistic goals and take growth steps toward work and life visions.

The Women in PST program collaborated with SEE Change in 2022 to offer the course through an online platform by a team of lead trainers from SEE Change that included 20 hours of live online workshops (8 x 2.5 hour sessions) and 6–8 hours of self-paced assignments. Of note is that NREL staff can access this training now through the existing subcontract with Johns Hopkins. There is an opportunity to expand engagement with

the SEE Change training and offer the course to a wider range of participants from NREL and USAID to help achieve more impactful individual, organizational, and community-level outcomes.

- [Gender 101](#) training was developed by USAID’s Engendering Industries initiative to provide USAID and its partners with an introduction to gender equality fundamentals, concepts, and terms needed to advance gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace. This is an hour-long training video that is a great starting point.
- [World Bank Energy Sector Management Assistance Program Gender and Energy Equality e-Learning Course](#) is a self-paced course the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program developed for social development and energy specialists, policymakers, practitioners, and members of civil society interested in learning about the links between gender equality and energy using research, data, and country-level experiences. It covers a full range of pertinent issues in the gender and energy nexus and is a great starting point to build foundational knowledge on the topic. Six modules provide video presentations, readings, quizzes, and interactive problem-solving exercises.

Toolkits and foundational resources: Many toolkits exist for gender and energy mainstreaming, some of which are highlighted below.

- [USAID Delivering Gender Equality: A Best Practices Framework for Male-Dominated Industries](#): An Engendering Industries resource that focuses on the employee life cycle as a key entry point to affecting long-lasting and impactful change. This document focuses on human resources-focused issues, with a framework for male-dominated industries, with global best practices and practical resources to identify gaps, define objectives, and establish a road map for sustained progress in integrating gender equity throughout their operations and corporate structures.
- [USAID Advancing Gender in the Environment \(AGENT\): Making the Case for Gender Equality in Large-Scale Renewable Energy Infrastructure Development](#): Provides an overview of the gender dimensions of planning and building large-scale (10 MW or more) renewable energy infrastructure, such as hydropower and geothermal plants, solar, and wind. It presents the impacts that large-scale renewable energy infrastructure development can have on communities, women, and men, and introduces entry points for advancing gender equality.
- [United for Gender Parity](#): A comprehensive compilation of the United Nations’ tools and strategies for gender parity, including leadership and accountability; senior management; recruitment and retention; creating an enabling environment; and deployment in country offices.
- [Sustainable Energy for All: Women and Youth at the Forefront](#): A program and set of resources that aim to expand professional and leadership opportunities for women in the energy workforce and champion the next generation of female energy leaders.
- [Gender in the transition to sustainable energy for all](#): Paper summarizing a 5-year research program on gender and energy (2014–2019), coordinated by [ENERGIA](#), to use an evidence-based approach to analyze the links between gender, energy, and poverty, and to translate this evidence into recommendations for energy policy and practice. The focus was on six thematic areas: (a) electrification, (b) productive uses of energy, (c) energy sector reform, (d) the role of the private sector in scaling up energy access, (e) the political economy of energy sector policies, and (f) women’s energy entrepreneurship.
- [Guide on Gender Mainstreaming Energy and Climate Change Projects](#): Developed by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization’s Energy and Climate Change Branch, this document provides practical guidance on how to systematically address gender inequalities and gender perspectives throughout the project cycle for energy and climate change activities.
- [Energy and Gender for Sustainable Development: A Toolkit and Resource Guide](#): Although a bit dated (2015), the toolkit and resource guide, produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), provides tools to help development practitioners ask the relevant questions needed to bring about better development and energy outcomes that are gender-specific and that address the needs of women in particular.

- [*Gender Tool Kit: Energy—Going Beyond the Meter*](#): While also a bit dated (2012), this is a comprehensive resource, produced by the Asian Development Bank, that provides users with a set of tools to design energy projects that are gender-responsive. It contains key questions to be asked during gender analysis, examples of gender-inclusive design features and gender indicators, and a number of case studies of recent Asian Development Bank-financed projects.
- [*Toolkit on Gender Advocacy in Clean Energy*](#): This toolkit, developed by Partnership on Women’s Entrepreneurship in Renewables (wPOWER), aims to create an agenda to strengthen women’s involvement in clean energy initiatives to accelerate energy access. It focuses on five key areas: (a) advancing women’s participation in clean energy entrepreneurship, (b) improving access to finance for women in clean energy, (c) expanding research on women’s impact in clean energy initiatives, (d) promoting gender-inclusive policies for clean energy, and (e) focusing engagement at the grassroots level.
- [*Gender integration in renewable energy policy: A guideline for renewable energy policy and decision makers*](#): This is a guide published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to introduce, improve, and integrate gender into renewable energy policies. The guide is intended to help policymakers and decision makers understand the linkages between energy access and gender equality, provide steps to integrate gender into energy policies at all levels, and to understand how to address women’s lack of participation in decision-making in the energy sector.

Annex 3: Key Terms and Definitions¹⁴

Agency: the capacity to make decisions about one’s own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution, or fear.

Collective intelligence: shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration, collective efforts, and competition of many individuals and appears in consensus decision-making.

Empowerment: change in relationships among individuals and groups. Empowerment is a process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make strategic choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. This involves improving their assets and their capabilities so they can become agents of positive social change on their own behalf.

Endowments: resources that allow people to use social, political, and economic opportunities to be productive and to protect themselves (against shocks). Endowments can be human (informational, such as education; psychological; education; health; and organizational) or physical (such as assets, finances, etc.) and are critical inputs to agency.

Equal opportunity: is an equal distribution, among individuals, of opportunities for education, training, employment, career development, and the exercise of power without being disadvantaged on the basis of sex, race, language, religion, economics, or family situations.

Gender: the social, behavioral, and cultural attributes, expectations, and norms associated with being male or female. Gender equality refers to how these factors determine the way in which women and men relate to each other and to the resulting difference in power between them.

Gender-based violence: an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (that is, gender) differences between males and females. Gender-based violence includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering; threats of such acts; and coercion and other deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life

¹⁴ Taken from a wide number of sources, including [*International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)*](#), [*World Bank Energy Sector Management Assistance Program \(ESMAP\)*](#), [*Getting To Gender Equality In Energy Infrastructure Lessons From Electricity Generation, Transmission, And Distribution Project*](#), January 2018, and [*ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy*](#)

Gender equality: ability for women, men, girls, and boys to have equal access to opportunity, resources, benefits, and legal protections.

Gender equity: fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men.

Gender gaps: societal differences in opportunities, influence, decision-making power or status, attitudes, etc., between women and men, boys and girls. In most parts of the world, such differences favor men and boys at the expense of women and girls, although this is not always the case. For example, men tend to have more influence in the energy policy domain and in energy technology development than women. Closing gender gaps is critical to development and attaining gender equality.

Gender-mainstreaming: a process that systematically integrates gender perspective into legislation, public policies, programs, and projects. This process enables making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres, with the goal of achieving gender equality.

Job/occupational sex segregation: differences in participation in the labor force by women and men due to gendered opportunities and expectations. It can be exemplified by women and men dominating in different sectors or by women and men dominating different positions within the same sector. Women-dominated sectors and positions tend to be undervalued and underpaid.

Voices: decisions that influence a person's life trajectory and subsequent ability to exercise autonomy and make choices.

Women's empowerment: ability for women to act freely in society, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as equal members of society



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The USAID-NREL Partnership addresses critical challenges to scaling up advanced energy systems through global tools and technical assistance, including the Renewable Energy Data Explorer, Greening the Grid, the International Jobs and Economic Development Impacts tool, and the Resilient Energy Platform. More information can be found at: www.nrel.gov/usaid-partnership.

