

## **Chapter 5 Gender Mainstreaming in Water Sector Policies and Institutions**

### **What is a Gender Policy?**

A gender policy inclusive of intersecting identities of race, class, caste, ethnicity, age, ability, and geographical location. is a public statement of a country's or an organisation's commitment to taking gender issues seriously, and a framework for what this means in the context of the organisation's work. A gender policy in water resources management relates to both of the following:

- the organisation's work: - i.e. women's and men's involvement in the planning, construction, operation, maintenance and management of domestic water supply, irrigation, sanitation or environmental protection;
- the organisation's internal culture and staffing – issues affecting female and male staff at work; for example, recruitment, promotion and training opportunities for female and male staff, sexual discrimination and harassment, and issues such as child care, paternity or maternity leave, and safe travel arrangements (Gender and Water Alliance, 2003).

### **Why Develop a Gender Policy?**

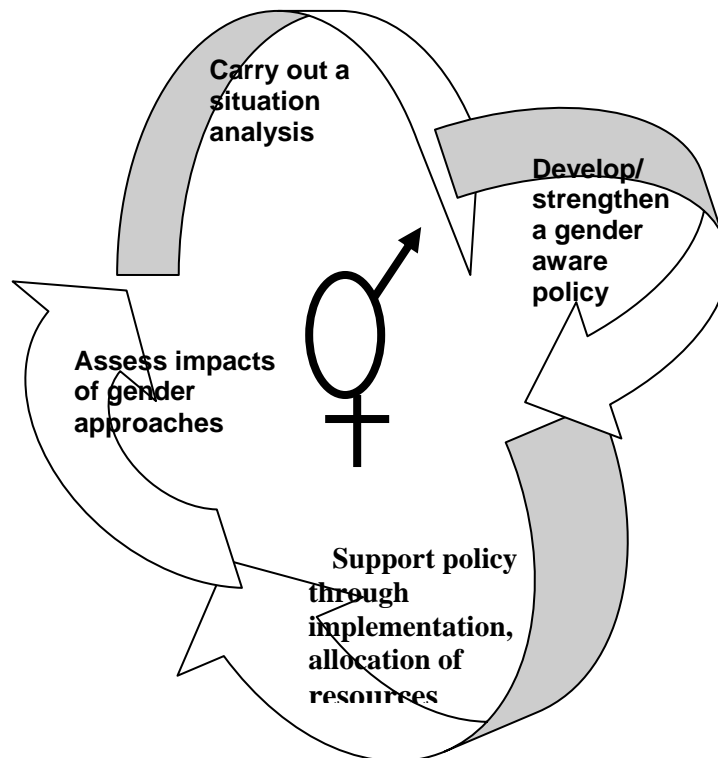
The development of a gender policy is a necessary and common starting point for focusing attention on gender issues in an organisation and its work. For organisations which have already taken some steps towards promoting gender sensitivity (for example, through providing staff with training and guidelines), development of a gender policy is an opportunity to consolidate and formalise the steps they have taken, and think strategically about the future. A gender policy provides:

- a valuable opportunity to involve staff and other key stakeholders in thinking through why gender and social equity are important to the organisation's work and what the implications are for practice;
- a public statement of the organisation's commitment to taking gender issues seriously;
- agreed gender-related action and indicators of change;
- an instrument of accountability against which to evaluate the organisation's performance.

Gender policy development and implementation require an on-going strategy for the capacity building of all members and partners of the institution or organisation.

Policy development is not a one-off process. It is important to re-visit gender policies that have been in existence for some time, evaluate performance, review lessons learnt, and develop and launch revised policy commitments accordingly. The figure below illustrates how policy formulation should be a continuous process.

## Policy formulation should be a continuous process



### Policy Components

Three distinct components are important for an effective gender policy:

- Situational analysis – examining gender issues concerning beneficiary groups and the organisation itself. The latter includes an examination of staff knowledge, skills, commitment and practices in relation to gender issues, and an examination of gender issues affecting staff (such as gender differences in promotion opportunities or sexual harassment at work).
- The policy itself – this should be devised on the basis of the situation analysis and comprise an explanation of why the organisation considers gender issues to be important, the organisation’s vision of gender-sensitive practice, and the various ways in which this understanding will influence the organisation’s work.
- An implementation strategy or action plan – this sets out in detail how the policy will be implemented over a specific time period, including activities, time-bound targets, budgets, responsibility and indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

Policy documents are usually public documents. Strategies and action plans are usually internal documents. Some organisations include aspects of their situation analysis in public documentation; others confine public documentation to the policy itself. Policies vary enormously in length – from two to several pages depending on what organisations choose to include in them.

## Enabling Institutions

The implementation of a policy will depend to a large extent on a supportive institutional framework. It is therefore necessary to pay attention to the organisation itself. Developing appropriate understanding, commitment and capacity as well as addressing issues of gender inequality within an institution or organisation is a long-term process of organisational change. Activities such as capacity building, budget allocation, setting of indicators and monitoring need to be undertaken. The table below summarises some of the organisational pressure points important for implementing gender-sensitive policy.

**Table: Organisational Points for Gender Mainstreaming Institutions**

Category of inquiry	Issues to consider	Steps to be taken for organisational change
<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b>		
<b>Policy and Action plans</b> Gender policies: Attention to gender in all policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a gender policy?</li> <li>• When was it developed and who was involved?</li> <li>• Does it use sex-disaggregated data? Is its implementation being monitored?</li> </ul>	If there is no gender policy but a desire to address inequalities between men and women, then follow steps outlined above.
<b>Policy Influencing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the attitude of senior management staff to gender issues? Who are formal and informal opinion leaders?</li> <li>• Which external agencies or people have an influence on the organisation?</li> <li>• What are the decision making bodies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess who are the champions for gender equality and equity</li> <li>- Engage all relevant and potential staff and management.</li> <li>- Create a participatory and inclusive environment for policy development.</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources</b> - Gender Focal Staff - All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a designated gender unit/focal person?</li> <li>• What do they do? With what resources? Are other staff members gender-aware?</li> <li>• Is sensitivity to gender included in job descriptions and assessed at job evaluations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have clear TORs for the unit/focal persons.</li> <li>- Establish training in gender mainstreaming and advocacy as an on-going process with action targets.</li> <li>- Have professional backstopping support.</li> <li>- Involve focal units as an integral part of existing processes and programmes.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial /time resources</b> - Gender equality initiatives on the ground - Staff capacity building initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there funding for capacity building on gender?</li> <li>• Is there funding for gender actions on the ground?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allocate budgets for staff capacity building and for actions on the ground.</li> <li>- Allocate time for actions at the operational level.</li> <li>- Develop indicators to monitor progress.</li> </ul>
<b>Systems procedures and tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is attention to gender included in routine systems and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include gender in systems and procedures</li> <li>- Develop sex-disaggregated</li> </ul>

	<p>(information systems, appraisals, planning and monitoring)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have staff been issued with guidelines on gender mainstreaming?</li> </ul>	<p>information systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include gender in staff TORs and interviews.</li> <li>- Have indicators for monitoring policy progress in implementing gender.</li> <li>- Develop checklists and guidelines</li> </ul>
<b>WORK CULTURE</b>		
<b>Staffing statistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the numbers of men and women at each level in the organisation and according to roles and sectors?</li> <li>• Check employment and hiring polices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have gender sensitive recruitment policies that are not discriminatory, even though gender is not about balancing numbers</li> <li>- Provide staff access to decision making processes.</li> </ul>
<b>Women and men's practical and strategic needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the organisation create a safe and practical environment for women and men e.g., transport, toilets, childcare, and flexibility of working hours?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyse the organisation with respect to its sensitivity to the different needs of women and men.</li> <li>- Look at organisational assets such as equipment, furniture, toilet design and accessibility, etc. Are they suitable for women and men?</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does information flow and to what extent are women and men included in the communication chain?</li> <li>• What are the main shared values? Do they relate to equality? And specifically to gender?</li> <li>• Is decision making centralised or decentralised?</li> <li>• What are the attitudes towards female/male staff?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adopt an organisational culture that values women and men's perspectives equally.</li> <li>- Explicitly state the organisation's commitments to gender equality in all policies and programmes.</li> <li>- Decentralise decision making to allow both women and men a voice in organisational decision making.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff perceptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the male and female staff perceptions towards gender?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct gender capacity building and awareness raising programmes, especially where gender is seen as just one of the donor requirements and not an organisational value.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy and actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the organisation have equal opportunity polices? What does the policy cover? How is it promoted and implemented?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pay attention to equality within the structure, culture and staffing of organisations as well as in the programmes, policies and procedures.</li> <li>- Assess and evaluate continuously using gender-sensitive indicators to enable a comprehensive review.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Derbyshire, 2002.

## References

Derbyshire, Helen, 2003. *Gender Manual: A Practical Guide for Development Policy Makers and Practitioners*. Social Development Division, DFID, UK.

Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), 2003. *Policy Development Manual for Gender and Water Alliance Members and Partners*. Delft, Netherlands. Available at:  
<http://www.genderandwater.org>

GWA, 2003. *Gender Perspectives on Policies in the Water Sector*. Leicestershire, UK, Published by WEDC, Loughborough University, Leicestershire, UK, for the GWA.

## Key Resources

Schreiner, Barbara, Barbara van Koppen and Kathy Eales., 2003. *Gender Mainstreaming in Water Policy and Legislation: the Case of South Africa*. Paper developed for the Gender in Court Session at the 3rd World Water Forum, Kyoto, Japan.

Status of Women, Canada., 1998. *Gender-Based Analysis: A guide for policy making*. Government of Canada, Revised. Available at: [http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/gbaguide/index\\_e.html](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/gbaguide/index_e.html)

Wakeman, Wendy, Susan Davis, Christine van Wijk and Alka Naithani, 1996. *Sourcebook for Gender Issues at the Policy Level in the Water and Sanitation Sector*. Water and Sanitation Collaborative Council.