

ADVANCING TOWARDS GENDER-SENSITIVE WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



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For Input

SDG 6 IWRM SUPPORT PROGRAMME



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About

This report is produced by the SDG 6 IWRM (Integrated Water Resources Management) Support Programme, a coordination mechanism which assists governments in designing and implementing country-led responses to SDG indicator 6.5.1, the degree of implementation of IWRM, as an entry point to accelerate progress towards the achievement of water-related SDGs and other development goals, in line with their national priorities. This is in direct support of the official SDG monitoring and reporting processes, and should lead to measurable progress on the relevant SDG target(s).

Under the guidance of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), as the custodian agency for SDG indicator 6.5.1, and coordinated by Global Water Partnership (GWP) in collaboration with UNEP-DHI Centre and Cap-Net, the Support Programme brings together a unique blend of partners in each country, representing governments, civil society, academia and the private sector, in the spirit of SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. For more information, and for any enquiries relating to this report, please refer to <https://www.gwp.org/en/sdg6support/>.

Acknowledgements

First of all, we would like to sincerely thank the 186 UN Member States that have reported on the status of SDG 6.5.1 on the degree of implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management over the last five years, including the gender-related questions. In particular, we would like to thank the representatives of the 23 nations and states that went further in unpacking their responses to the SDG 6.5.1 survey instrument, and which therefore provided further input to this study and report. Those nations and states are, in alphabetical order, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Cyprus, Dominica, Georgia, Greece, Grenada, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Nepal, Nicaragua, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Somalia, South Africa, State of Palestine, Sweden, Turkmenistan and Viet Nam.

We would also like to thank the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for its kind and generous support to the Global Water Partnership, which made this study and report possible.

Disclaimer:

This report is an advanced version which is being shared for comments and feedback, prior to its finalisation. The consultation period is open from March 8th to April 9th, 2021. Should you have any comments, please send them to sdg6iwrmsp@gwp.org.

The report was commissioned to Solutions for the Environment Sustainable Engineering (SEVEN). It does not necessarily represent the views of the GWP, UNEP, UNEP-DHI or Cap-Net, nor any of their affiliated bodies.

Glossary

AMCOW	African Ministers' Council on Water
DfID	Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
GWA	Gender and Water Alliance
GWP	Global Water Partnership
GWPO	Global Water Partnership Organisation
ISF-UTS	Institute for Sustainable Futures of the University of Technology of Sydney
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP-Cap-Net	United Nations Development Programme - International Capacity Development Network for Sustainable Water Management
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-DHI	United Nations Environment Programme - Danish Hydraulic Institute
UN ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
WRM	Water Resources Management
WWAP	World Water Assessment Programme

Foreword

Gender equity and social inclusion are among GWP's core values, and have been since our creation in 1996. A lot has changed in the world since then, and much progress has been made, but advancing towards gender equality by fully recognising the important role of women and marginalised populations in water resources management remains a major challenge. In our twenty-fifth anniversary year, GWP remains as committed as ever to pursuing that objective.

Since 2017, we have partnered with the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP-DHI Centre, and Cap-Net through the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme. This Programme assists countries in monitoring and accelerating progress towards their water-related SDGs. The Support Programme uses the SDG 6.5 monitoring process as a triennial status check on how well the world is progressing towards fully implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), and builds on that process to provide guidance and assistance for countries to advance towards their national targets. We believe that mainstreaming gender in countries' IWRM approaches is a key strategy to help them reach not just SDG 6.5, but also, in the indivisible spirit of the SDGs, many other related targets.

We are therefore proud to present this summary of a study that the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme carried out of the gender-related question in the SDG 6.5.1 survey instrument, which all UN Member States were invited to fill in during the 2020 data drive. This draft report has been prepared as a starting point for more detailed conversations with national and local governments, international development partners, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, and any other interested party, on how best to achieve gender mainstreaming in IWRM.

This document is open for consultation between March 8th and April 9th, 2021. We welcome your input on the possible solutions we have identified, in consultation with IWRM country focal points. Please send your comments and feedback to sdg6iwrmsp@gwp.org, or fill in this [FORM](#).

As a network of networks striving for a water secure world, we welcome any organisation that shares this vision to join forces with us to foster gender transformative approaches to water resources management. If our 25 years of work have taught us anything, it is that the world's water challenges can only be solved by working in partnership.



Darío Soto-Abril



Executive Secretary
Global Water Partnership

Executive Summary

This report presents the key findings of the study “Understanding and advancing gender-sensitive responses to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), in line with SDG indicator 6.5.1”. The starting point for the study was the results of the 2017 baseline survey on SDG 6.5.1, completed by 172 countries, which showed that the gender-related questions were among the least advanced among all aspects of IWRM. The study also drew upon the 2020 country responses to the same, which showed that the global average score for the gender-related question had risen from 45 out of 100 in 2017 to 54 out of 100 by 2020, revealing definite progress, although clearly much more needs to be done.

The main objective of the study, and therefore of this report, was to showcase and disseminate a range of practices that have been implemented in different countries to mainstream gender in IWRM, drawing on: (a) real examples collected from SDG 6.5.1 focal points¹ from 23 countries that participated in structured interviews, and (b) the textual responses from all countries that reported under the gender-related question 2.2d “Gender included in laws/plans or similar within water resources management” in the 2020 survey. This report presents some of the different mechanisms, practices and tools used by those countries to advance gender mainstreaming in IWRM. It is hoped that this report will thus allow for cross-fertilization of knowledge, highlighting some of the common gaps, challenges and constraints, and key enabling factors, and providing recommendations on how to replicate and upscale the current practices.

Overall, the participants of the countries interviewed in the framework of this study identified that gender mainstreaming in IWRM goes beyond the issue of the integration of women. **Gender mainstreaming is about fully integrating all gender perspectives** (differences in needs, uses and practices, employment and entrepreneurship, access to resources, vulnerabilities and impacts, adaptation and mitigation capacity of men, women and non-binary individuals) in water planning, management and decision-making. It is not just about increasing women’s representation in councils, committees, etc., but it is mostly about integrating gender issues in all policies in a crosscutting manner, linking water and other relevant policy areas.

Numerous gender mainstreaming strategies within WRM have been developed by different organisations, and many countries have adopted gender policies or strategies. Yet, **evidence has revealed a clear gap between these policies and practice**. Such strategies are not always accompanied by concrete action plans or adequately funded, measures and mechanisms are not fully implemented, and data collection and monitoring and evaluation processes may not always be sophisticated and disaggregated enough to reveal the true gender and inclusion power dynamics occurring within a WRM context.

While the majority of the SDG 6.5.1 focal points interviewed as part of this study understood the importance of integrating gender considerations in their IWRM policies, most also recognised that not

¹ Each UN Member State names an official focal point to represent them for the purpose of reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.1. These focal points are government representatives, either from the nation’s water or environment agency or ministry, or sometimes from the statistics division.

enough has been done in their countries to implement comprehensive gender-mainstreaming strategies either because of the lack of knowledge, resources, technical expertise and/or political backing to be able to implement them. They highlighted that, in practice, gender mainstreaming is not always identified as a priority or explicitly recognised at various levels of policy-making, often being treated as a separate ad-hoc topic. There is also a need to better understand and account for a broader range of factors that can lead to exclusion and marginalisation, such as age, disability, ethnicity, caste and sexuality, if we are to truly ensure that no one is left behind.

Despite these challenges and gaps, many countries have taken significant and concrete steps towards advancing gender mainstreaming in WRM. Even though a one-size-fits-all strategy for gender mainstreaming does not exist for any sector, countries that are mainstreaming gender in IWRM seem to have adopted common practices and mechanisms, related to the following **enablers for gender mainstreaming in WRM**:

- *Strong commitment of the executive leadership, at the national level*: High-level commitment is key to drive the process; it should be noted however that this enabler is subject to political agendas which could potentially shift at every change of government. In addition, there is often a gap between political discourse and the design of policies focusing on gender mainstreaming.
- *Egalitarian legal framework promoted in the Constitution of the country*: Constitutions are long-standing documents that are difficult to undo and offer a robust framework for the development of laws. However, in itself they do not guarantee the implementation of gender equality policies.
- *Specialized policies are integrated in WRM strategies*: It needs to be carefully considered how the concept of gender equality appears in water laws. These laws tend to focus on specific water uses and management approaches but, more often than not, do not integrate gender equality as part of IWRM.
- *Earmarked funding is allocated to gender-mainstreaming in IWRM*, including establishing and running gender-mainstreaming units within different ministries and the local level, recruit gender specialists and implement gender-focused activities: These units have a clear mandate to review the agenda and activities of the Ministries they represent and ensure that gender matters are taken into consideration. Specific funds for gender equality measures are mainly present in programmes addressing social inclusion issues or fundamental human rights and rarely adopted in policy fields that are not seen as immediately related to gender equality, such as environment and water.
- *Centralized monitoring systems* are overseen by a national body such as the statistics office, which has the means and technical skills to design gender-sensitive indicators and gender-disaggregated data collections: The design and collection of data and indicators on the basis of a gender approach is crucial to developing actions and intervention plans that promote men's and women's access, decision-making and control over resources. The definition of gender-related indicators requires an expertise that not all countries have access to. More precise measurements of the participation of women and other vulnerable groups in IWRM could be further developed.

- *Multi-stakeholder consultation processes and engagement, intersectoral mechanisms and bodies*, which bring the needed expertise to address gender issues: Some countries have adopted multi-sectorial commissions, in which members of the central government, the local government, non-governmental organizations and users associations are represented, set and oversee gender issues. Inter-sectoral mechanisms are in some countries in place to design and implement robust capacity building activities.

These enablers are inter-dependent; however, achieving all of them in unison is a challenge for many countries, as acknowledged in their SDG 6.5.1 surveys. It should be emphasised that, according to the findings of this study, countries that have developed and committed to a gender mainstreaming strategy with specific targets, clear definition of roles, financial and human resources, lines of accountability under an overarching implementation plan and a data strategy, may be found all over the world, and in all income categories. The same can also be said of countries facing challenges in the implementation of gender mainstreaming in IWRM. However, many of the examples shared in this report may provide pointers to countries looking to advance in that direction.

Background, objectives and methodology of the report

Background

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) has become a globally accepted framework since the 1990s². A widely used definition of IWRM has been formulated by the Global Water Partnership (GWP): “IWRM is a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximize economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems and the environment”³. GWP further describes IWRM as management of water resources “in a sustainable and balanced way, taking account of social, economic and environmental interests. It recognizes the many different and competing interest groups, the sectors that use and abuse water, and the needs of the environment”⁴.

One of the clearest commitments to advance IWRM globally is the dedicated Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5 (SDG 6.5)⁵, which calls upon countries to “implement, by 2030, integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate”⁵. The achievement of this target is monitored and reported through two dedicated indicators, namely 6.5.1 on the “degree of implementation of IWRM”, and 6.5.2 on the “proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation”⁶.

Principle number 3 of the 1992 Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development stated that “women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water”⁷. In line with the indivisible nature of the SDGs, achieving SDG 6.5 will require that attention be paid to gender mainstreaming, in line with SDG 5 on gender equality and empowering all women and girls⁸, and its specific target 5.5 on ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

² Bertule, M., Glennie, P., Koefoed Bjørnsen, P., James Lloyd, G., Kjellen, M., Dalton, J., Rieu-Clarke, A., Romano, O.; Tropp, H., Newton, J., Harlin, J., 2018. Monitoring Water Resources Governance Progress Globally: Experiences from Monitoring SDG Indicator 6.5.1 on Integrated Water Resources Management Implementation. *Water* 2018, 10, 1744.

³ Global Water Partnership (GWP). What Is IWRM? TAC Background Papers, no. 4, Integrated Water Resources Management, 2000 <https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/toolbox/publications/background-papers/04-integrated-water-resources-management-2000-english.pdf>

⁴ Global Water Partnership (GWP), 2009. A Handbook for Integrated Water Resources Management in Basins. Global Water Partnership: Mölnlycke, Sweden, 2009

⁵ United Nations. Sustainable Development Goal 6. Available online: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal6> (accessed 23/08/2020)

⁶ Ibid

⁷ International Conference on Water and the Environment, 1992. The Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development. Dublin, Ireland, available online: <https://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/hwrrp/documents/english/icwedece.html> (last accessed 05/12/2020)

⁸ United Nations. Sustainable Development Goal 5. Available online: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5> (accessed 30/12/2020)

While it is true that women typically bear the brunt of the water provision tasks at domestic level, the argument for including them in water governance and related decision making processes should not be based solely on the sometimes idealised role of women as providers and users of water and guardians of the living environment. Acceptance and implementation of this principle requires positive policies to address women's specific needs and to equip and empower women to participate at all levels in water resources programmes, including decision-making and implementation, in ways defined by them. Gender mainstreaming in WRM can be instrumental in helping countries address other national and global challenges (poverty, inequalities, social justice, climate change, etc.), and should thus be integrated into holistic and crosscutting national policies which contribute to the SDGs.

In its agreed conclusions on “mainstreaming the gender perspective in all policies and programmes in the United Nations system”, the UN Economic and Social Council⁹ defined gender mainstreaming as a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, with the ultimate goal of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Objectives of the report

To support the monitoring and evaluation of gender aspects in IWRM implementation, SDG indicator 6.5.1 survey includes a gender-related question for UN Member States to self-evaluate the extent to which gender is included in their laws/plans or similar within WRM. However, both in the 2017 baseline and the 2020 update to that SDG indicator, the average global score for this question was rather low (43 in 2017 and 54 in 2020, on a scale from 0-100), while many countries reported challenges in interpreting the question and knowing how to report on it in the national context. In this context, the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme appreciates that advancing gender mainstreaming and the gender objectives in WRM is still a matter of urgency, and countries need to ensure that WRM and programmes incorporate specific gender objectives. This Report thus aims to enhance understanding on the multiple benefits of more fully integrating gender considerations into WRM and enhancing women's participation, and thereby accelerating achievement of SDG 6.5.1 and other related SDG targets. More specifically, the Report aims to:

- Clarify misconceptions around the context around gender mainstreaming in WRM
- Provide clear guidance to countries in terms of what it means to mainstream gender in WRM, within their relevant laws, plans and practices
- Showcase and disseminate a range of practices that have been implemented around the world, drawing on real examples collected from SDG 6.5.1 focal points in national governments, allowing for knowledge sharing

⁹ UN Economic and Social Council, 2010. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, Report of the Secretary-General, E/2010/57

- Highlight some of the common gaps, challenges and constraints experienced by countries, as well as key enabling factors which facilitate gender mainstreaming in WRM
- Support the understanding around gender mainstreaming in WRM, and provide recommendations on how to strengthen current practices

Methodological approach

The primary purpose of the survey instrument for SDG Indicator 6.5.1¹⁰, to be completed roughly every three years by all UN Member States, is to support national, regional and global monitoring and reporting on indicator 6.5.1. It has been designed to be useful as a simple diagnostic tool for countries to identify strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of IWRM implementation. To support the monitoring and evaluation of gender aspects in IWRM implementation, this survey instrument includes a gender-related question, 2.2d “Gender included in laws/plans or similar within water resources management”. Countries score themselves on this question on a 0-100 scale and provided additional supporting free-text information.

This report was mainly based on the findings of structured interviews which were conducted in late 2020 with 23 nations and states around the world following their submissions of the 2020 SDG 6.5.1 survey, namely (in alphabetical order): Australia, Austria, Brazil, Cyprus, Dominica, Georgia, Greece, Grenada, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Nepal, Nicaragua, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Somalia, South Africa, State of Palestine, Sweden, Turkmenistan and Viet Nam. For the selection of these case studies, a set of criteria was applied: coverage of all scores (from 0-100 increments) assigned to question 2.2d in the survey, dispersion among all UN regional groups¹¹ and GWP regions¹², representation of Least Developed Countries (LDC), Landlocked developing countries (LLDC) and Small island developing States (SIDS), and the relevance and depth of the textual information that was provided in the response to question 2.2d.

Additionally to these 23 interviews, the justifications that were provided by the respondents to the 2020 SDG 6.5.1 Survey to the gender-related question (q2.2d), referencing evidence wherever possible (e.g. quoting reports, laws, plans etc.), were also analysed for the purposes of this report.

Based on the 2020 country submissions, some general statistics were calculated, and compared to the 2017 baseline SDG 6.5.1 survey. Overall, the scores have increased, with the global average score in 2020 54, across 187 countries, as compared to 43 in 2017, across 172 countries. It can be observed that the number of countries with scores higher than 50 (i.e. the three highest implementation categories) increased from 51 countries (30%) in 2017 to 85 countries (45%) in 2020, a 15% increase. On the other hand, the number of countries which scored themselves lower than or equal to 50 (i.e.

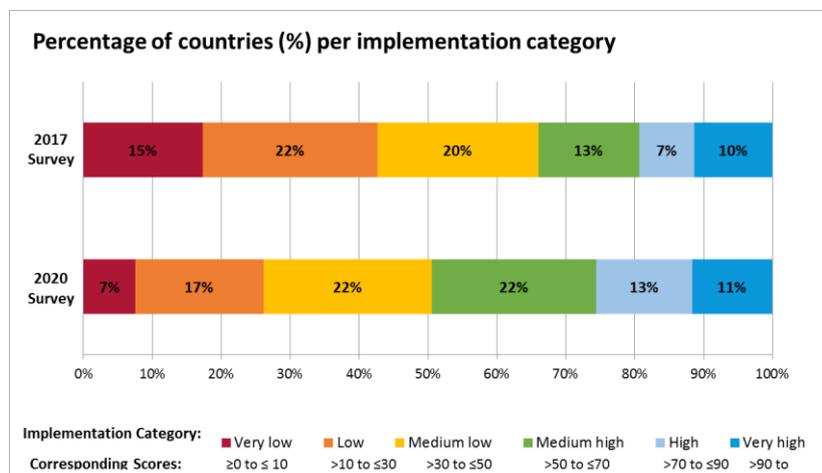
¹⁰ Country Survey Instrument 2020 for SDG Indicator 6.5.1:
http://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/IWRMDataJsonService/Service1.svc/DownloadSurveyDocument/English/IWRM_Survey_Final/docx

¹¹ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/regional-groups>

¹² <https://www.gwp.org/en/About/who/Regional-Water-Partnerships/>

the three lowest implementation categories) decreased from 99 countries (58%) in 2017 to 87 countries (47%) in 2020, a 11% decrease.

Figure 1: Comparison of percentage of countries per implementation category between the 2017 and the 2020 SDG 6.5.1 Survey



Looking at the UNSD Megaregions (used by the UN statistical reporting on SDGs) across a common dataset of the 145 countries which reported numerical values in both the 2017 and 2020 reporting, the highest average score is still observed in Europe and Northern America (75%) where a 11% increase can be observed as compared to 2017. The average scores of Australia and New Zealand (65% in 2020) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (66% in 2020) present the highest increases of 20% and 18% respectively when compared to their 2017 averages. In general, the median scores increased in all regional groups.

Gender mainstreaming in water resources management: concepts and understanding

Links between gender and water resources management

The concept of gender in WRM has been included in the criteria monitored through the SDG indicator 6.5.1 for various reasons. First, water scarcity disproportionately affects poor communities and the most marginalized individuals in society. Second, access to water is relevant for women's empowerment because it further affects women's access to education, health (in relation to pregnancy, childbirth and water-borne diseases), as well as their income and safety (gender-based violence). Third, as highlighted by Oxfam in a recent report on SDG Goals 5 and 6, "gender equality and access to water are basic human rights and are thus foundational for achieving the other SDGs"¹³.

It is important to note at this stage that the terms 'women' and 'gender' are not interchangeable. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)¹⁴, sex refers to the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and do not change. Gender refers to social attributes that are learned or acquired during socialization as a member of a given community. Because these attributes are learned behaviours, they can and they do change over time (with increasing rapidity as the rate of technological change intensifies) and vary across cultures. Gender in WRM therefore refers to the socially constructed attributes (roles, activities, responsibilities, needs and opportunities) associated to women and men, boys and girls, transgender and intersex people, in a given society at a given time, in the designing, planning, management, implementation, monitoring, decision-making and evaluation processes related to the use and exploitation of water resources. While it is now generally agreed that we need to ensure inclusive and sustainable water governance for all genders, women remain the more vulnerable gender.

Perceptions around gender mainstreaming in water management

The interpretation of what the concept of gender and gender mainstreaming in WRM entails varies across people and countries. The following three interpretations are the most prevailing ones:

- **Fair representation** of all gender groups and individuals in management, executive and decision-making bodies.
- **Equity in opportunities of raising voices and participating** in the decision-making process at all levels.

¹³ OXFAM, 2020, Achieving Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 6. The case for gender-transformative water programmes, Emma Crawford.

¹⁴ UNDP, 2016. How to conduct a gender analysis, A guidance note for UNDP staff. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bureau of Policy and Programme Support, Gender Team, 2016

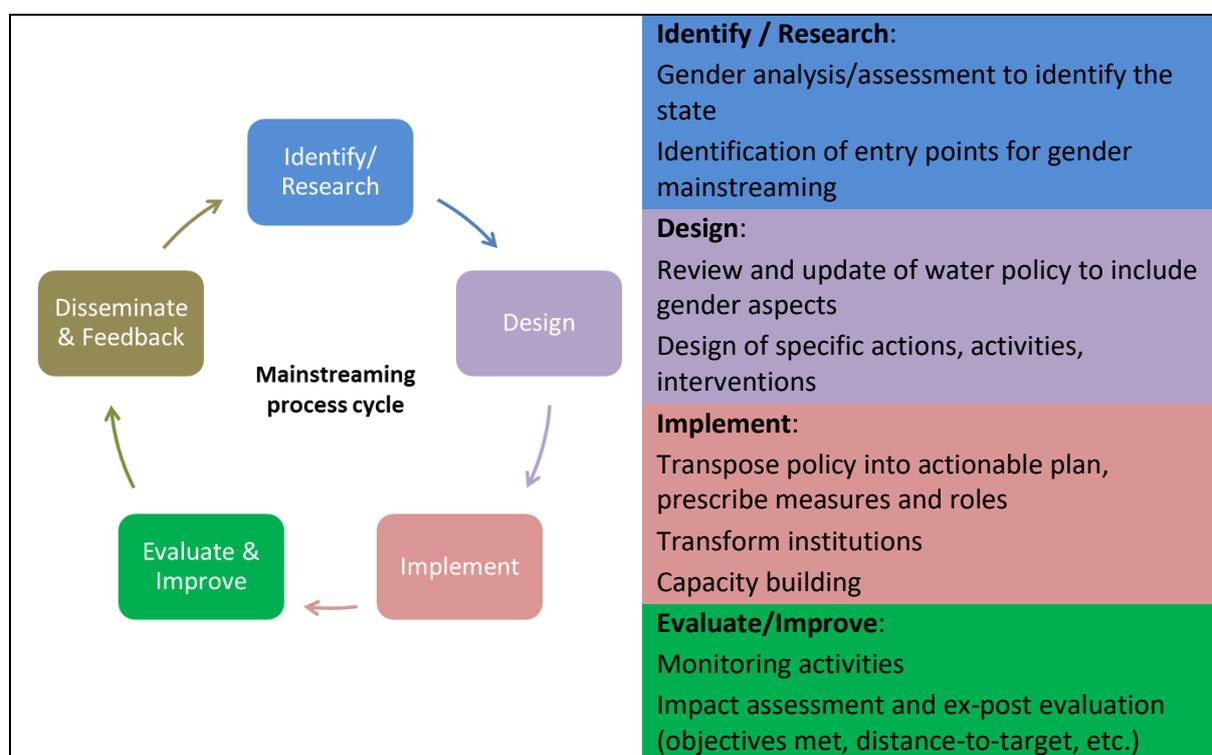
- **Full integration of all gender perspectives** (differences in needs, uses and practices, employment and entrepreneurship, access to resources, vulnerabilities and impacts, adaptation & mitigation capacity) in water planning, management and decision-making.

“The number of women representatives in water projects and boards should not be the sole goal, neither the ultimate objective of gender mainstreaming. Having women in planning bodies alone doesn’t guarantee that gender issues are mainstreamed; it is a much wider process. The presence of women in water projects won’t radically influence the impact of the project if the women have not been included in the design phase and if the projects have not integrated all gender needs and set objectives that are gender-sensitive and beneficial for all”,
 Mr. Dibya Kansakar, retired employee of the Department of Water Resources and Irrigation, Nepal

The standard process cycle of gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming involves the implementation of different steps within a standard process cycle: identify the current state and objectives, design a strategy with prescribed actions along with the various mechanisms and tools that can support their implementation, implement the prescribed actions, evaluate the results and identify problems and weaknesses, disseminate and incorporate feedback in order to improve the whole cycle. As this is a cyclical process, this does not necessarily suggest that one should always start only if the identification step is fulfilled; efforts can be made at any step of the cycle and then be re-iterated, improved and re-designed. However, every bit of the cycle matters. Worldwide, countries are at different phases of the gender mainstreaming cycle.

Figure 2: Gender mainstreaming process cycle



Disseminate/Feedback:

Raise awareness, Collect feedback, Educate

Mechanisms and practices for gender mainstreaming: experiences from different countries

This section presents and discusses the different ‘specific ways’ (mechanisms, practices, tools) that countries have implemented for mainstreaming gender in their WRM. These are derived both from the analysis of the free text responses provided under the 2020 SDG 6.5.1 survey instrument on the gender-related question 2.2d, as well as the interviews conducted with the 23 selected countries¹⁵.

Countless gender and inclusion strategies within water resources management have been developed by non-governmental organisations, governments, regional bodies, partnership organisations, multilateral development banks, and bilateral aid agencies. Yet, evidence has revealed a clear gap between these policies and practice.¹⁶ Gender mainstreaming is not always well understood, gender strategies are not always accompanied by concrete action plans and are seldom adequately funded, measures and mechanisms are seldom fully implemented, and on the whole, data collection and monitoring and evaluation processes may not always be sophisticated and disaggregated enough to reveal the true gender and inclusion power dynamics occurring in WRM. Furthermore, there is a need to better understand and account for a broader range of factors that can lead to exclusion and marginalisation, such as age, disability, ethnicity, caste, and sexuality, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Despite these challenges, many countries have taken significant and concrete steps towards advancing gender mainstreaming in WRM. We hereby present some specific ways, mechanisms, practices and tools, along with examples, that have been developed and used by countries in order to progress with gender mainstreaming. These have been grouped into 6 categories based on their relevance to a specific enabling factor of mainstreaming:

- Advocacy, high-level commitment, prevailing norms and stereotypes
- Legislative and policy framework, governance
- Human capital, financial resources, institutions and support organisations
- Women’s participation and parity
- Monitoring activities to track and assess progress to target

¹⁵ The 23 nations and states interviewed were: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Cyprus, Dominica, Georgia, Greece, Grenada, Japan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Nicaragua, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Somalia, South Africa, State of Palestine, Sweden, Turkmenistan and Viet Nam

¹⁶ GWP, 2017. [Action Piece: Gender equality and inclusion in water resources management](#)

- Awareness raising, capacity development and education

Advocacy, high-level commitment, prevailing norms and stereotypes

A clear high-level institutional commitment to mainstreaming gender and inclusion objectives is important to drive the mainstreaming process. This can be a commitment at the central government level (from legislative bodies and commissions such as unions, parliamentarians, etc.), from the local governmental level (from river basin organisations, political parties, etc.), and/or from the organisational level (users' associations, water councils, institutions, industries wishing to maximize impact and reduce investment failures, etc.). Ideally it would be at all of those levels in parallel.

It is important to identify how power is exercised in each country, power being defined here as the capacity for influence. The consensus across all the different interviews conducted shows a low ability of women, and other vulnerable groups, to have an impact and raise their voice to influence water policies, how funding is allocated or on water-related management practices. However, efforts are being made at different levels of government and citizen's participation to address the representation gap. Some of these efforts are related to awareness raising and capacity development which are addressed below. In parallel, several countries have highlighted the integration of gender considerations in the process of reform of the national water resources action plans.

More often than not, these efforts are inspired by the objectives of the Agenda 2030, international commitments, and/or by requirements related to funding opportunities provided by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) for example. Countries like Somalia, Brazil, Nepal, Laos are currently in the process of developing new national strategies or action plans led by the relevant ministries integrating gender considerations as an integral, overarching component of the strategy and not as an after-thought. However, when looking at the comments provided by other countries in the 2020 survey, gender mainstreaming is not often considered a top priority and is frequently disassociated from WRM plans. Such plans are often drafted and finalised before the issue of gender can be appropriately addressed. It is essential that countries reach a common understanding that gender mainstreaming is an integral and founding component of IWRM. In this sense, some actions that could be taken include:

- National Management Plans, National Development Plans, etc. emphasise and clarify that the role of women and other vulnerable groups in environmental management must be recognised and advocate for the promotion of gender parity in all levels of decision-making.
- Independent bodies reporting directly to the executive and legislative branches of power are established and conduct policy assessments and gender analyses to inform policy-making.
- A gender perspective should be analysed and integrated into the responsibilities at all levels of decision-making from the national government to local administrative boards with general guidance and tools prepared and made available in order to facilitate this process.
- Adoption of accountability mechanisms, at the different levels of government, to ensure that policy and practice are linked and that progress does not depend on the commitment of individuals.

To stimulate political will, it is often essential to make the problem explicit, since the business-as-usual model may hide the prevailing issues. Behavioural change and forward planning require breaking the

customary patterns based on evidence that highlight the relevant aspects of the issues at stake. In this sense, some actions that could be taken include:

- Undertaking a gender and WRM analysis and assessment, and presenting the data as an evidence basis to establishing a common understanding of the prevailing gender issues.
- Highlighting and disseminating the prevailing issues in relevant water resources reports, to raise awareness, also presenting any available numbers about the limited women's representation at the different decision-making levels to provide a robust baseline.
- Develop targeted awareness-raising campaigns and activities at all levels and addressing various targets groups (from politicians to citizens)

Box 1. Country examples on advocacy, commitment and political will

- In **Algeria**, a Ministry responsible for the status of women was set up and the "National Strategy for Integration and Promotion of Women" was adopted by the Government in July 2008. This confirms the interest accorded by Algeria to the issue of the promotion of women, to their participation in all areas of the development process, to their role in family stability and in social cohesion.

- The Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) in **Australia** released (in 2017) its Gender Equality Strategy to contribute to equality in rural communities in the Murray-Darling Basin. The MDBA has maintained a long running commitment to engage with rural women, and to build their capacity to engage, through the Basin Plan Water Reform and Operations of the Murray River.

- The **Austrian** Government Programme (AGP) 2020-2024 safeguards gender equity. The AGP is supported at the highest level by the Chancellor, who is keen on pursuing gender equality among his Ministers. The Minister of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions And Tourism (BMLRT), which includes the Water Directorate, is also setting a good example, and a gender mainstreaming Working Group has been established.

- In **Georgia** there is a permanent "Parliamentary Gender Equality Council" which has its own Action Plan (2018-2020) according to which a Gender Impact Analysis (GIA) methodology must be institutionalized in the Parliament. According to indicator 1.3.1, each Parliamentary Committee must implement a gender impact analysis for at least one draft law per year. Considering this, the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, with the support of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and UKAid conducted a study on the GIA of the new draft Law on WRM. The study includes specific recommendations on how gender can be mainstreamed within the new legislation, including both specific articles of the law, and mainstreaming gender in the decision-making processes envisaged by the draft law.

- In **New Zealand**, Gender Implication Statements are a requirement for all policy papers that go to the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee and is considered good practice for all Cabinet papers.

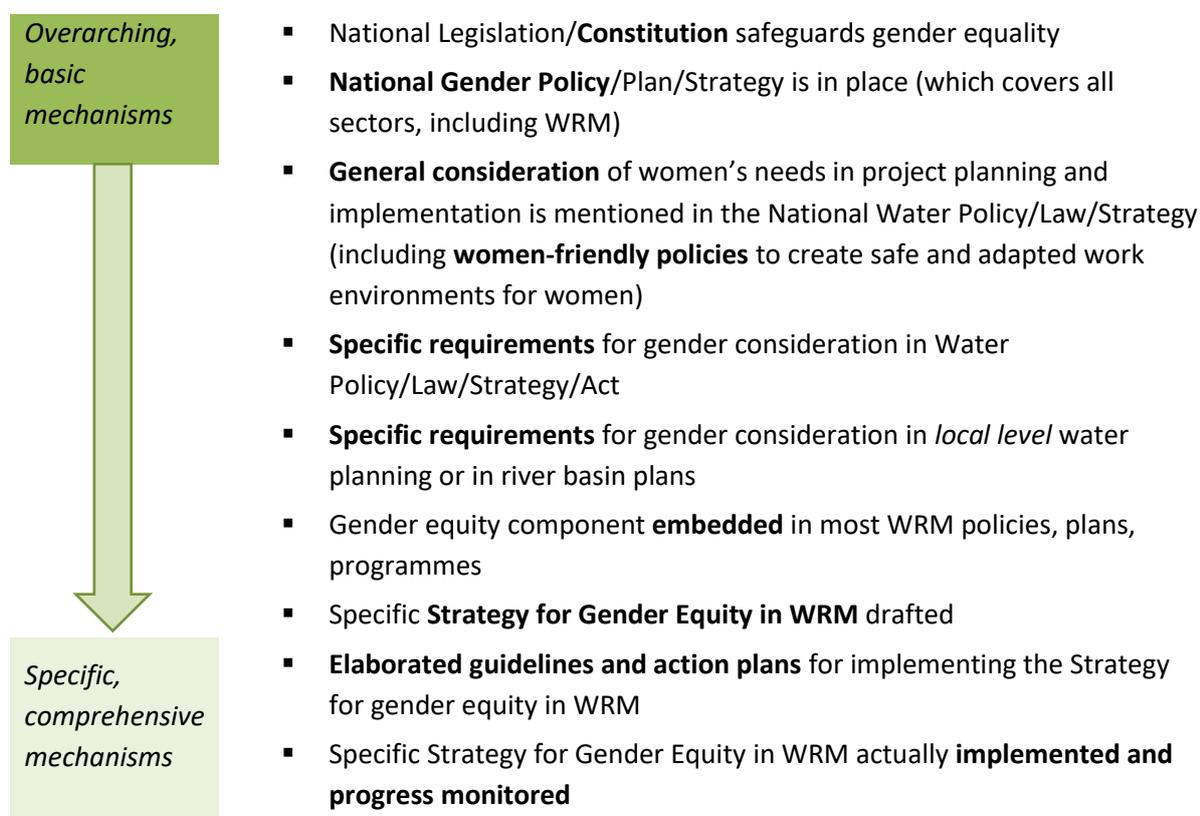
- In the **Philippines** the areas where we can observe mainstreaming at all levels are usually the ones where the governor or the mayor would be more committed and dedicated to ensuring that both men and women are equally heard, and trainings on women's leadership are effectuated. Leadership and political will are very important factors for gender mainstreaming.

- In **South Africa** there is a strong political will for gender mainstreaming. All Departments are given a mandate from the President of South Africa to establish Transformation Units responsible for gender mainstreaming, the empowerment of women and youth as well as people with disabilities. These Units have a uniform structure in all departments.

Legislative and policy framework and governance

Gender mainstreaming tools are increasingly integrated by governance structures as highlighted by the countries who participated in the 2020 survey on SDG 6.5.1, but often nowhere near enough to ensure systemic changes. This may be due to many factors, including lack of inclusion of gender aspects in water policies, strategies or plans, lack of specific gender objectives in these strategies and plans, weak or missing action plans which translate the objectives into specific programmes and activities, or a gap between policy and implementation. The fact that the different bodies and institutions involved in WRM within a country or region may be at different stages of maturity, technical knowledge and understanding about the water management system is also a contributing factor. All these elements can compromise putting policy into practice.

Gender-centred WRM should be viewed and implemented as a tool for social and economic development of all genders and other vulnerable groups. However, the focus in terms of legislative and policy frameworks seems to often reside in the technical components rather than in social inclusion. Integrating the concept of gender equity in policy-making is not only about recognizing that men and women have the same rights, but to identify ways to address the barriers to access those rights by the population across all social categories, taking into consideration the prevalent social norms (local hierarchy, class/cast system, economic circumstances, etc.). In this sense, various actions can be taken separately, ranging from establishing overarching, more basic and general structures, enhancing policy requirements and mechanisms, to promoting more specific and comprehensive mechanisms, as presented below:



Box 2. Country examples on legislative and governance mechanisms

- In Algeria, the **National Action Plan for the Promotion and Integration of Women (PANPIF)** is an instrument for the execution, coordination and monitoring of the **National Strategy for Integration and Promotion of Women** (adopted by the Government on March 9, 2010). WRM was represented in the Intersectoral Commission responsible for drawing up the 2017-2021 National Action Plan, providing for mechanisms aimed at strengthening equality between men and women in WRM and their complementary roles at different levels of political, social and economic life.

- In Australia, under the Human Rights Parliamentary Scrutiny Act 2011 each new bill/piece of legislation introduced into Federal parliament is accompanied by a **Statement of Compatibility with Australia's international human rights obligation**, and thus a range of issues (including gender) must be considered. While in the water legislation there is not explicit reference to gender equity, Australia does incorporate gender equality concepts through that policy cycle and the fundamental questions that are asked.

- In Austria, there is no specific policy for gender mainstreaming in water since the high-level legislation suffices. The **Austrian Government Programme (AGP) 2020-2024** safeguards gender equity as one of its basic principles. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions And Tourism (BMLRT), which includes the Water Directorate, has a **Specific Ordinance** for fostering women equality (so called Frauenförderungsplan) with specific objectives and measures (i.e. organizational, financial, etc.), including for example raising the ratio of women occupying positions in the Ministry, supporting gender mainstreaming, facilitate the balance between work and family, etc. Annual reports are issued to monitor the objectives of the Ordinance.

- In **Bangladesh**, the **National Water Policy 1999**, the **Coastal Zone Policy 2005**, and the **National Women Development Policy 2011** carefully considered the issues of gender in water sector.

- In **Western Africa**, gender is one of the principles of the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Water Resources Policy adopted in 2008. In line with that policy, in **Burkina Faso**, the National Gender Policy (PNG) was adopted in July 2009. Its general objective is to promote participatory and equitable development for men and women, by ensuring them equal and equitable access and control over resources and decision-making spheres, while respecting their fundamental rights. In the ten actions of the **National Programme for IWRM 2016-2030 (PNGIRE)**, a specific action was devoted to crosscutting aspects including gender. **PNGIRE action 10 is a specific objective that takes the gender dimension into account**. A strategy for involving women has been developed and actions are implemented to allow gender to be taken into account in the establishment of management, consultation and decision-making bodies. The interest and contributions of women, men and vulnerable segments of society are integrated in policy formulation, capacity development, planning, development and investment operations in the water sector.

- In **Cabo Verde**, a number of mechanisms have been developed, ranging from strategies, plans, communications programs and networks, including the **ESGAS (Social and Gender Strategies for the Water and Sanitation Sector)** in force until 2020

- In **Costa Rica**, several recent policies incorporate the issue of gender equity, such as the Communal Aqueduct Policy, providing a significant empowerment of women. For example, they have broad participation in the Boards of Directors of Communal Aqueducts, in the Water Resources Governance Mechanism and in community initiatives.

- Gender considerations are featured in the **Grenada National Water Policy**, and in the supporting studies for the G-CREWS project (Gender Analysis referenced in Chapter F3). A number of areas are mentioned in this policy such as gender balance in the workplace, human rights and the benefits arising from social equity. It is noteworthy that gender issues were explicitly included in the 2018/19 water policy process, while 42% of the

stakeholders consulted were women, and women played a leading role in articulating inputs to the IWRM Plan.

- In **India**, the role of women in project planning and implementation is also included in **National Water Policy 2012**, paragraph 9.6 of which says: "*Local governing bodies like Panchayats, Municipalities, Corporations, etc., and Water Users Associations, wherever applicable, should be involved in planning of the projects. The unique needs and aspirations of the Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribes, women and other weaker sections of the society should be given due consideration*".

- In **Lao People's Democratic Republic** a set of **guidelines on water resources and river basin management and how to implement gender issues** on the ground are available at the local level. Evaluation and monitoring procedures are also specified in the guidelines.

- Currently in **Nepal**, **all strategies, government policies, plans and programmes in the water resources sector, as well as the master plan and water related legislations, include a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion compulsory component.**

- In the **Republic of Moldova**, the **Strategy for ensuring equality between women and men for the years 2017-2021 and the Action Plan** on its implementation were approved in 2017. This Action Plan also includes the field of water supply and sewerage, which will be adjusted in the future normative acts in terms of gender issues.

- In **South Africa** a multi-layer approach in the legislative process promotes gender equity. **The National Policy Framework for Women empowerment and Gender equality (nPFWeGe) 2000** set a roadmap for public policy, legislation and organizational and operational policy. There is an established **National Gender Policy**, which promotes the participation of women in the water sector. The **Constitution of South Africa**, the basis for all legislations, guarantees gender equality. More specifically, certain chapters of the Constitution guarantee the participation of women in society, such as the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2) and the chapter for State institutions supporting constitutional democracy (Chapter 9). The **National Environment Management Act (NEMA)** makes it clear that the role of women and youth in environment management must be recognised. In the **National Water Act**, as a measure to redistribute national resources, it is legislated that priority should be given to historically disadvantaged groups (including women) when obtaining licenses for the use of water resources. At the lower implementation level, Government authorities, Catchment Management Agencies and Water User Associations have **gender sensitive policies** and many organizations also apply gender specific policies.

- In **Sweden** five Water District Authorities (WDAs), operating from the County Administrative Boards offices, implement the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) at the regional level. The implementation of water district management plans is based on the **County Administrative Boards' Strategy for Gender Equality.**

- In **Uganda**, the Water and Sanitation Gender Strategy (2018-2022) echoes the water and environment sector's commitment towards the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment within WRM. It demonstrates the resolve to contribute to eliminate all gender inequalities. The National Gender Policy, adopted in 2007, aims to ensure gender responsive planning in water resources at all levels, including community, district and national.

Human capital and financial resources, institutions and support organisations

The SDG 6.5.1 focal points play an important role in reporting on IWRM activities implemented within their countries, although their technical expertise is mostly related more specifically to water-related issues. For questions related to gender mainstreaming specifically, they often rely on the expertise of

technical units dedicated to monitor the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies in the processes related to WRM in order to ensure the inclusion of women and other vulnerable groups. More often than not, SDG 6.5.1 focal points from countries that have invested in this in-house expertise have a better understanding of the interlinkages of gender equality and IWRM. The creation of gender units within the WRM bodies has been clearly identified as a key enabler to design and implement gender-mainstreaming strategies.

Different countries have moved into this direction, e.g.: In **Senegal**, a Gender Unit within the Ministry of Water and Sanitation is responsible for the gender strategy in WRM. In **Burkina Faso** Gender Units exist at the national level and at the level of each ministry and ensure involvement and parity. In **Grenada**, a Gender Unit exists in the Ministry of Social Development. However, the existence of a gender unit does not guarantee mainstreaming as such, if not properly staffed with qualified gender experts and adequately funded. These are often challenges that the gender units face. Gender-mainstreaming strategies can also be developed within working groups, joint ministerial committees and other mechanisms where exchanges of best practices can be capitalized, resources can be pooled, and cross-cutting issues can be identified.

In addition, in interviews various focal points highlighted the need for dedicated resources to conduct gender assessments and policy analysis. Although some of the required assessments and monitoring activities certainly have associated support costs, there are other gender mainstreaming tools and processes which can be embedded in existing structures. In this direction, some actions that could be taken in relation to financial, human resources and institutional support include:

<i>Overarching, basic mechanisms</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish coordination mechanisms between relevant ministries (Environment, Health, Education, etc.) to address crosscutting issues ▪ Set up specific Working Groups and identify focal Points ▪ Dedicate funds for transformation and promotion of gender and social inclusion policies ▪ Provide in-house expertise ▪ Identify organisations with expertise that offer support at various governmental and/or local entities ▪ Impose gender equity as a funding conditionality for e.g. water utilities, local development funds ▪ Integrate gender equality in the contracting process ▪ Support to women-led or women-focused social enterprises and water-related businesses
<i>Specific, comprehensive mechanisms</i>	

Box 3. Country examples on human capital and financial resources, institutions and support organisations

Financial resources:

- In **Australia**, some funding agreements mention gender equality in relation to contracting. There are explicit clauses stated in the contracts, which give recognition to gender equality in some of the agreements for the Commonwealth government to fund programmes and projects at the state or local level (e.g. clauses/terms

on the irrigation organization projects and on urban water management programmes). There are also some specific clauses that when selecting a partner to work with, they must not be found to previously being not aligning with the sex discrimination act, so there is a check to make sure they have a history of good practice.

- In the **Philippines**, the Republic Act No. 9710, passed on 14th August 2009, otherwise known as the “[Magna Carta of Women](#)” (MCW), consolidates and reinforces previous national policies on Gender and Development (GAD). This law mandates all government instrumentalities including the local government units (LGUs) to pursue gender mainstreaming as a strategy to protect, promote and fulfil women’s human rights, and eliminate discrimination in their systems, structures, policies, programmes, and processes. One positive aspect is that this Law has budget provisions, i.e. there is a certain percentage in government agencies to be spent for GAD-related activities. On the local level the GAD Fund is about 5% of their total internal revenue allotment. The internal revenue allotment (IRA) is the fund that the LGUs have for all of their different development programmes and initiatives (of which 5% is dedicated to GAD). Portions of that IRA come from the national government, and the rest comes from local taxation and other revenue measures. So the GAD Fund is a major resource that would allow LGUs to undertake gender-related activities in the water sector, but it is not solely dedicated to water. In government agencies and major divisions there is a Focal Person for Gender (FPG) to ensure that the GAD Fund will be adequately utilized, and to have the full overview of developing gender responsive programmes.

Human resources and expertise, institutions and support organisations:

- In **Australia** there is an Office for Women, which provides great support for the different departments on the different mechanisms they can employ. Many departments in water businesses and organisations have gender equality strategies and practices in place. In addition, the Australian Gender and Science Equality Organization (GSEO) accredits organizations in their diversity strategies to enable women to have access to roles and education. Finally, the Water Service Association of Australia, the key industry body for urban water industry, shares [detailed information](#) on achieving gender balance in water utilities. So it is not just in the policy development-implementation-evaluation cycle, but also at the practical level that gender equity themes are being embedded in day-to-day work.

- The **Brazilian** National Water and Sanitation Agency (ANA), which is linked to the Ministry of Regional Development, has established since 2016 a voluntary Gender Committee (GC), directly linked to the Director, and with a relevant statute of creation, including its composition, attributions, etc. The ANA GC provides support and training with a focus on addressing the theme of gender and water, talking about gender in the water management system, and mainstreaming steps. The budget available to the GC from ANA is limited, so additional resources must be pulled from the GC.

- In the **Lao People's Democratic** Republic, there is a Lao Women Union (LWU) in the Department of Water Resources (as in all departments). The LWU was recognized in 1991 under the Constitution as being responsible for responding to women’s development needs, promoting the status and role of women, and promoting unity amongst women of different ethnic groups and social strata throughout the country. In the annual LWU meetings every sector reports the progress made in the past year. The LWU of the Department of Water Resources has been involved in the development of the Gender Strategy in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Action Plan 2021-2030 update.

- In **Togo**, on the initiative of the Ministry responsible for the advancement of women, in 2019 a Gender Unit was created within the ministerial departments, whose mission is, among others, to ensure the production of sex-disaggregated data to guide decision-makers; to develop programmes and projects with a gender perspective relating to the department concerned; to follow up on actions and/or activities and make any

suggestions necessary for improving programmes and plans in progress aimed at gender equity and equality. The Water Ministry has thus set up its Gender Unit, the chair of which is the Director of the Ministry's Cabinet.

- In Zimbabwe, Focal Points responsible for gender policy and gender concerns are in place in authorities that deal with water resources.

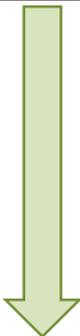
Women's participation and parity

It is essential to promote normative changes about women's participation in WRM and engage women and other vulnerable groups in the whole water value chain. It starts by not simply viewing them as end-users but to engage them in a gender-smart transition in WRM. Around the world, women are often blocked from participation in WRM institutions by both direct and indirect obstacles. Direct obstacles may include the lack of title deeds to land, thus making them ineligible for participation in water user associations or lack of technical qualifications that are assumed to make them unsuitable candidates for management jobs. Indirect obstacles can include the harmful gender norms which discourage girls from engaging in STEM education and reaching management positions in other fields or norms which prevent women from active participation in consultation mechanisms, female illiteracy rates, lack of women role models, male hiring committees that are reluctant to bring women into all-male environments, job requirements for frequent travel or long hours that make it difficult for women to reconcile work life with family life and lack of women-friendly policies to retain women working in WRM after they get married and/or have children.

In the SDG 6.5.1 survey, many countries provided examples of the use of quotas to ensure a better representation of women in different levels of government and decision-making, while highlighting at the same time that the participation of women or other vulnerable groups does not guarantee gender mainstreaming at the policy level. Moreover, these quotas are usually limited to specific bodies (parliament, parliamentary committees, water boards, etc.) and are not carried out throughout the different decision-making levels and representative bodies. In some cases, even if there is a fair share of women's representation in a body or committee, their specific role and responsibilities may be limited. However, women who access opportunities to integrate decision-making structures through a quota system and who are provided with the needed support and framework to actively participate in decision-making processes can have a positive impact on representation and policy-making. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on promoting and diversifying women and other vulnerable groups' opportunities in WRM. In this sense, various actions can be taken, ranging from ad-hoc ones to a more comprehensive and systematised basis, as presented below:

Ad-hoc actions

- Gender considerations on **an ad-hoc basis in WRM projects**
- **Women's participation in the consultation** processes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women’s participation in the actual development and implementation of water policy/initiatives/programmes ▪ Representatives of women’s organisations are specifically invited to participate in the consultation and development process ▪ Community participation (i.e. women are included as part of the wider community participation) ▪ Gender accounted for in the appointment of managerial positions ▪ Gender accounted for in the tendering processes of consultancies ▪ Mandatory representation (quotas) of women in executive & decision-making positions ▪ Assessments of policies affecting women professionals in the water sector
<p><i>More systematized basis</i></p>	

Box 4. Country examples on women’s participation and parity

- In **Algeria**, 53% of workers in the water sector in 2018 were women, at the level of the central administration (which is responsible for the development of the water resources sector strategy, its action plan and its implementation), while 38% at the sub-national level (wilayas water resources directorates). The proportion of women in senior positions increased from 9% in 2009 to 40% in 2018, while the proportion of women managers in senior positions increased from 57% in 2009 to 79% in 2018.

- In **Australia**, the Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Service launched the “Towards Gender Parity; Women on Boards” in October 2016, resulting in an increase in the proportion of women on Queensland Government Boards from 31% to 39%. The Victorian Government in its “Water for Victoria” Policy includes a focus on developing programmes in support of women wanting to lead to the highest level. The number of women on the water sector boards has increased to more than 50% of all positions, including 18 out of 29 chair positions. The Victorian Government has extended this to the executive level, and so a 12-month programme was launched in 2019 supporting women working in the water sector and related fields to develop their leadership skills to position themselves for future executive roles. The impact of the programmes will be visible in the next few years.

- In **Brazil’s** National Water Resources Council, 24% of participants are women. The participation of women is higher in the parliament than in the decision-making committees, so actions to increase this participation must be pursued. In the National Water and Sanitation Agency (ANA) there are about 30-40% women representation in the decision level (3rd level). But at the highest levels (2nd and 1st level) women representation is 1 to 5 (20%) and 0% respectively. The same case prevails in the committees: all the directors are men while women are in the administrative/ secretariat level, while also men prevail in the technical staff. So, it is important to take into account not only the number, but the type of positions held by women as well

- In **Dominica**, women are represented with a high percentage in WRM organisations. For example, in the board of directors in the Dominica Water and Sewage Company, seven members are women and three out of five positions in the top management are held by women. Also, in the last years, most of the top governmental positions having influence in the water policy of the company were held by women.

- The new draft Law on Water Resources Management in **Georgia** is promoting a river basin approach. Five river basins will be created and then different Consultancy Coordinating Councils will be established with key stakeholders from the specific basins. To mainstream gender and encourage women participation, regional groups consisting of women from the area will be included in those Councils as a specific stakeholder.

- Women's participation in **Grenada** is today at a very good level, as a result of the strong involvement of women in political issues and policies since the late 70s. There is an enabling environment in the country that facilitates participation and allows women to voice their opinion, actively participate and shape the policy.
- In **Kenya**, at the catchment level, emphasis has been placed on women's representation on water management structures. For example, Catchment Management Strategy (CMS) of the Tana Catchment Area structured gender targets around women's representation and maintaining a 30% gender balance in Water Resource Users' Associations (WRUAs) and Catchment Area Advisory Committees (CAACs)
- The Republics of **Kazakhstan** and **Kyrgyzstan** share the waters of transboundary Central Asian rivers Chu and Talas, which provide essential resources for irrigation of the vast agricultural lands in both countries as well as opportunities for hydropower generation. The transboundary consultations of the Chu-Talas Water Commission (ChTWC), headed by women, successfully addressed the use of interstate water facilities and rivers, while a series of seminars, workshops and training events were also organised. It should be noted that the Secretariat on both sides is headed by women and the Working Group of the Commission is dominated by women. This experience has shown that next to the typical abilities that the members of such Commissions need to have, e.g. good education, charisma, management abilities, good manners, and resistance to stress. The case of the Chu and Talas Water Commission is widely recognized as one of the most successful Commissions that have handled sensitive transboundary issues in the Central Asian region.
- In the **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, the National Economic Development Plan sets the targets for gender equality and women empowerment. It specifies that 20% of the top management positions have to be allocated by women. The plan also sets the target to increase the representation of women in the National Assembly to 30% and to increase the percentage of women who graduate from secondary schools to 85% in order to improve the education and the financial independence of women.
- In **Nepal**, all the water related government policies, plans and programs have Gender Equality and Social Inclusion component in them and at least 33% representation of women.
- In **Nicaragua**, following approval of the Law of Equal Rights and Opportunities in 2008, every governmental institution works according to the gender policy of 50% men and 50% women in the workplace that promotes equality between men and women both in rights and duties.
- In **Nicaragua**, the water management plans in basin 72 and sub-basin Mayale had gender equality as a transversal axis, with a goal of at least 40% of participation of women in all management spaces, a percentage that was exceeded in both basins.
- In **Pakistan**, women played an active role in the formulation of National Water Policy and its implementation plan at different levels. Women participated in equal numbers to male participants during the consultations and awareness campaigns run by the Pakistan Water Partnership through its AWPAs, especially in water scarce areas.
- In **Philippines**, the Magna Carta for Women 2019 defines a 40% participation of women in the Development Councils which are responsible for the planning of WASH and IWRM
- In the **Republic of Korea**, according to the ordinance of the "Framework Act on Water Management, the gender ratio of the Presidential and Basin Water Commission members should be considered. Currently, more than half of the civic members of the Presidential Water Commission are women

- In **Slovakia**, in the department of Strategic Water Planning out of 36 people 30 are women and 6 are men. Also, the Directorate has three departments, 2 of which are led by women. The Director of Water Research Institute is also a woman.
- In **South Africa**, at the local level there are established entities called “Water Boards” playing a key role in the water sector, operating water infrastructures and providing technical support to municipalities. The aim in the Water Boards is to have a 50-50 representation at all times, bearing in mind that the targeted gender parity is not only about women but about both genders.
- In **Togo**, the involvement of women in management of water points in rural and semi-urban areas is strongly recommended, with a defined quota of having at least 2 women out of the 5 members in the Committee.
- In the **United Republic of Tanzania**, the membership of Basin Water Boards has a requirement of at least one third to be women.
- In **Vanuatu**, there is a provision in the amended Water Resources Management Act that requires 40% of women participation in all local water committees, and this is implemented through the registration of local water committees (committees without 40% women will not be registered). Gender equality in committees is encouraged and women can be found at all levels of decision making.

Monitoring activities to track and assess progress

Monitoring and evaluation is one of the key pillars of any gender mainstreaming strategy, which needs to be based on evidence collected through disaggregated data. Most of the focal points interviewed highlighted gaps or the absence of gender-disaggregated data and/or progress-tracking tools related to gender equality and mainstreaming. In order for gender-disaggregated data to inform efficient policy-making, the relevant analysis needs to compare differences over time, provide specific data for men, women, boys and girls and other specific groups (age, race, urban population vs. rural population, etc.), and measure quantitative as well as qualitative changes¹⁷, since quantitative data do not tell the whole story.

“The lack of accurate and reliable gender-specific data, which would indicate the existence of problems, is one of the main challenges in gender mainstreaming in water resources management”, Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Hassan, Hydrometeorology Department of the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Somalia

In interviews, most focal points identified a national body in charge of data collection such as the National Statistical Office, which collects some level of gender-disaggregated data. However, the data collected do not always provide a comprehensive image of the local situations as they might focus only on the number of women employees in the relevant ministries and not provide information at the smaller local administrative levels. Other countries have established monitoring mechanisms within the water and sanitation departments that track gender representation at all levels. In some cases, data are collected mainly at the project level, but they are fragmented and a central depository and

¹⁷ Qualitative data are important to highlight the barriers to access or participation.

dataflow process are lacking. However, countries need to make sure they have the right policies and practices in place, and the right tools to assess their effectiveness.

“Gender disaggregated data should be collected to help track the progress in achieving objectives. The lack of gender-disaggregated data is very problematic, makes monitoring very difficult and the estimation subjective. Authorities could use some assistance, although they have in principal the know-how for collecting the data. However, the main issue is having limited resources and capacity, as the staff is focused on solving technical problems and it is difficult to assign the people needed to collect the data”, Mr. Magnus Williams, Chief Engineer at the Dominica Water and Sewage Company Ltd. (DOWASCO)

Monitoring and reporting are thus paramount in this process of gender mainstreaming. In this sense, some actions that could be taken include:

- Enhance the local technical expertise in data collection and identify relevant indicators (seeking support for that purpose from e.g. Donor institutions, universities, intergovernmental organisations such as GWP, UN agencies, World Bank, IMF, etc.)
- Headcount statistics (national)
- Headcount statistics (local/regional)
- Disaggregated gender statistics, in-depth assessments
- Gender impact assessment
- Gender gap assessment
- Monitoring of disaggregated gender statistics to assess progress made towards targets
- Report systematically on the gender-related question of the 6.5.1 SDG survey instrument to monitor overall progress on gender mainstreaming in IWRM, using that reporting process as a springboard to accelerate progress between reporting periods.

Box 5. Country examples on monitoring activities

- In **Australia** most workforces collect gender-disaggregated data, as well as information on culturally/linguistically diverse groups, indigenous groups, etc. At the government level, the “Workplace for Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)”, charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces, collects and analyses gender and intersexual related data on Australian industries, including gender pay gap statistics, representation at executive levels, flexible working arrangements, maternity leaves, etc. According to [WGEA](#), women’s representation in the water sector has recorded growth in the last 20 years. States and territories also have their own monitoring systems and track gender data. It is quite a common practice in Australia that all major water utilities also capture information around gender and diversity groups. Overall, at the government level, when companies, departments and agencies do their annual reports they have to report gender information/fundamental employment statistics.

- In **Austria**, Annual Reports are issued in order to monitor the objectives of the BMLRT Ordinance for fostering women equality. Annual Reports at the Federal level, where each Ministry is evaluated, and statistics on the percentage of women employed in each Ministry, are also included (per Ministry, not per sector)

- In **Lao PDR**, there are monthly and annual reports from the Lao Women Union meetings where every sector reports the progress made in the past year

- In **Panama**, the Water Resources Department of the Ministry of Environment collaborates with the Ministry of Public Health, which collects gender-disaggregated data, relevant to the access of communities to water services at the community level.

- In **South Africa**, the Department of Water and Sanitation constantly monitors the impact of employment in the water sector and the impact of development in the water sector as well as the impact of the implementation of a Preferential Procurement Policy Framework, which emphasises the empowerment of women. As an example, the Department is being informed on a monthly basis to what extent companies owned by women are responding to invitation to tenders. Based on this information, officials are able to estimate the number of women engineers, their employment rates, the skills of women etc. Reports on the findings are forwarded to the Presidency.

Awareness raising, capacity development and education

Cultural issues, prevailing norms and stereotypes about women's place in a specific society and their role in planning, management and decision-making are often significant barriers in gender mainstreaming. Overcoming them is a significant challenge. In some areas, the "traditional" point of view undermines the role of women compared to the role of men in water planning and decision-making. During the interviews conducted, some of the challenges highlighted by respondents indicate that the power dynamics within households (where women's participation in non-traditional sectors or in the public sphere is viewed as a weakness of the male parent), the local community (difficulties of women and other vulnerable groups to contradict older men or men with a certain social status) or even within national institutions (absence of women at the highest levels of decision-making) need to be addressed to ensure a more diverse participation in water-related decision-making bodies and consultations. Changing the current paradigm requires a change of mentality and culture, the starting point for which is, of course, awareness, capacity-building, and education.

"Legislation, policy, organizational aspects are enablers of gender mainstreaming, but, one more key enabling factor is education: providing education, giving opportunities to women and girls to go into the field of water management", Ms. Kirsty Bunfield, National Water Policy Branch, Water Division, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Focal Point for SDG 6.5.1, Australia

In this sense, some actions that could be taken include:

- Disseminate the current state and prevailing issues through multiple means, to make people more aware, presenting numbers, facts, etc.
- Education and awareness-raising on the importance of women's participation
- Capacity development for women's empowerment and skill development

- Capacity development for improving the legal and institutional aspects of mainstreaming gender in WRM
- Education in schools for increasing the number of women students in Engineering, Science and Maths-related disciplines (STEM is for girls campaigns) as well as other relevant fields
- Exchange networks for women experts and professionals in WRM
- Endorsement and/or support from specific programmes and initiatives for women participants
- Engaging with the media to make women's participation in WRM more visible
- Internship and mentorship programmes devoted to women graduates between the public/private sectors and universities
- Development of managerial skills of women through specific capacity development opportunities for women graduate students and professional practitioners.

Box 6. Country examples on awareness raising, capacity building and education activities

Awareness raising and capacity building:

- An exchange network for women experts on disaster risk reduction, so called “Women exchange for disaster risk reduction (we4DRR)” established by the **Austrian** BMLFUW supports women working in research, policy and practitioners in this field. Similarly, the FEMTECH network established by the Austrian Ministry of transport and innovation supports women in technical jobs. Several water experts are part of the network, while the Ministry engages young women and pupils in the network.

- In **Brazil**, the ANA Gender Committee is developing the Platform “eles existem (they (female plural pronoun) exist)” with different functionalities for empowering women: displaying pictures from events (e.g. the climate change events) showing the lack of women in discussion panels, having a database with CVs of women experts and search functions, etc.

- In the **Philippines**, the Department of Environment and Water Resources (DENR), the DENR National Gender and Development Focal Point System (GADFPS) have initiated the review of the DENR Gender and Development (GAD) Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 for proposed enrichments to align planned programmes and activities of the environment, water and natural resources sector with the current state of the country as it continues to face the impacts of climate change, health and gender issues. A series of seven webinars on the priority programmes of the DENR as these are linked to climate change, gender and health, were conducted in 2020. Webinars were conducted on “Pursuing Climate-, Gender-, and Health-responsive Programs in the following sectors: biodiversity, forestry, solid waste and hazardous wastes, air quality, water sector, land, and mineral resources development. The context of the webinars was about better understanding the links, identifying entry points in mainstreaming, and emphasising the need to seriously consider going beyond mainstreaming gender in the priority programmes of the DENR.

- In **South Africa** gender objectives in policies are followed by specific programmes to address these objectives, including the Gender Training Programme to raise awareness and change attitudes, the Woman Incubation Program which is ran by the Department of Water and Sanitation and Water Research Commission, and the Gender Mainstreaming Training Program.

- In **Viet Nam**, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has signed partnerships with international organizations with strong gender expertise. A series of community-based climate change initiatives were implemented, including increasing the representation of vulnerable women, men and children in risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The participation of diverse community members was secured through Sharing and Learning Dialogues. The participants received training and coaching sessions on how to make presentations and lead discussions with other stakeholders, provided by the experts of the INGO Care.

Education in colleges/ schools, women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math):

- In **Australia**, there are governmental programmes for women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) to provide an awareness of the jobs that are available and to provide them with key pathways into those types of roles.

- In **Somalia** scholarship programs for young Somalis are currently implemented. Empowering women with the government has been identified as another way for gender equity.

Strengthening of current practices: steps for gender mainstreaming in water resources management

The interviews conducted with SDG 6.5.1 focal points and the responses provided to question 2.2d of the survey instrument highlighted that in practice, gender mainstreaming is not always identified as a priority, nor is it recognized at various levels of policy-making, but more as a separate topic integrated into IWRM-related policies at a later phase. As described in previous sections, gender mainstreaming contributes to social inclusion and gender equality, which are key elements for the achievement of all SDGs. In WRM, “gender equity and women’s empowerment in water resources management is one of the cornerstones of the Dublin-Rio principles. Gender plays an intricate role in IWRM, not just in the planning process but also through the stakeholder consultations and in helping to secure and enforce rights and responsibilities relating to many different aspects of use.”¹⁸ These aspects are captured in the IWRM survey questions.

Countries that have developed and committed to a gender mainstreaming strategy with specific targets, clear definition of roles, financial and human resources, lines of accountability under an overarching implementation plan and a data strategy, may be found all over the world, and in all income categories. The same can also be said of countries facing challenges in the implementation of gender mainstreaming in IWRM. The ability to integrate gender considerations in WRM policies is not related to the global economic rankings, nor is it simply related to the promotion of gender equality in the national constitution, as many countries reported in the 2020 SDG 6.5.1 survey.

Creating an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming in IWRM

Overall, the focal points of the countries interviewed in the framework of this study had a good understanding of some aspects of gender mainstreaming within IWRM. While the majority understood the importance of this issue, most of them also recognised that not enough has been done in their countries to implement comprehensive gender-mainstreaming strategies either because of the lack of knowledge, resources, technical expertise and/or political backing to be able to implement them. Even though a one-size-fits-all strategy for gender mainstreaming does not exist for any sector, countries that are mainstreaming gender in IWRM seem to have adopted some common practices and mechanisms, linked to the six aforementioned key enablers, to integrate a gender perspective into policies and programmes, as can be observed in the following table:

¹⁸ *UN-Statistical Division, 2016: Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.* New York.

Building a pathway towards gender-sensitive water resources management

Modalities, challenges, sustainability and impacts of specific enabling mechanisms and practices

Key enabler	Specific mechanism / practice	Modality	Challenges	Sustainability	Impact
Advocacy, high-level commitment, prevailing norms and stereotypes	Strong commitment of the executive leadership	Political discourse and gender-related policies are aligned	This component is subject to the political agenda which potentially shifts at every change of government	Low	High
Legislative and policy framework, governance	Egalitarian legal framework promoted in the Constitution of the country	The Constitution promotes equality between men and women before the law and can include provisions on non-discrimination between genders. Constitutions are long-standing documents that are difficult to undo.	The Constitution offers a framework for the development of laws. However, in itself it does not guarantee the implementation of gender equality policies.	High	Low
	Gender consideration within the Water legislation	The concept of gender equality appears in the water sector laws	These laws tend to focus on specific water uses and management approaches, but more often than not do not integrate gender equality as part of IWRM	High	Medium

Key enabler	Specific mechanism / practice	Modality	Challenges	Sustainability	Impact
Human capital, financial resources, institutions and support organisations	Ear-marked funding	<p>Funding is allocated to achieve gender equity outcomes by removing one of the barriers for IWRM focal points to access the needed structures and technical expertise to design and implement gender mainstreaming strategies.</p> <p>Countries with a more established track record in gender mainstreaming are also using gender budgeting as a tool to plan and assess how public funds (across all sectors) contribute to gender equality.</p>	The provision of specific funds for gender equality measures is mainly present in programmes addressing social inclusion issues or fundamental human rights. However, a gender equality perspective is rarely adopted in policy fields that are not seen as immediately related to gender equality, but that may have significant gender effects such as environmental policies (including water-related ones). ¹⁹	Medium	High
Women’s participation and parity	Specific mechanisms and provisions for supporting women’s participation & parity	Promotion of normative changes about women’s participation in IWRM, engagement of women and other vulnerable groups in the whole water value chain, not simply as end-users but as active members in a gender-smart transition in WRM. Development of specific mechanisms and tools to boost this engagement.	Participation of women alone does not guarantee gender mainstreaming at the policy level. The percentage representation of women is not on its own a robust indicator of the level of mainstreaming achieved. In some cases, even if there is fair share of women representation in a body or committee, their specific role and responsibilities may be limited	Medium	Medium

¹⁹ The EU Directorate-general for internal policies policy department, Citizens’ rights and constitutional affairs. The use of funds for gender equality in selected Member States. Study for the FEMM committee. 2016. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571393/IPOL_STU\(2016\)571393_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571393/IPOL_STU(2016)571393_EN.pdf)

Key enabler	Specific mechanism / practice	Modality	Challenges	Sustainability	Impact
Monitoring activities to track and assess progress to target	Centralized monitoring systems	<p>Disaggregated data is collected by the national statistics office or another structure to inform gender mainstreaming strategies.</p> <p>The design and collection of data based on indicators on the basis of a gender approach is crucial to developing action plans that promote men’s and women’s access and control over resources and to enjoy their benefits.</p>	<p>The definition of gender-related indicators requires an expertise that not all countries have access to.</p> <p>Indicators that meaningfully measure the improvement of the participation of women and other vulnerable groups in water and sanitation management remain to be further developed</p>	High	High
Awareness raising, capacity development and education	Multi-stakeholder consultation processes and engagement, inter-sectoral mechanisms and bodies which bring in the needed expertise to address gender issues and support capacity development activities	<p>Partnerships (such as joint committees) are established to address gender-related issues (from access to water and sanitation services to gender-based violence) through consultation (with experts and local communities), coordination and evaluation of activities.</p> <p>Intersectoral mechanisms are in place to design and implement robust capacity building activities</p>	Without a strong political backing of the government, these mechanisms tend to be short-lived and their recommendations may not be included in future policy planning.	Low	High

Most of the above-mentioned enablers are inter-dependent. However, an integrated approach relying on all of the above in WRM remains a challenge, as several countries reported in the Survey Instrument for SDG Indicator 6.5.1. In addition, during the interviews conducted in the framework of this report, several SDG focal points 6.5.1 highlighted the gap between political discourse and the design of policies specifically focusing on gender mainstreaming.

Putting gender mainstreaming in IWRM into practice

The social, political and environmental context of each country should be taken into account when designing and implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy in WRM. In this report there are several examples of specific mechanisms and tools shared by focal points for SDG 6.5.1, which reflect the different stages of a gender mainstreaming process cycle, as defined in Figure 2. In order to strengthen the current practices of the surveyed countries, while recognizing that countries are at different stages of implementation, some recommendations can be put forward:

- For **countries with no or low implementation** in gender mainstreaming, focus should be placed on developing the capacities of relevant staff within the relevant WRM offices by establishing collaborations with gender experts (within NGOs and universities) and partnerships, at the local level, with community-based initiatives to conduct gender analyses. Joining forces with the health sector is another interesting and straightforward collaboration that can be pursued as there are clear linkages between sanitation and health. Both ministries can work together to improve the well-being of all citizens, while empowering vulnerable and minority groups to take on new roles, beyond the role of “water custodians” (traditionally perceived to be the prerogative of women). The health sector usually has a good regional presence (primary health care centres are located in the most vulnerable communities) and pre-existing and successful communication platforms used to inform the population about vaccination campaigns and more recently COVID-19-related messages. These centres and platforms can be used to conduct training programmes for women on new roles (such as the repair and maintenance of water systems). In addition, in most countries, the health sector is more advanced in terms of establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks (for vaccine campaigns, monitoring of births and deaths, etc.). When these ministries join efforts, they can successfully bring the needs of vulnerable groups in terms of water provisioning and sanitation and raise their voice to inform national development agendas. Women and other vulnerable groups should not be passive beneficiaries of development.

- **Countries that have a medium level** of implementation might have previously developed a gender mainstreaming strategy but may be struggling to put it into action. Gender units should be created within all ministries, including for water and/or environment, and staffed with technical engineers and gender experts. These units would take the lead in conducting gender evaluations and gender impact assessments to identify the lack of progress informed by annually collected gender-disaggregated data. The difficulties shared or hinted at by the surveyed countries rely mainly on the lack of gender-disaggregated data. Gender evaluations are necessary because they provide “systematic and objective assessments of the design and planning (objectives, results pursued, activities planned), the implementation and results of an ongoing or completed activity, project, programme or policy from a gender perspective. It can take place either upon completion of the project, when focus is placed on gender impacts and the contribution of the programme to promoting gender equality, or throughout project implementation, with the aim of seeking to have a process of continuous improvement. It can also take place ex-ante in order to evaluate how a policy can affect gender equality in WRM. It is important to take into consideration, in the gender-sensitive evaluations, all factors impacting the ability of women and other vulnerable groups to fully participate in the design of IWRM strategies, including proprietary rights, inheritance laws, tenure of land and cultural norms.

- **Countries with a strong level of gender equality** and which might have achieved several outcomes in their gender mainstreaming strategies related to WRM should practice caution and acknowledge that disparities subsist in every context. They should continue to implement and document (through disaggregated data) policies that address the asymmetrical relationships in their society. It is important to note that having female ministers or heads of the water establishment, albeit important because representation matters, does not replace the necessity to design and implement evidence-based gender mainstreaming strategies, to identify discriminatory practices, increase the number of women in the STEM and related fields, or develop gender budgeting and procurement strategies.

Box 7. The Way Forward

✓ What type of support do water planners and managers need?

In order to design and implement an IWRM strategy, water planners and managers need to rely on the political and financial support of the central government. This support will ensure the capacity development of focal points, access to technical experts on gender issues, gender-disaggregated data in addition to establishing a legislative framework that will help to define transformative strategies. Therefore, they will be able to improve access to water and sanitation services for all citizens, improve the representation and participation of vulnerable groups in decision-making bodies (at the local and national level) and ultimately break harmful gender norms. Ultimately, it is about making water planners and managers accountable for the achievement of SDG 6, including on gender mainstreaming.

✓ What type of support do local communities need?

It is important to understand that gender mainstreaming, as highlighted in this report, goes beyond the issue of equality between men and women. The intersectionality between gender and various other social issues (ethnicity, migrant status, sexual orientation, age, disability, geographical settings, etc.) is important and should be taken into consideration when designing IWRM plans. Countries need to review how social, economic and environmental data are collected. Disaggregated data should include all vulnerable groups in order to inform policies that will aim to improve the well-being of all local communities based on the local contexts. In the 2020 survey, water-related issues of minority groups were highlighted by various countries, such as Sweden and Slovakia, which are trying to establish adapted policies to improve the access of these groups to water and sanitation services but also to increase their voices within the local and national decision-making bodies.

From the point of view of local communities and minority/vulnerable groups, several SDG 6.5.1 focal points underlined the issue of awareness raising. These communities need to be made aware of the role they can play in designing policies that improve their well-being and the impact that gender norms have on their ability to fully participate in these processes.

✓ What role can educational institutions and non-governmental organisations play?

The lack of participation in the design and implementation of IWRM policies of educational institutions and NGOs was mentioned by several SDG 6.5.1 focal points, who acknowledged that these institutions could provide the needed technical expertise that water planners and managers may lack in terms of gender mainstreaming. Educational institutions could therefore play an

important role in the development of qualitative and quantitative gender-specific indicators to measure the impact of IWRM policy. They could also conduct data collection exercises, in partnership with the relevant ministries, ensuring that data protection prerogatives are taken into consideration. They could also develop curricula focused on gender mainstreaming in the water sector. It would ensure that future generations of engineers and water planners have a better understanding of gender issues. NGOs and UN agencies, working in the WASH and protection sectors (focusing on gender-based violence and the protection threats faced by marginalized groups), among others, should also be invited to intersectoral, multi-stakeholder consultations to provide insights on barriers to access and participation of vulnerable communities/groups. In some contexts, these stakeholders are able to provide funding to conduct multi-sectorial needs assessments, awareness-raising activities and provide key services.

Concluding remarks

Gender considerations have been intrinsic to Integrated Water Resources Management since this term was first employed. As we have seen, from the Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development, if not before, the world recognised that “women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water”. This report has approached the question of why we should materialise such engagement, and some possible pathways to do so, based on real-life experiences from countries from around the world. We hope that by reading it, you will have been inspired by some of the specific actions that nations and states have taken, and will be asking yourself how you can contribute to gender mainstreaming in IWRM within your context.

Rather than compiling an empirical listing of all possible alternatives, our aim with this report was to share some directional guidance based on the experiences of a representative selection of countries. Given the complexity of countries’ political, social and economic systems, we deliberately steer clear of recommending any particular practice across the board, since there is definitely no one-size-fits-all solution. However, we believe that the enablers that have been highlighted in this report may be common to all countries, and many of the examples from one country may be applicable to others. Be it around the legal framework, high-level leadership, policies and strategies, funding, human resources and expertise, normative support for women’s participation, centralised monitoring systems or multi-stakeholder consultation processes, clearly there is much that can and should be done. In that sense, this report is intended to be a starting point for further exchanges on this important topic, between different stakeholders and geographies.

At GWP, it is our belief that fully achieving IWRM will not be possible without mainstreaming gender equity, and vice versa. The monitoring of SDGs 5 on gender equality and 6 on clean water and sanitation has shown that the pathway to fully achieving both objectives is long, and countries are at different points in their respective journeys. However, the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme and its member organisations are committed to supporting nation states wherever they may find themselves on that journey, by providing them with tools and sharing experiences from others. Doing so will be a significant contribution towards the sustainable development of those nations, their economies, their societies and their natural environments.

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