Summary of the Learning Exchange on Gender Mainstreaming in WRM

During the discussions in breakout groups at the webinar, participants identified a broad variety of bottlenecks and support areas for gender mainstreaming, which were loosely grouped into categories for the purpose of this summary:

- Legal frameworks and leadership commitment to gender mainstreaming
- Funding allocation
- Supportive frameworks for the effective participation and parity of women
- Cultural norms and values
- Education, awareness raising, and capacity development
- Monitoring systems

Legal frameworks and leadership commitment to gender mainstreaming

Key bottlenecks for gender mainstreaming:

- Lack of political commitment and loss of interest among technical experts in gender mainstreaming
- Insufficient gender-related law enforcement
- Lack of proper women leadership
- Complex and intertwined challenges in WRM with undetermined priorities
- Establishment of conflicting agendas and approaches

Proposed types of support needed to tackle the bottlenecks identified:

- Target policies for framing activities for women and supporting changes needed
- Supportive legal frameworks for gender mainstreaming that transcend, where applicable, local customary law
- Inclusion of gender mainstreaming in policy-making at all levels in all sectors

Funding allocation

Key bottlenecks for gender mainstreaming:

- Insufficient funding and financial support of gender mainstreaming
- Limited tracking of the gender-targeted budgets
- Constrained funding capacities and lack of access to capital for women

Proposed types of support needed to tackle the bottlenecks identified:

- Control and tracking system for earmarked funding for gender activities
- Appropriate and sufficient financing for gender mainstreaming and participation

Supportive frameworks for the effective participation and parity of women

Key bottlenecks for gender mainstreaming:

- Lack of meaningful women participation in the water sector both at the operation and executive levels
- Lack of women's motivation in participation and increased involvement in WRM

- Existing gaps in integration and balanced representation of women in decision-making institutions and related industries in the water sector
- Some careers in the water sector not seen as appealing/attractive for women
- Widespread tokenistic practices in gender mainstreaming realisation
- Women participation overlapping with their other responsibilities/commitments
- The time lag in participatory processes
- Weaker women networking
- Lack of association and cooperation between local-level water users
- Poor stakeholder engagement in gender mainstreaming in WRM

Proposed types of support needed to tackle the bottlenecks identified:

- Creating an enabling environment for women at the workplace
- Enhancing stakeholder mobilisation and engagement
- Enabling environment for women to participate meaningfully
- Raising awareness among all on the importance of having underrepresented groups at the table
- Increasing participation of the community in decision-making about funding
- Encouragement and inclusion of women's voices and considerations on WRM
- Equal (gender-wise) participation in discussions about gender issues and decision-making
- Creating more opportunities for women in WRM instead of gender quotas

Cultural norms and values

Key bottlenecks for gender mainstreaming:

- Social and cultural barriers, including biases and misconceptions, beyond the water sector, especially in rural areas
- Traditional subservient role of women overall
- Gender socialisation and cultural norms causing lack of confidence and participation
- Women voices suppression and their exclusion from decision-making, especially in rural areas
- Gender is not perceived as a significant issue
- Women being occupied with other social roles and responsibilities and lacking time for involvement in WRM

Proposed types of support needed to tackle the bottlenecks identified:

- Identification and recognition of gender-related issues
- A gender-transformative approach involving social roles change, and men and women working together
- Men sensitisation and education
- Culturally tailored support of gender mainstreaming

Education, awareness raising, and capacity development

Key bottlenecks for gender mainstreaming:

- Unequal access to education and resulting difference in technical competence level and experience
- Lack of awareness and robust advocacy on gender mainstreaming

- Misunderstanding of the concept of gender and gender mainstreaming, especially in its relation to the water sector
- Lack of skills for facilitating gender and social inclusion processes
- Lack of capacity building instruments for women, especially at the grass-roots level

Proposed types of support needed to tackle the bottlenecks identified:

- Raising awareness about gender equality
- Establishing clear goals and targets for gender-specific education
- Building understanding of gender mainstreaming and advocacy campaigns for its sensitising
- Inclusion of gender agenda in both formal and informal education
- External support in bringing understanding and skills for organisations in facilitating such processes
- Culture and context-tailored training programmes
- Issuing a gender mainstreaming manual for WRM
- Promoting learning exchange and sharing case studies on the importance of gender mainstreaming for WRM
- Strengthening the narratives around gender implementation within IWRM/water and sanitation issue
- Continuous capacity building for women and overseeing the progress

Monitoring systems

Key bottlenecks for gender mainstreaming:

- Limited gender-disaggregated data, especially for WASH
- Decentralised data collection and monitoring with a significant risk of data loss
- Underestimation of the importance of lay expertise

Proposed types of support needed to tackle the bottlenecks identified:

- Strengthening mechanisms of MEL (monitoring, evaluation, and learning) at all levels
- Resource mobilisation for collection of gender-sensitive data
- Gender data integration and open access across different institutions and different levels of governance