

Strengthening gender-sensitive energy policy research in the new millennium:

A checklist for analytical work based on the CRGGE experience

A major goal of the CRGGE was to push forward analytical frameworks and capacity to provide gender-sensitive policy and operational research in order to improve energy project design and policymaking. The four elements below provide our experience on what gender-sensitive energy policy research looks like. Gender-sensitive analytical work can provide the basis for, for example, feasibility studies for the design of energy projects; policy background papers and dialog with institutions; monitoring and evaluation of impacts on women and men; operational case studies of approaches and strategies, as well as for more conventional academic research.

- 1. Establish partnerships and a process for interaction between key gender researchers, policy makers and stakeholders in the country, and key energy researchers, policy makers and stakeholders, as team preparation for carrying out the analytical work. Multidisciplinary teams are essential. Joint workshops and capacity building can help engage partnerships in an active dialog to “speak the same language.” How the research is organized and carried out, and experiences of working together, can be as significant as the substantive findings, in changing “ways of thinking” (see section 5.1).***
- 2. Link micro research to the macro policy level: Identify the gender-energy-poverty nexus in the country and project area under study. What is the intersection between current energy policy questions and the specific gender challenges in the country (the needs of women, the policy environment, the causes of poverty and livelihood opportunities)? Using the micro level description and analysis of gender and energy issues to inform critical and current energy policy concerns for the governments, utilities, and private sector players in the country is critical. The background and historical poverty-gender context needs to be understood, as well as the energy supply, consumption and policy situation in the country, by first reviewing literature on both gender and on energy, and building on past research, project and policy experience in the country. These then need to be related to one another, to make clear how energy policy is influencing and could be influenced by the poverty-gender challenge (see section 5.2).***

- 3. *Choose and combine appropriate research frameworks and methods from gender and from energy research.*** Gender analysis was the basic framework for analysis in all of our work. Although this seems obvious, disaggregation and analysis of data by gender (men and women, boys and girls) has not routinely been done in the energy sector. Treating gender as a separate category of analysis focuses attention on the subordination of women. Sustainable livelihoods framework was also valuable for our research, in focusing attention on energy for women's productive uses, and their control over assets, including energy-producing assets. CRGGE researchers found useful a wide variety of data-gathering tools and methods, with the most important being policy and institutional analysis, the use of both qualitative and quantitative data, and the inclusion of people's perceptions (see section 5.3).
- 4. *Ask the right questions: Focus on opportunities for transformation.*** The conclusion of the CRGGE was that while points 1 to 3 above were important steps towards a gender-sensitive energy policy analytical framework, the most critical function of our research was determining the right questions to ask. Our research started by asking whether gender relations were a key variable in determining the impact of energy policies, projects and programmes; and inversely, how could energy interventions most effectively contribute to the process of empowering women? The case studies helped us focus these broad questions in four areas where analytical work can assist in both operations and policy dialog:

 - a) *Evidence about impacts on women and men of energy projects and changing access is needed as part of every energy project and policy's planning, monitoring and evaluation.*** Under what conditions are impacts positive or negative, both conditions over which implementing energy agencies have little control – such as culture, land rights or the status of women – and conditions which can be influenced, such as credit and institutional arrangements, skill building and information access, and hiring of staff and workers, as part of their energy policy and operations? Impact assessment is needed in particular to cover a wider range of technologies and to provide models of gender mainstreaming in larger-scale operational energy projects and policies.
 - b) *Rhetoric gap between policy and practice in energy policy, budgets and implementation.*** Gender audits of budgets and investment portfolios can expose the gap between energy policy rhetoric and the reality of women's lives. Do energy budgets, policy statements and project practice reflect women's as well as men's needs? Do poverty documents such as PRSPs reflect the reality of women's energy situation? The collection of gender-disaggregated data was found in the CRGGE research to be the single most powerful and essential tool in being able to provide evidence to policymakers to motivate them to engender energy policy, as well as for the actual process of integrating gender into energy planning and implementation.

c) *Culture and ideology in gender relations.* Understanding the ideologies that influence gender relations and women's empowerment in the energy sector was found to be unavoidable in understanding the reasons behind changes in gender relations and how energy access affects or how it is affected by those changes. Gendered labour relations and the relative opportunity costs of women's and men's labours; new legislation on women's rights and its enforcement by police; the ideology of home economics; and sexual violence, sexual harassment, and power relations in the household and society were aspects of culture and ideology found to affect energy security and the energy transition in the CRGGE case studies.

d) *Political economy of change in gender and energy: What are the "Drivers of Change"?* What incentives and disincentives face the various participants – at the household, community and societal levels - and how can these be modified? What political power relations are involved between the various factions? What coalitions or alliances for "pro-poor" and "pro-women" change can be effective in the energy sector? Who is likely to support pro-women energy policy and who opposes it? Why would the state or a utility want to respond to women's needs? In terms of analytical work, this might lead to the need to examine the concerns of the opposing factions and to "put our work in their language". In terms of policy dialog, key gender and energy stakeholders need to be active participants in direct and formal energy decision-making processes and structures.