



SmPower

Women for Climate-Resilient Societies



Renewable Energy for Resilience.
Renewable Energy for All.



Sverige



Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith/DFID

EMPOWER: THE STATE OF PLAY

In the Asia-Pacific region, climate change and climate-induced disasters continue to ravage the lives and livelihoods of over 4 billion people. Increasingly dependent on natural resources, communities relying on agriculture, forestry, fisheries are at the frontlines of climate change. Polluting fossil fuels, often sources of energy, contribute to almost 60% of greenhouse gas emissions. Globally, nearly 1 billion people lack access to electricity and nearly 3 billion people still rely on traditional fuels, wood, charcoal, kerosene etc for energy, many of them women who rely on these options for domestic needs. While rapid technological advancements, growing awareness, depreciating unit costs, strong commitments from governments and enabling policies are ensuring a transition to renewable energy, such policies, projects and investments have largely been gender-blind.

Currently, women comprise only 20-25% of the workforce in the renewable energy sector. Investing in women in the transition to renewable energy can reap rich dividends. There are untapped opportunities to promote gender equality in the sector- by way of inclusive policies, access to technology, skills and equitable investments in women's entrepreneurship in the sector. While the time for climate action is now, its impact cannot be fully realized unless it is inclusive and addresses the distinct voices of women and marginalized communities.



RENEWABLE ENERGY AND GENDER EQUALITY

Addressing the root causes that make women and marginalized groups more vulnerable to climate change requires addressing women's access to economic means and resources and their ability to make decisions. Renewable energy has the potential to lessen women's time and efforts in running domestic chores, provide a sustainable source of energy to run small enterprises and increase productivity, thereby improving incomes. In agrarian communities where women often bear invisible loads, renewable energy can aid in practising climate-smart agriculture, improving irrigation, crop productivity, food processing, food storage and livestock rearing. Studies also show that renewable energy has indirect benefits on health outcomes, education and school enrolment and safety and security against violence. After a disaster strikes, renewable energy can be used to power up critical infrastructure, communication lines and used for essential services like refrigeration for medicines and accessing clean water.

Accessing renewable energy services can enable women to be economically empowered. Having control over their incomes and their resources, in turn, helps women to plan, adapt and respond to climate change and shocks better.

Across Asia and the Pacific, women are typically 'energy managers' in households. Through UN Environment and EmPower's support, women will be able to use renewable energy technologies to run enterprises that can improve their existing incomes as well as sell renewable energy products to others. Creating an enabling policy environment and providing training, mentorship, financial options and networks for women-led enterprises, EmPower supports women entrepreneurs using renewable energy to succeed and build resilient lives. Women entrepreneurs by virtue of their role as community-builders, have the potential to influence more women to adopt renewable energy technologies, lower servicing costs and opening new market avenues, thereby creating a snowball effect.

WHAT WILL THE IMPACT BE?

Harnessing renewable energy as a means, women can improve their capacity to adapt to climate change and benefit from climate-resilient livelihoods. Some potential impacts on the lives of women and marginalized groups at the end of the project include:

- Saving energy
- Saving time
- Increasing productivity
- Increasing incomes and savings
- Increased skills to manage businesses
- Indirect benefits to education, health, reduced in-door air pollution, and well-being
- Strengthening ability to bounce back from disasters and shocks
- Improving ability to assert their rights and greater confidence in managing resources
- Increasing ability to engage with policymakers in decision making
- Reducing drudgery

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

Interventions in the renewable energy sector has a snowballing effect on other sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, handicrafts and cottage industries, health, nutrition, water and sanitation and in order to leverage this wide-spread impact, EmPower will consider 20 different enterprises and interventions in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Viet Nam supporting 140 women entrepreneurs directly and nearly 1000 women indirectly. From installation, maintenance and repair to distribution, billings and collection, there are opportunities to involve women across the renewable energy value chain.



Renewable energy to improve productivity in existing value chains (powered water pumps to improve agriculture and horticulture in drought prone areas, solar energy for crop drying, agro-processing, handicraft making, poultry)



Renewable energy technologies sale and supply (sale of solar lanterns, solar home system, solar power packs, cookers, dryers, water heaters, bio-digesters, improved cookstoves for efficient cooking)



Renewable energy for associated livelihood benefits (lighting systems, clean cookstoves, refrigeration and cooling, drinking water systems, healthcare applications)

WHAT ARE THE PILLARS OF EMPOWER'S WORK ON WOMEN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY?



POLICY & PLANNING

Developing national approach papers focused on integrating gender into renewable energy policies and programmes. Developing provincial action plans with partners to define strategies and actions to promote women's entrepreneurship and renewable energy-based livelihoods



CAPACITY & KNOWLEDGE

Continuous training and mentorship on business skills, financial literacy, operation and maintenance of renewables-based enterprises. Incubation of enterprises, synergies with long-standing capacity building programmes and partnerships. Fostering regional knowledge and South-South learning



ACCESS TO FINANCE

Supporting women entrepreneurs to access existing public and private funds and loans. Leveraging partnerships with government institutions to finance enterprises. Channeling co-funding based on requirement, targeting current and future women entrepreneurs



MARKET LINKAGES

Identifying needs through detailed feasibility studies, leveraging partnerships with public and private institutions to support women entrepreneurs to access existing and new markets

HOW IS EMPOWER SUPPORTING?

Through various consultations at the national, provincial and country level, EmPower has mapped out energy needs, gender roles, livelihoods and opportunities that will inform the selection and implementation of women-led projects using renewable energy. EmPower's approach includes the following steps:

2019



SCOPING & PRE-FEASIBILITY

Scoping studies on livelihood and enterprise options for women, women's groups, cluster of villages. Shortlisting of interventions and groups. Assessment of existing skillsets.



FINAL SELECTION OF PROJECTS

Final selection of 6-7 enterprises per country, engaging women's groups, local stakeholders and partners.

2020-2021



TRAINING

Continuous training and mentorship throughout the project's life cycle. Designing and facilitating tailor made modules on business skills, marketing, financial literacy, and operation and maintenance for running RE-based enterprises. Leveraging partnerships and synergising with existing training programmes.



DETAILED FEASIBILITY & FINANCE

Provisions for accessing finance set up. Leveraging co-funding from partners. Detailed feasibility, finalizing business models and due diligence of enterprises undertaken.



DEMONSTRATION

Demonstrating on-the-ground interventions, supporting enterprises to access finance and training, expand products and service distribution networks.

2022



IMPACT

Documenting benefits and impact of projects on women's lives, communities and the renewables sector. Encouraging peer-to-peer learning, spotlighting champions and leaders from the community, facilitating links to policy.



SCALE UP

Developing case studies and lessons learned, sharing examples at national and regional levels. Leveraging long term partnerships and networks and attracting private investment to sustain support to projects.

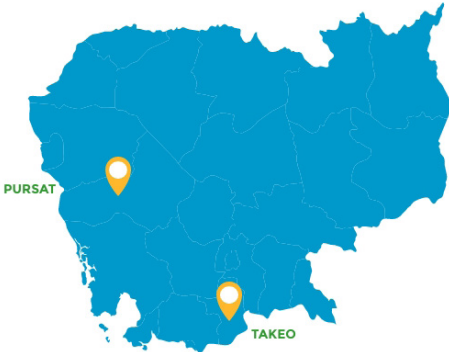
LOCATIONS



BANGLADESH



VIET NAM



CAMBODIA

PARTNERS

BANGLADESH | SREDA, Infrastructure Development Company Ltd. (IDCOL)

CAMBODIA | National Committee for Subnational Democratic Development (NCDD-s) Nexus for Development, SHE Investment

VIET NAM | GreenID, Viet Nam Women's Union, CHAISE, Ministry of Planning and Investment

REGIONAL | Asean Centre for Energy, ENERGIA, Private Finance Advisory Network (PFAN)

RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS

KEY MESSAGES



Renewable energy has the potential to unlock resilient livelihoods for communities vulnerable to climate change



While many advancements in the energy sector are underway in the region, renewable energy policies and programmes are often gender blind and do not account for the specific needs and priorities of women



Leveraging women's roles as "energy managers" and decision-makers of households and investing in women entrepreneurs can help build resilient communities



Supporting women-led enterprises through renewable energy requires a concerted effort on policy, capacity-building, access to technology, finance and markets



The UN Environment-UN Women EmPower:Women for Climate-Resilient Societies project, funded by the Government of Sweden (2018-2022) aims to ensure climate action and disaster risk reduction in Asia-Pacific actively considers gender equality and human rights



UN Environment, through EmPower supports women entrepreneurs in renewable energy, by focusing on: Policy (gender responsive energy policies, provincial action plans, approach papers), On-the-ground pilot projects provided with training, mentorship, provisions for finance and networks through partnerships, Sharing knowledge locally, nationally and regionally

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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UN Women Asia Pacific



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