



A POWERING AGRICULTURE GUIDE ON INTEGRATING GENDER IN HUMAN RESOURCE PROCESSES



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE?

As an innovator and entrepreneur, you understand that the success of your clean energy solution (CES) requires talented staff on your team—from management and product development to salespersons and technical field staff. This guide will help you plan for recruitment, training, and retention of male and female staff to strengthen the quality of your clean energy solution, expand your customer base to women and men, and maximize creativity and profitability.

This guide is aligned with these general human resources (HR) lifecycle phases:

1) Workforce Planning, 2) Talent Acquisition, 3) Training, and 4) Retention. It provides information and questions for you to consider as you identify ways in which you can strengthen gender integration in each phase.

WHY DOES INTEGRATING GENDER INTO HR PROCESSES FOR CES COMPANIES MAKE COMMERCIAL SENSE?

Women account for a large share of the global consumer market and purchasing decisions in households (ILO 2016), including in the agricultural sector in developing countries. To reach this crucial segment, you need to ensure women are included in your product development, marketing, sales, management, and technical teams, for the following reasons:

- Women better understand female product demands and purchasing patterns (ILO 2016).
- Many female farmers in developing countries are only comfortable participating in agricultural and technology trainings and demonstrations if there is a female technician facilitating the event.
- Women are often more comfortable purchasing goods and services from other women.
- When you engage women and men on design teams to maximize the user friendliness of the CES, you are maximizing potential adoption and use.
- More female representation in technical positions within an organization or a company will improve perceptions of technology accessibility and increase adoption by female farmers.

Many recent studies also demonstrate increased profit and performance when management teams are more gender-balanced and women are included in key decision-making roles. In addition, more companies are recognizing other non-financial benefits, such as an improved image or strong female role models that can indirectly contribute to a company's place in the marketplace. A greater



Increased Profits and Returns from Women in Leadership Roles (ILO 2016)

- A comparison in 2013 by Catalyst of companies with the least number of women directors on their boards with those with the most shows that the latter outperform the former in their return on sales by 16 percent and their return on invested capital by 26 percent.
- On a nine-year average (2005–2013), companies with at least one woman on their board had a return on equity of 14.1 percent, versus a return of 11.2 percent for companies with no such representation.
- In a study by Thomson Reuters in 2014, based on a sample of 1,843 international companies, companies with mixed boards had better returns and fewer tracking errors.
- A comparison of the performance between 2009 and 2013 of 863 companies with no women on their boards and of 990 other companies whose boards were at least 10 percent women shows that the companies with mixed boards perform better (Chanavat and Ramsden, 2014).

role for women also enhances diversity within the workplace, which can be valuable for a firm's ability to solve problems, make decisions, and enhance leadership. Better balance between work and family life has benefits for company performance, including improved perceptions, recruitment, and retention of staff (ILO 2016).

Recognizing that it makes business sense to include women at all levels of staffing—from management and engineering to sales, marketing, and technical field positions—you will want to identify ways to overcome barriers women face within the workforce.

These barriers include:

- Globally women occupy around 19 percent of all ministerial posts, but only 7 percent of these are in environment, natural resources, and energy, and a mere 3 percent are in science and technology (UNIDO 2014).
- Worldwide, women account for only 9 percent of the construction workforce and make up only 12 percent of engineers (UNIDO 2014). As a result, policy makers and private sector leaders are often unaware of women’s energy demands, and less attention is paid to technology development and investments aimed at improving women’s work in comparison to men’s (UNIDO 2014).

- Women are less likely to enter technical and scientific fields due to: expectations of “appropriate” women’s work; judgments about skill and ability; discouragement of girls to pursue technical education and careers; and hostile or discriminatory work environments (UNIDO 2014).

As a result, fewer female engineers are involved in product development; fewer female agronomists are involved in piloting and training; and fewer females are involved in sales and marketing—which, as mentioned above, are challenges to reaching women consumers and maximizing your market potential.



BEST PRACTICES FOR INTEGRATING GENDER IN HR PROCESSES

To capture the benefits of including women on your teams, gender should be integrated within HR processes throughout the entire HR lifecycle. For the purposes of this guide, the HR lifecycle is broken into four phases: **1) Workforce Planning; 2) Talent Acquisition; 3) Training; and 4) Retention.**



PHASE 1: WORKFORCE PLANNING

Gender integration during work force planning starts with a good understanding of the skills required to develop and sell your CES and the availability of male and female workforce pools to supply these skills. At the same time, you will want to ensure that when developing job descriptions for all positions, they are carefully crafted to require knowledge/expertise about gender equality, and that requirements do not inadvertently exclude or bias against men or women.

Some important questions to ask yourself include:

- Have you conducted a rapid workforce assessment that identifies your company's needs in all areas (product development, marketing, management, sales, technical teams, administration, etc.) against the available pool of workforce talent in all operation areas?
 - *Does this workforce assessment draw upon knowledge of local universities, women's business associations, and non-governmental organizations working on women's workforce development?*
 - *Does this workforce assessment identify skills or technical gaps/training needs among potential pools of both male and female workforce talent across job need types?*
- Does the job description across job types, including in product development and management, include required past experience developing products for, marketing to, and considering needs of both male and female consumers?
- Does the job description across job types include any requirements that may inadvertently exclude either women or men (e.g., a certain skill or minimum years of experience that mostly men can fulfill)?
- Does your workforce plan allocate a budget and a position for a community engagement or gender equality specialist to provide ongoing workforce training, review of planning documents and products, etc.?
- Does your workforce plan target balance across teams and job types to ensure that both women and men are represented in all areas such as product development, marketing, management, sales, technical teams, administration, etc.?
- Has a community engagement or gender equality specialist reviewed the work plan for staffing and team requirements, as well as draft job descriptions and provided input on how to remove biases from content, language, or requirements?
- If you are invested in a particular geographic area, have you established a partnership with local secondary schools, vocational schools, and universities to: 1) provide technical vocational/apprenticeship opportunities to girls in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields; 2) award/support scholarships to promising girls studying STEM; and 3) hold job fairs staffed with female employees/mentors in STEM fields?



PHASE 2: TALENT ACQUISITION

In this phase, you need to ensure that your recruitment strategy maximizes the pool of talented male and female applicants across all job types, from administrative assistants, salespeople, and technical officers, to managers and engineers. You should also ensure that the interview and hiring process is equitable and results in creating a diverse team.

Some important questions to ask yourself include:

- Do you advertise employment opportunities through channels likely to reach more women, such as women's business networks and organizations, universities and associated women's groups, and non-governmental organizations supporting women's skills development?
- Do you advertise employment opportunities as equal opportunities to men and women, and encourage women to apply for stereotypical male positions, and vice versa for men?
- Do you offer information sessions conducted by women to encourage women to apply to stereotypical male positions?
- Do you advertise your company as an attractive place to work with very good work-life balance to encourage both women and men to apply?
- Do you offer equal pay for equal work, regardless of whether the candidate is a man or woman?
- Do you ensure the CV review processes, and personnel involved in reviews, are gender balanced?
- Do you require quotas of females to make it into the pool of applicants for interviews?
- Do men and women conducting interviews have training in gender equality, including removing of conscious and subconscious biases against women or men, particularly those in STEM and management?
- Do you utilize blind recruiting by removing any personal information such as names, photos, marital status, hobbies, and age in the CV review process to prevent conscious and subconscious biases against women or men?
- Have interview questions about marital status, religion, age, family status been removed?
- Do interview questions help to get a sense of the prospective candidates' attitudes and biases regarding the same and opposite sex so that final recruitment excludes anyone that may disrupt an equitable work environment?
- Do you have hiring quotas within job types to ensure diverse and equitable representation of men and women at all levels, from administration and operations to management and technical?



PHASE 3: TRAINING

In this phase, you will focus on building skills, confidence, and leadership of your staff at all levels. You will want to ensure that women and men do not only have equal opportunity for professional skills development, but that as a result you have a workforce comprised of confident, highly-skilled men and women who are comfortable raising their voice and influencing decision-making.

Some important questions to ask yourself include:

- Do you have both male and female mentorship opportunities within all job types, either through internal mentorship matching, or through external means (such as women’s business networks or non-governmental organizations focused on economic empowerment)?
- Does staff training emphasize “soft skills” such as leadership skills, confidence, and public speaking, as much as the technical skills required?
- Do you provide skills training specifically to support underqualified women or men to become qualified for promotions?
- Do you provide ongoing training for all men and women staff, at all levels, in participatory gender awareness, sensitization, planning, and analysis?
- Have you identified someone on your staff who can serve as a champion and a point of contact for gender integration?





PHASE 4: RETENTION

In this phase, you will focus on ensuring the investments you make in your male and female staff pay off through dedicated staff who are happy to continue supporting your CES. You want to create a positive and equitable work environment where employees thrive as a team and as individual women and men. You should aim to create a healthy work-life balance that recognizes both women and men as members of external families and communities.

Some important questions to ask yourself include:

- Do you have female supervisors on staff?
- Does supervision routinely identify and reward what is done well by both women and men to create an equitable and supportive work place environment, while putting corrective measures in place where team members may have a negative effect on an equitable work place environment ?
- Do you have formal, enforced work place policies to promote gender equality that all staff are trained to know? Examples of gender equitable work place policies include
 - Guarantee freedom from sexual harassment (women and men). Establish rights and responsibilities for the treatment of employees in the workplace
 - Establish structures for all staff to participate in decision making.
 - Promote family-friendly work practices, including flexible working arrangements such as flexi-time, flexi-place, part-time work, and job sharing encouraged at all levels, including senior managers.
 - Develop maternity and paternity leave policies.
 - Provide childcare and dependent care leave and support.
- Do you provide “gender equality” champion rewards (monetary or non-monetary) among both male and female staff, including at higher management levels?
- Do you link male and female employees to local non-governmental and governmental organizations that provide additional valued social services (e.g., health, education) to encourage healthy and involved employees?
- Do both male and female managers publicly demonstrate their support for female employees in technical positions to send a message that women are valued and respected?
- Do you have the physical infrastructure present in the workplace to support male and female diversity such as nursing rooms and emergency child care options?
- Do the employee benefits that you provide accommodate women’s specific needs such as maternity leave, etc.?

- Do you have regular staff performance reviews to assess:
 - How each male and female staff member contributes to making a work environment equitable?
 - How each male and female staff member contributes to developing or selling CES technology that adapts to both male and female consumer needs and demands?

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In addition, you may consider measuring how well your company or organization is doing in creating an equitable, diverse, and creative work environment with the end goal of a dynamic and profitable company and CES technology.

Some illustrative indicators that could be used to identify how well you are doing include:

- Presence of a resourced gender focal point who:
 - 1) coordinates a work place gender policy and various HR policies focused on creating a gender equitable environment and
 - 2) reviews and inputs

into technical work (e.g., product development, marketing, etc.)

- % of applicants for open positions that are women
- % of management positions/engineering positions/technical field staff/operations and maintenance/sales staff/administrative staff filled by women
- % of women/men who report high levels of satisfaction (scale 1-5) of work-life balance/ supportive work environment with room for individual professional growth
- % of men/women staff provided with mentorship opportunities/leadership and confidence building



SOURCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

ILO (2016). *Women at Work*.

Catalyst.org: Statistical overview of women in the workforce.

World Bank (2009). *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*.

UNIDO (2014). *Guide on Gender Mainstreaming Energy and Climate Change Projects*.

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AN ENERGY GRAND CHALLENGE FOR DEVELOPMENT



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