Gender Mainstreaming Tools for Water Infrastructure Project Preparation Processes

Practical application and lessons learned from using CRIDF's gender tools to influence water projects in SADC

June 2018

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Introduction

Throughout SADC, women and girls are the primary collectors, users and managers of water resources and services. Given these inherent links between women and water, CRIDF is committed to ensuring that the needs of women and girls are considered in all CRIDF interventions through mainstreamed or explicit gender-related project components, with a view to empowering them and improving their quality of life.

We have therefore endeavoured to adopt a gender and socially -sensitive approach, and to ensure we give women and girls *voice, choice, and control* on water, land and other natural resource management issues. This is critical to ensuring the impact, performance and sustainability of the projects we implement.

- ✓ By **voice**, we mean empowering women and girls to participate in decision-making structures from a local to ministerial level.
- ✓ By **choice**, we mean providing the opportunity to the women and girls to raise incomes and improve their livelihood through improved water infrastructure that meets *their* needs.
- ✓ And by **control**, we aim to ensure that women have the opportunity to provide input in the technology and operation choices so that they have control over the schemes and can sustain infrastructure that contributes to improvement of their livelihoods.

CRIDF has therefore developed a set of Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines and Tools for the project preparation cycle – to ensure design teams consider and adequately address gender issues throughout each project development stage. The tools were developed to be used on an ongoing basis from inception, to design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation; they are designed to be practical and fit-for-purpose, with outcomes being action-oriented and measurable. The CRIDF tools have been iteratively updated since 2015, with the intention of making them useful to a wider audience in SADC – specifically other institutions and organisations involved in identifying, designing, funding and implementing water infrastructure interventions.

Notably, these efforts align with SADC's Handbook on Gender Mainstreaming in the Water Sector (2015), which emphasise the importance of enhancing gender

> **CRIDF I CASE STUDY**
> **Enhancing Project Designs to Maximise Benefits**
> The women-only discussions held during the Mashili Dam site mission (in Zambia) elicited responses that had not previously been voiced during several general community-level meetings. For example – a key outcome of the focus group discussions with women was the importance of enhancing accessibility of social services through the provision of a bridge. This would primarily benefit women and school-going children, and the Project Engineer included suitable crossing options in the final design.

aspects throughout the project preparation cycle using checklists, participatory processes and on-going M&E. The Handbook was developed under the *Gender Mainstreaming in Transboundary Water Management in SADC Project.* The Project endeavoured to integrate gender and social inclusion issues into policy and programming by decision-makers and water specialists at different levels throughout SADC. The primary purpose of the Handbook is to:

- Contribute to capacity building of **non-gender experts** in the water sector, to be able to **integrate the gender perspective in their work.**

- Assist institutions in considering and addressing gender issues in **all stages of a project life cycle**, and effectively mainstream gender in **day-to-day activities**.

CRIDF's Gender Tools

CRIDF's tools provide a structured and consistent manner to analyse gender-specific issues and inform the development of targeted and/or mainstreamed actions to meet the needs and maximise benefits accrued to women and girls.
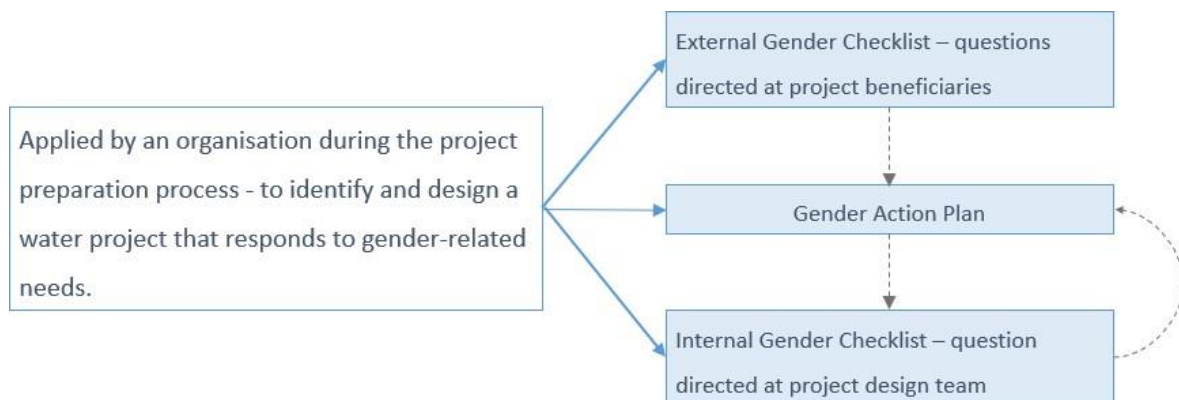

Figure 1: Gender tools for project preparation

Pre-Feasibility – External Checklist

This checklist (see Annex A) must be used during the **first site visit**, to collect on-the-ground information, to inform the Options Analysis/Outline Business Case for the project design. The checklist includes questions on women and men's **access** to, **participation in**, and **preferences** with regard to water-related infrastructure, decision-making structures, roles and responsibilities.

The questions are designed to illicit nuanced responses, rather than a simple yes/no. They are also fairly generic so as to be applicable to a wide range of contexts; they should therefore be tailored to suit the project type, location, and cultural/traditional considerations. The questions should be answered through a series of focus group discussions with different social groups (e.g. women, school-going girls, men, community leaders).

The information collected from this process is largely anecdotal; whenever possible, relevant studies and reliable local/national data should be included in the assessment to support findings and recommendations.

Pre-Feasibility – Gender Action Plan

The findings from the external checklist should inform a series of recommendations, to be taken up during follow-on project stages. These could be targeted or mainstreamed actions, and relate to: design options, capacity building components, establishment/support of decision-making platforms. To ensure these actions are carried through to future project stages, it is important to develop a Gender Action Plan (see Annex B) that:

- indicates clear gender-related actions for each project stage;

- stipulates who is responsible for each action;

- earmarks the scale of inputs / cost associated with each action.

The intention is that the Action Plan be revisited throughout future project stages, to track what actions were completed, what challenges arose, and whether additional actions/information linked to actions (roles, costs, timing etc.) should be added.

Feasibility – Internal Checklist

This checklist (see Annex C) must be used **internally** by the design team (led by the Sociologist) during Feasibility stage discussions, to determine if/how the proposed design addresses the findings from the external checklist (i.e. pre-feasibility), what the benefits may be, and whether further action is required. This process ensures the findings from pre-feasibility are understood by the wider project team, and translated into tangible design decisions appropriately.

The outcomes of this checklist should inform a revision of the Gender Action Plan to reflect up-to-date decisions.

> **CRIDF I CASE STUDY**
> **Using Gender Tools to Inform Decision-Making**
> Application of the gender tools during pre-feasibility and feasibility stages ensures that social issues influence project design parameters, and forces Engineers to think beyond purely technically-sound and cost-effective solutions. This came to light in the 12 Towns (Mwami, Chipata & Chanida - Zambia) study, where the concerns raised by female beneficiaries around safety, hygiene and privacy were considered during the kiosk site-selection process, and ultimately influenced the location of the kiosks.

Annex A – External Checklist

	Question	Response	Indicate if an Action is required to address response, and if it: a) could be mainstreamed in project design; b) requires a targeted action/intervention as part of the project; c) should be addressed through Policy Dialogue
ACCESS	Who collects, stores, manages and uses water? Does it differ for different household and livelihood activities?		
	What is a women's role in family health *and* hygiene?		
	How do these above responsibilities impact on women's ability to participate in other income-generating/community/personal development activities?		
	What are the water and hygiene needs of women and girls (and do they differ from men, and/or according to age & occupation of women)		
	What proportion of the households are female headed, and is there sex disaggregated data (or even anecdotal evidence) on housing ownership for planned and unplanned settlements?		
	Is there sex disaggregated data (or even anecdotal evidence) available on who has access to what water-related infrastructure in the project area?		
	Is water access by women restricted by legal or traditional rights, or social structures, or financial impediments?		
	Are there mechanisms for women to access/apply for financial support/loans?		
PARTICIPATION	What % of women currently sit on community decision-making committees? What role do they play?		
	Do policies or protocols exist within community/institutional structures to support women's needs and gender equality, through targeted actions/indicators? Are they adhered to?		
	Have measures been put in place to ensure women can participate in committees and community meetings (i.e. choosing suitable times and locations)		
	Do women's groups exist in the community? What do they do?		
PREFERENCE	Communal/sharing vs individual arrangement		
	Type of water supply scheme (pumps, taps, power source, distribution network)		
	Type of sanitation & hygiene facilities		
	Mode of payment for water services		
	Women's' preference on prioritisation of allocated/ available water (household: cooking, hygiene; livelihoods: crops, cattle, livestock; supply to community facilities: schools, clinics)		

Annex B – Gender Action Plan Structure

Activities	Indicators And Targets	Responsibility		Project Cycle Stage	Cost Estimate
		CRIDF	Other Institutions		
Output 1: Finalisation of detailed designs of Chibabava Village Water Supply Scheme					
Participatory Design Sessions of Water Centres	• Introductory Session to gather community inputs • Intermediary Session to present draft designs • Final Session where designs are approved by participants.	CRIDF	District Services of Planning and Infrastructure (SDPI) / District Services of Women, Social Affairs and Health (SDMAS)	Project preparation	**TBC**
Protection of Adolescent Girls	• Introductory Session to gather adolescent girl inputs for the design of a protected space in school with latrines and yard tap. • Intermediary Session to present draft designs • Final Session where designs are approved by participants.	CRIDF	SDPI / SDMAS	Project preparation	**TBC**

Annex C – Internal Checklist

	Based on the feasibility study outcomes, would the proposed Project………	Yes/No Comment &	Indicate type of Action required to address response, and if it: a) could be mainstreamed in project design; b) requires a targeted action/intervention as part of the project; c) should be addressed through Policy Dialogue
ACCESS & BENEFITS	Negatively impact on women, girls, and/or female headed households? If so, explain.		
	Increase access to and control over production factors such land amongst women, men and persons with disability?		
	Increase potential for women's involvement in productive activities? If so, how?		
	Contribute to changes in the quality of life of the women in the communities? Describe these changes.		
PARTICIPATION	Increase women's decision-making power and recognition of their input to the project activities? If so, how?		
	Constrain equal participation of women, men, youth, or people with disabilities in the management and use of the water supply scheme? If so, in what way?		
	Constrain equal participation of women, men, youth, or people with disabilities in the use of productive activities linked to the water supply scheme? If so, in what way?		
DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION	Include technology choices suitable for use by women, children, persons with disability (all types of impairment, the elderly, pregnant women and the sick)? If not, elaborate.		
	Include a gender specific component that visibly benefit women & girls? If so, describe.		
	Promote involvement of women in the procurement process; e.g. provision of goods, labour and services		
	Benefit from the existence of additional partner project personnel / existing institutions possessing knowledge and awareness of gender and social inclusion concerns? If so, describe support.		