Gender Issues in ESIA

Introduction

- Gender refers to socially constructed **roles** and **power** relations between **men** and **women**. Due to different roles, activities and knowledge, women and men's concerns **differ**.
- Gender equality ensures equal **societal status**, opportunities, and benefits from resources. **Complete gender equality is difficult to achieve**.
- In projects, plans and policies, men's needs and priorities often (**unconsciously**) get more **weight** than women's.
- Integrating **gender equality** is a strategy to address concerns and experiences of both men and women in project activities.
- Within SIA, impact assessment and gender analysis may identify **unforeseen** impacts.

Introduction

- Gender equality is a **human right** and a condition for **sustainable development**.
- Women and men should have **equal influence** on the decisions that shape their lives and benefit equally from development interventions.
- Although well-intended, these interventions do not always lead to equal benefits and can even **reinforce** existing gender **inequalities**.
- The **integration** of gender into impact assessment is recognized as good practice.
- Process should **incorporate** gender analysis, differentiated between effects on men and women and define appropriate measures to **avoid** and **mitigate** adverse effects.

Gender in ESIA: general questions

A gender inclusive approach is used if answers to the following questions are taken into account for every stage, topic, and stakeholder (group) in the EIA process and in the proposed project/plan:

a. What are the differences in **participation** and **influence** on decision-making by women and men?

b. What are the differences in **benefits** and **disadvantages** for women and men?

c. Are these differences being **monitored** (via sex-disaggregated data and data on gender differences)?

Gender in ESIA

- Not sufficient to simply ask women's **opinions** on the proposed project as means of **public participation** in ESIA.
- It is essential to **pay attention** to gender first of all in the setup of the ESIA process.
- Various stages of **environmental assessment** offer different opportunities for integrating gender equality:
  - **Scoping:** identify key gender issues.
  - **Terms of Reference (ToR):** indicate the need to collect gender-specific and disaggregated data; ensure **gender expertise** and **gender balance** of the team.
  - **Baseline data collection:** collect gender-specific data on work within and out of the household, time use, and decision-making.

Gender in ESIA

- **Impact identification:** conduct a gender analysis; identify positive/negative effects on women and men.
- **Public consultation:** ensure meaningful participation of men and women from different groups. Consider cultural gender perceptions: Who speaks? Would separate meetings for men and women improve participation? If women do not speak out, women's groups could speak with a united voice.
- **Mitigation measures:** include measures to address the identified adverse impacts on both women and men.
- **Environmental management plan:** include a gender action plan or gender strategy.
- **Monitoring and impact measurement:** use gender-sensitive indicators for identified impacts, measuring outcomes for women and men. Use participatory monitoring mechanisms for women and men.

Participation of Women

In project implementation low participation due to the following reasons:

- Mass illiteracy;
- Ignorance about the importance of women's participation;
- Influence of traditional society of **male dominance**;
- Women's opinions and suggestions are not entertained by male counterparts;
- **Ignorance about the environmental considerations and consequences**;
- Women perform triple roles such as, **productive**, **reproductive**, and **community** roles;
- Lack of **encouragement** towards women's participation in the decision making process.
- Lack of awareness;
- Lack of effective counseling and advocacy,
- Lack of information **dissemination**.

Women's Challenges in Public Participation

- Even when women are participants in formal decision making processes, their interests are rarely taken into account.
- They are often **discouraged** from speaking in public forum by norms of **female decorum**.
- Women usually have less time to participate due to a **heavier burden** of work (household tasks, childcare, income generation and home-based agricultural production).
- Unequal access to education, as well as **cultural** and **social** norms, women often have less experience expressing their views confidently.
- They may be **reluctant** to invest time in participation, based on a **strategic** calculation that they have little to gain from doing so.