

Gender policy in the mining, oil and gas sectors: experiences and lessons from the WAGES project in Ghana

by

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A cross section of participants on a working session during the validation workshop.

Introduction

WUSC and CECI through the West Africa Governance and Economic Sustainability in Extractive Areas (WAGES) project has facilitated the development of a gender equality strategy and capacity building for members of the Ghana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GHEITI) as part of the Project's efforts aimed at facilitating mainstreaming of gender into the natural resource sector in Ghana. GHEITI is a member of the global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) which is a global standard promoting open and accountable management of oil, gas and mineral resources¹.

The development of the gender equality strategy and capacity building was a response to a request by GHEITI to WUSC to help them develop the gender equality strategy and to help build capacity for their members on its application. The goal of the gender equality strategy is to promote a transparent, accountable, all-inclusive and gender-sensitive operation in the mining, oil and gas sectors in Ghana. The gender strategy is also an initiative to help GHEITI to fully operate, in compliance with the new global EITI standard gender requirements adopted in 2019. These require all member countries to ensure a gender balance in representation of the Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG), documentation and disclosure of

¹ <https://eiti.org/About>.

employment figures by projects, and role and gender considerations in the dissemination of GHEITI data. The main methodology and approach adopted during the process of elaboration of the gender strategy was based on participation, ownership and experiential learning by all stakeholders.

Project description

The WAGES project aims to break the vicious circle in which local communities, especially women and youth are excluded from the benefits of mining investments. Additionally, the project works to ensure the participation of local communities, and specifically, the integration of women and youth in the governance of natural resources, entrepreneurship and the sustainable development of these areas. The project is being implemented in three mining regions of Burkina Faso, Ghana and Guinea with the ultimate outcome of **“enhanced socio-economic benefits from extractive industries for communities, especially women and youth, living in West Africa”**.

In Ghana, the project is being implemented in the Wassa East District and Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality of the Western Region. Implementation of WAGES in Ghana is led by WUSC’s country office, with support from the WUSC head office in Canada and the Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI), with which WUSC works in a consortium on implementation of WAGES.

Gender mainstreaming is key to the WAGES project as a cross-cutting strategy in the delivery of the project’s activities and engagement with partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders. A key milestone in this quest is the establishment of the **Fiaseman Mbaa Yedie Kuo** women support group; which aims at providing support to women and also sustaining interventions in all project areas. The project’s facilitation of gender strategies, operational plans, training manuals and sensitization toolkits on gender-based violence in communities and the workplace and several capacity building sessions across project host communities all point to the centrality of gender mainstreaming in the delivery of WAGES project activities in Ghana.

The need for a gender equality strategy

The need for a gender strategy in the extractive sector, is a step towards the fulfilment of the EITI Standard gender requirements for all countries who have acceded to the initiative, including Ghana - who became a member in 2003. The 2019 GHEITI Standard requires Multi-Stakeholders Groups (MSG) to consider gender balance in their representation and disclose employment data by company, gender and occupational level. The new guidelines further recommend adoption of gender considerations in the dissemination of EITI data, and encourages MSGs to document how they have taken gender considerations and inclusiveness into account². In addition, the EITI international secretariat is committed to ensuring that women make up at least one third of representatives on MSGs and two thirds of EITI implementing countries disclose gender disaggregated data. The GHEITI gender strategy contributes to this commitment.

The Co-Chair of Ghana’s EITI, Dr. Steve Manteaw, highlighted the need for the gender strategy and capacity building for Ghana’s EITI members during a capacity building and validation workshop held in August, 2021 as follows: *‘today’s meeting is a step we are taking towards compliance of an aspect of the new EITI standard which was adopted at the Paris Conference in 2019. All EITI implementing countries are required under the new standard to mainstream gender into the extractive sector and this should begin from the policy level to the decision making around the use of extractive sector revenues’*.

² <https://eiti.org/document/overview-of-proposed-changes-to-eiti-requirements>.

He added that there was a recognition that even though women tended to be impacted by the sector as they might need to walk long distances to their farms, and in search of water for household chores in times of relocation; their needs were not prioritized when decisions such as how to manage revenues were being taken. The gender strategy therefore seeks to contribute to inclusion of women in the decision-making and reporting, ensuring that the sector responds to needs and interests of women and to improve women's livelihoods and empower them to participate in the sector.

The gender equality strategy is also in line with objective one of Ghana's EITI Work Plan (2021) which aims to **'Enhance Citizens Participation in Decisions around Resource Extraction along the value chain'**³.

The process

A 5-phased process and a participatory methodology were adopted in developing the first ever gender equality strategy for GHEITI members. At every phase of the process, there was considerable engagement between the partners and stakeholders before the commencement of the next phase. The interviews and dialogue at each stage were transparent and based on mutual understanding and ownership of relevant stakeholders.

Contracting

This phase involved the WAGES Project team discussing the scope of the request and the anticipated process and methodology for the delivery of the gender strategy with the GHEITI Secretariat and leadership of the Multi-Stakeholders Group (MSG). The MSG is **'a tripartite body made up of government, industry and civil society, with the responsibility of steering the affairs of Ghana's EITI'**⁴. The initial discussions afforded the two partners; WUSC in Ghana; the Consortium member leading the WAGES project implementation in Ghana and GHEITI Secretariat to fully understand the expectations, roles and timelines for the delivery of the strategy. The estimated budget that was required and how the partners would contribute towards the financing of the assignment was also discussed during this phase.

The two partners agreed to contract a consultant with expertise and connection to the extractive sector in Ghana to lead the process in the development and capacity building of the members. Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the recruitment of the consultant were developed by the WAGES project team and shared with GHEITI for their input. Feedback was received within two weeks and incorporated into the ToRs. The ToRs were advertised and applications received. The applications were screened and 3 candidates were shortlisted and interviewed. The panel consisted of a representative from the Multi-Stakeholders Group and WAGES project's team in Ghana. A consulting firm was selected to execute the assignment.

Following the selection of the firm and the signing of the contract of service, an inception meeting was held involving the consultant and the partner institutions. This was followed by an inception report that

³ https://eiti.org/files/documents/2021_gheiti_annual_work_plan.pdf.

⁴ <https://eiti.org/document/eiti-standard-2019#r1-4>.

focused primarily on the assignment's intent, methodology and approach. The objectives and scope of the assignment were outlined as follows:

- Development of a gender strategy that could be adopted to ensure full integration of gender in all GHEITI activities with emphasis on the promotion of women and youth empowerment in extractive areas.
- Development of a gender mainstreaming action plan for GHEITI.
- Provision of recommendations and guidelines for the integration of gender and youth in the planning and implementation of all activities of GHEITI.
- Development of training modules based on the developed gender strategy.
- Training of the GHEITI Multi-Stakeholder Group and the Secretariat on the developed GHEITI gender strategy, policy and gender mainstreaming road map.

Data collection and stakeholder feedback

The team of consultants reviewed secondary data including WAGES Project's reports, carried out a gender audit of the Multi-Stakeholders Group and collected primary data from stakeholders in the mining, oil and gas sectors in selected areas of the Western Region of Ghana. Institutional representatives from the private sector (mining, gas and oil companies), civil society organizations and public agencies as well women groups and traditional leaders in extractive communities were engaged during the data collection phase. Key informant interviews, focused group discussions and individual interviews were deployed to collect primary data.

Feedback from GHEITI members was received and community members especially women and youth in the extractive communities engaged. The primary data complemented secondary data reviewed in the sector by the team of consultants. This was meant to ensure comprehensiveness in the data collected and acceptance of recommendations thereof.

As part of the process of ensuring validity of the data collected, a 2-day engagement for over 25 stakeholders mainly drawn from GHEITI members was held in Accra. A presentation of issues identified during the first phase of the data collection was made by the consultant and feedback received that helped strengthen the approach. A major gap identified was limited data on the oil and gas sector. The consultant was tasked to collect further data related to the oil and gas sectors.

Reporting and team input

After many weeks of data collection that included data from the oil and gas sector, a first draft report was submitted to GHEITI and WUSC Ghana. This report was shared with relevant project teams in Ghana and Canada. Feedback was collected and submitted to the Consultant for incorporation into the draft strategy. The report was updated following the team's feedback and ready for validation with the stakeholders at a 2-day workshop.

Validation and finalization

A 2-day stakeholders' validation and training workshop was organized in August, 2021 at Aburi, East Region of Ghana. In all, about 45 stakeholders drawn from government agencies, civil society organizations, mining, oil and gas companies as well as media houses participated in the workshop.

Participants among others reviewed the strategic objectives, theory of change and deliberated on recommendations made by the Consultant. Among the issues discussed during the workshop was the need for GHEITI members to take practical steps to ensure that the strategy is fully implemented, monitored and evaluated within the period 2022-2026. The need for stakeholders' mapping to support the effective mainstreaming of the strategy was also brought to the fore. Continuous capacity building of the GHEITI members was recognized as a major step in ensuring effective implementation of the strategy.

Speaking to journalists during the workshop at Aburi, the Co-Chair of GHEITI, Dr. Steve Manteaw highlighted the need for women inclusion in the extractive sector, *"The benefits of resource extraction accrue largely to government and a lot of the time women are missing around the major decisions. In fact, they do not even get the opportunity to participate in that discussion in terms of even trying to influence decisions around expenditures in a way that supports their livelihoods"*.



Dr. Steve Manteaw delivering the opening remarks at the validation workshop at Aburi, Eastern Region-Ghana.

After the validation and training workshop, the consultant was tasked to incorporate the feedback and submit the final strategy to the partners for final feedback before acceptance. An action plan for the implementation would be discussed between the partners.

Implementation

The most crucial phase of the process is the implementation phase. This phase involves the actual work done to ensure that there is gender balance in representation of the MSG, documentation and disclosure of employment figures disaggregated by project, role and sex and ensuring gender considerations in the dissemination of EITI data.

To facilitate the implementation, a gender mainstreaming action plan has been developed and included with timelines for delivery to ensure the strategy is implemented. For the partners and stakeholders to realize the full implementation of the strategy, they must demonstrate a high level of commitment in terms of time, resources and continuous engagement at all levels to realize the full benefits of the strategy.

Key lessons learnt

- **Awareness of the process:** Designing and mainstreaming gender into the mining, oil and gas sectors is not a one-off activity. It's a process and requires an awareness of the process and concerted efforts by all in the space; civil society organizations, public sector agencies, the business community and community level stakeholders to fully engage in a continuous dialogue. This awareness provided an impetus to carry everyone along.
- **Buy-in:** All stakeholders must buy-in to the need for the gender strategy. Management and staff who worked directly or supported the process must be in full support of the process. This commitment ensured that everyone was fully supportive.
- **Document the relationship and allocate funds:** The team started with verbal conversations, but with time, we saw the need to sign a memorandum of understanding between the main partners. In view of that, the GHEITI included the development of the gender strategy in their 2021 annual work plan and the WAGES project also did the same. Resources were also allocated by both partners to undertake the assignment.
- **Continuous engagement:** The initial timelines agreed with the consultant were missed. The consulting firm could not keep to the many deadlines they gave to the team. This created an uneasy situation among the stakeholders, partners and the consulting firm. In view of this, there was consistent conversation among the stakeholders on how to get the process ongoing. We kept engaging all relevant stakeholders; explaining the cause of the delay and identifying alternative options. Even under this situation, the stakeholders acted professionally all the time until the strategy was delivered.
- **Involve the media:** The partners invited selected media personnel who participated in the validation workshop and also covered the stories. The stories of the validation workshop were widely published on television, print media and online. This helped to broaden the conversations around the subject even before the strategy could be finalized.

- **Training GHEITI members:** For next steps, it is recommended that the gender strategy of GHEITI be mainstreamed throughout the organization, allowing all members to be trained on gender mainstreaming.

Conclusions and policy implications

There is no doubt that stakeholders need to mainstream gender equality into the mining, oil and gas sectors. The fundamental starting point in doing so is to have a policy that has a binding effect on all players in the industry. The WAGES project and partner, GHEITI, have demonstrated their commitment in developing the gender equality and capacity building strategy. This strategy would have no consequence without concerted efforts by all GHEITI member institutions, civil society organizations, the general public, and private sector stakeholders to continuously engage all duty bearers in the implementation of the strategy. This remains one of the surest ways to fully achieve a transparent, accountable, all-inclusive and gender-sensitive mining, oil, and gas sectors in Ghana.