

Gender mainstreaming in climate change projects

The case of NOOR Ouarzazate in Morocco



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP



List of abbreviations

ACWA Power	Arabian Company for Water and Power
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AfDB	African Development Bank
ANAPEC	National Agency for Promotion of Employment and Skills
CESMP	Construction Environmental and Social Management Plan
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CSP	Concentrated Solar Power
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTF	Clean Technology Fund
DAR	Directorate for Rural Affairs, Ministry of the Interior
EIB	European Investment Bank
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
EPC	Engineering, Production and Construction
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
HR	Human Resources
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IEA	International Energy Agency
IPP	Independent Power Producer
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
MASEN	Moroccan Agency for Sustainable Energy
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NOOR	Moroccan Solar Energy Program
ONEE	National Office of Electricity and Potable Water
SESIA	Specific Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
WOCAN	Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management
\$	US Dollars



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Project introduction

Climate change—including both its causes and the initiatives designed to combat its drivers and impacts—is not gender neutral. Women are not only affected by climate change differently than men, but they can contribute to climate change action in a different manner. Climate change will have a negative impact on women, not least due to differentiated impacts across key sectors driving economies and underpinning livelihoods. For example, noting that women constitute two-thirds of the agricultural labor force on the African continent, and that they are the ones producing the majority of African food, climatic impacts on the sector will hit women and their families the hardest.¹

Actions taken to combat climate change can also have positive impacts on the region's development and the lives of women. For instance, although the electrification rate in Northern Africa can reach close to 100%,² most of the electric power stations in the region use fossil fuels for electricity generation.³ Diversifying the energy mix, giving greater importance to renewable energies and energy efficiency, has the potential to open up new labor opportunities as well as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). Activities that will boost women's participation in the value chain of these sectors, through their recognition as agents of change and key actors in the energy transition, have the potential to support women's economic empowerment while reducing reliance of fossil fuel-based generation.

Moreover, international investment trends continue to show that the large majority of investments in renewable energy technologies go into utility-size generation.⁴ These types of projects can diminish negative impacts on women and men, as well as favor gender equality, including through the development of gender-responsive relocation and compensation

plans; the establishment of programs to combat gender-based violence and human trafficking; support to health programs; and the recruitment, training and retention of women as part of their labour force. Corporate social responsibility can also be used as a tool to increase gender equality, with utilities investing in community development programmes, for example, and having specific activities to support women and girls in neighbouring communities.⁵

Within this context, the African Development Bank aims to be the leading African financial institution addressing gender and climate change, as a strategy to both increase the social benefits of its portfolio investments on climate change and to strive towards ensuring gender equality on the continent. Toward this end, the African Development Bank has been mobilising funding from the Climate Investment Funds (CIF)⁶ to strengthen understanding of and capacities to address the interlinkages between gender and climate change of Bank staff and African CIF Pilot Countries.⁷

To support these efforts, the African Development Bank's Gender, Women and Civil Society Department and the Climate Change and Green Growth Department, designed the **AfDB/CIF Inclusive Climate Action Initiative**, the purpose of which is to support concrete integration of gender into future CIF initiatives implemented under the supervision and support of the Bank, through — among other things— context specific research, review of two case studies on good practices, and the production of a set of knowledge resources to support the work of the Bank and its staff. The project was publicly tendered in mid-2018, and Bank awarded the contract of this initiative to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

¹ AfDB (2015)

² World Bank Group (2018a)

³ ECA-NA (2012)

⁴ Frankfurt School of Finance and Management (2017)

⁵ IUCN (2018)

⁶ The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) are two trust funds—the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF)—designed to pilot transformational change towards low-carbon and climate resilient development through the scaling up of finance through the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).

⁷ The SCF is sub-divided to address three targeted programs: the Forest Investment Program (FIP), the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) and Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program in Low Income Countries (SREP). A total of 72 developing and middle income countries worldwide, referred to as pilot countries, receive support via the CTF or the SCF

About this report

The Solar Energy Program (NOOR) located in Ouarzazate (NOOR Ouarzazate), in the South-Central region of Morocco, is one of the largest concentrated solar power (CSP) facilities in the world. NOOR Ouarzazate is implemented by the Moroccan Agency for Sustainable Energy (MASEN) and the Arabian Company for Water and Power (ACWA Power), and is expected to diversify Morocco's energy mix, providing enough solar-generated electricity to the national grid to displace the use of 2.5 million tons of oil per year.⁸

NOOR Ouarzazate has received funds from the African Development Bank and the CIF's Clean Technology Fund (CTF) for the development of the first three phases of the solar complex. Additional financial support has been provided by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) and from the European Union. The complex has been identified by the African Development Bank as one of the cases for study under the AfDB/CIF Inclusive Climate Action Initiative.

This report thus presents a short summary of the NOOR Ouarzazate complex, followed by an introduction of the methodology used for conducting the case study analysis, focusing on the different measures undertaken by the implementing companies to address gender equality during the construction, maintenance and operation phases of the project. Then, the report includes a section on gender equality in Morocco, to provide the reader with information on relevant gender considerations at play in the country,

providing insights on the challenges faced by women when it comes to joining the labour market in the country, and particularly when these women live in rural areas. This contextualization is followed by the main findings extracted from the analysis of available project documents and data collected during field missions to Ouarzazate and Rabat, to identify the good practices and lessons learned from the project.

The report further includes a section on reflections, where attention is devoted to understanding the elements that shape an enabling environment for utilities and energy companies to invest in gender equality in their corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies as well as in their labor force. How these elements could be used to inform replication of actions or strengthening of interventions by other energy utilities and companies is also discussed.

Finally, building on the lessons and reflections extracted from the NOOR Ouarzazate project review, the report presents a list of suggested gender indicators that can be used to assess different elements related to gender equality actions (Annex 3). These sample indicators have been developed considering the impact, outcomes, and outputs that similar projects can have in contributing to advancing gender equality and the reduction of gender gaps.^{9, 10} This exercise was conducted to address a specific request by the Bank under the current assignment, to propose appropriate gender indicators for future African Development Bank and CTF related projects.

⁸ ESMAP (2018)

⁹ ADB (2013)

¹⁰ World Bank Group (2018a)

Methodology

The research methodology to prepare this project review report included an extensive literature review and interviews with key informants, both virtual and in person. When implementing this analysis, IUCN followed a standard gender mainstreaming approach to the project cycle when reviewing the pilot projects, meaning that key gender questions induced the analysis of decisions and actions undertaken in each step of the project cycle, including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The general questions guiding this analysis can be found in Annex 1 to this report.

The literature review involved the collection and analysis of key project documents. These included the identification of the project's design documents, its logical framework and the environmental and social assessments conducted in the beginning of the process. In addition, corporate documentation such as progress reports to the Bank and CIF, community development policies and strategies, and internal assessment reports were either made available by the implementing companies—MASEN and ACWA Power—or obtained on their websites. The literature review was further supplemented with the identification

and use of resources where the experience of NOOR Ouarzazate—with regards to its emission reduction contributions or its support to gender equality—has been further documented. The full list of documents covered in this review can be found in the section below on resources.

In collaboration with the Bank gender team and the task manager for NOOR Ouarzazate, IUCN was able to establish communication with key staff within MASEN and ACWA Power, mainly the teams responsible for the sustainable development and community development portfolios. In-person interviews were conducted with some of these representatives in January 2019 on the sidelines of the CIF@10 event organized in Ouarzazate.¹¹

In coordination with these key informants, a list of interviewees was developed and introductory interviews conducted over the phone with MASEN staff in February 2019. Questions posed during the interview were designed to identify good practices, following the structure of the project cycle (reference again Annex 1). These conversations established a foundation for conducting a field visit, during which further interviews were conducted in Rabat, where the head offices of the companies are located, as well as with their field development staff and with community informants in Ouarzazate.

Persons interviewed during the field visit were purposefully identified by the companies, to ensure views collected reflected those from staff working on the site and from persons who have been directly involved in the gender mainstreaming activities. Given the parameters of the assignment, it was not possible, nor expected, to conduct interviews with a wider range of actors. Hence, it is necessary to acknowledge that other views or claims on gender mainstreaming activities may not be captured in this report.¹² The full list of persons interviewed, both in Rabat and Ouarzazate, can be found in Annex 2.

¹¹ Information on the event marking the 10-year anniversary of the CIF can be found here: <https://cifpowerof10.org/>

¹² Community informants were identified by the companies to provide a sample of the different groups of persons who participate in the rural development initiatives, including improved agricultural and cattle rearing techniques, adult literacy opportunities and handicraft production. In addition, the companies facilitated the identification of female staff working in the Ouarzazate complex, who provided an impression of the different type of positions held by women within the complex, including management, engineering, administrative and support positions



Project summary

The NOOR Ouarzazate complex is one of the largest CSP facilities in the world and the first one of its kind in Morocco. The Bank and CTF have contributed €200 million each to the construction of NOOR Ouarzazate I, II, and III generation plants.^{13,14} Additional support has been provided by other financial institutions, such as EBRD, AFD, KfW and the EIB.

The complex, including NOOR Ouarzazate IV,¹⁵ will have an installed capacity of 580 MW by 2020. NOOR Ouarzazate is expected to generate enough electricity to annually displace 2.5 million tons of oil from Morocco's energy mix, reducing close to 890,000 tons of CO₂ per year as a result.¹⁶ With a reported 99% of the population in Morocco having access to electricity,¹⁷ NOOR Ouarzazate is not intended to contribute to grid extension but is rather seen as a key component of Morocco's Energy Strategy to increase its reliance on renewable energy generation as well as one of the key measures required for achieving its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) targets.

NOOR Ouarzazate is implemented via a public private partnership, between MASEN and the ACWA Power. MASEN is a special purpose energy company created by Law 57-09¹⁸ in 2009, as part of the instruments to achieve the Moroccan Energy Strategy. It has the responsibility to manage renewable energy in Morocco, through the development of programs, with the goal of securing 52% of the country energy mix from renewable sources by 2030. In this capacity, MASEN is the recipient and warrantor of the loans and financial support provided by lending institutions for NOOR Ouarzazate.

ACWA Power is a private developer, investor, co-owner and operator of power generation and desalinated water production plants, which is in charge of managing activities within the complex. As the project developer and main company responsible for operations within the complex, ACWA Power signed a contract with the lead company of the engineering, production and construction (EPC) consortium to undertake the construction phase of a project, and subcontracts other companies to undertake the operations and maintenance for the projects after construction.

MASEN also acts as intermediary, buying the electricity from ACWA Power and selling it to the National Office of Electricity and Potable Water (ONEE, for its acronym in French), the Moroccan distribution utility. The electricity from NOOR Ouarzazate goes directly into the national grid—and it is estimated that it could serve as much as one million Moroccan households connected to the grid.¹⁹

Both lead companies have a strong commitment to acknowledging equality among their personnel, supporting women and men in their staff without distinction and encouraging subcontractors to the complex to recruit women as part of their labour force. This task is particularly important, as women's participation in Morocco's labour is amongst the lowest in the world (only 26.8% of women of working age are employed in the formal sector),²⁰ and the participation rates in Ouarzazate are even lower than the national average.²¹



¹³ AfDB and CIF (2016)

¹⁴ NOOR I: 160 MW –approval was in 2012, for an amount of US\$200 million (CSP with 3 hour molten salt storage). NOOR II and III: 200 MW (NOOR II, CSP with 7 hours molten salt storage) and 150 MW (NOOR III CSP tower with 8 hours molten salt storage) –approval was in 2014, for an amount of US\$238 million. Both loans were provided by the AfDB and the CTF in equal parts (50% each). Mousa, A. Interview. 2019

¹⁵ NOOR IV has a capacity of 70 MW (traditional PV based technology) and is financed by KfW and other donors.

¹⁶ MASEN estimates reductions as follows: 280.000 tons CO₂/year for Noor I, 300.000 tons CO₂/year by Noor II, 222.000 tons CO₂/year for Noor III and 86.539 tons CO₂/year for Noor IV, for a combined total of 888.539 tons per year. At: <http://www.masen.ma/en/projects>

¹⁷ According to the IEA, Morocco reported in 2016 100% of urban and 97% of rural population with access to electricity. IEA (2017)

¹⁸ In 2016 Masen's objective was changed, by law 38-16 to deal with all sustainable energy technologies and not only solar.

¹⁹ Notably, although the estimate is done in number of households reached, this is difficult to monitor, as the electricity from the grid can be used by any consumer. The construction of NOOR Ouarzazate has not been paired with additional efforts to connect vulnerable households to the grid or to provide these with additional subsidies, a point made in interviews, which could be an approach considered at a later stage given the context-specific vulnerability of, for example, women-headed households as discussed in the following section of this report. (Lakssassi, M. Interview (2019) and Hamdouch, F. Interview (2019)

²⁰ World Economic Forum (2018)

²¹ ESMAP (2018)

Gender Mainstreaming in NOOR Ouarzazate

Gender context in Morocco and Ghesate

Morocco is a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament and, since the accession of King Mohammed VI, in 1999, has seen a series of reforms to liberalize the economy and improve the guarantee of fundamental human rights.²³ Legislation reforms from the past two decades include the adoption of a new Constitution in 2011, as well as the approval of legislation to strengthen women's rights, such as the 2004 revision of the Family Code (Moudawana) and the 2012 equality plan (ICRAM, for its acronym in French Initiative Concertée pour le Renforcement des Acquis des Marocaines).

In 2018, Morocco ranked 137th out of 149 countries in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Index with a score of .607, (a score of 1 equals full parity between women and men,) ranking slightly below the middle in its comparison with Northern Africa and Middle Eastern countries but quite low when compared to the median ranking of Sub-Saharan African countries.²³ Although the ranking is low, Morocco has demonstrated continued progress towards closing existing gender gaps, particularly on the WEF's Economic Participation and Opportunity sub-index, as a result of increased wage equality. Moreover, the country continues to improve on the Educational Attainment sub-index, mostly due to increased gender parity in secondary education, which is also reflected in a 2% reduction in the education gap in 2017.

In order to continue closing gender gaps, Morocco needs to fight strong social and traditional discriminatory patriarchal norms that continue to affect women's access to benefits and jobs. For example, the social expectation that it is obligatory for women to marry means women are less likely to be single than men (28.9% vs. 40.9%) but more likely to be divorced (3.4% vs. 0.9%) or widowed (10% vs. 0.8%).²⁴ Female-headed households account for 16.2% of households (18.6% in urban and 11.6% in rural areas), and are mainly headed by widows (56%) or divorced women (14.2%).²⁵ With women having less access to resources, female-headed households are found in more vulnerable economic situations than their male counterparts.

Ghesate, the territorial commune within Ouarzazate where the solar complex is located, is a mainly agrarian community, with defined labor segregation along traditional gender roles, whereby men tend to grow crops, such as date palm, fruit trees (e.g. almond trees) and women mainly tend to rearing of sheep and goats,²⁶ including collecting the forage needed for the animals, and the family vegetable gardens.²⁷

Literacy rates in Ghesate are much lower than the national average, with 71.7% of women and 39.4% of men in the region being illiterate.²⁸ Illiterate levels in the region therefore almost double those at national level, where it is estimated that 40.9% of women and 19.6% of men are illiterate.²⁹

²³ World Economic Forum (2018)

²⁴ High Commission for Planning (2016)

²⁵ Idem.

²⁶ BURGEAP (2011)

²⁷ Benjelloun, A. Interview 2019. Mechmoum, M. Interview 2019 and field observations.

²⁸ World Bank Group (2014b)

²⁹ World Economic Forum (2018)

The above means that the population in Ghessate, and particularly women, suffer strong educational limitations to join the labor force or fully comprehend and exercise their rights, as a result of their low literacy skills.

Prior to the construction of the complex, Ghessate had very limited infrastructure to support community development. There was only one high school in the center of the commune, for example. Of the schools providing primary education, 82% had access to sanitary infrastructure and only 14% had access to electricity.³⁰ Furthermore, access to health services and infrastructure was also limited in Ghessate, with only one attending physician working at the community health center. Maternal and infant mortality rates were also very high in the region.³¹

The participation rate of economically active persons was 25% in Ghessate, presenting strong differences in access to the labor market between women (only 6.7%) and men (47.2%).³² The discrepancy between

women's and men's participation rate—with men participating almost 8 times more than women in the labor force—is much larger than the national average, where men participate three times more than women in the labor force, with 78.9% of men of working-age having access to employment while only 26.8% of women of working-age are employed.³³ This places Morocco among the world's lowest 20% of countries for female labor market participation.³⁴ Age also plays an important role in unemployment, with the majority of those without a job being under 35 years old.³⁵

Noting the information above on the existing gender gaps in Morocco and Ghessate, it is important to recognize that the complex has been developed in an environment that poses several challenges when it comes to increasing women's participation and their economic empowerment through the project activities. The sections below will further explore the manner in which the companies have addressed gender gaps in their actions.



Gender mainstreaming in the project cycle

Following the gender mainstreaming approach to the project cycle, and based on the literature and project document review, in conjunction with the key informants' information and insights collected during the field visits and phone interviews, it was possible to identify gender-sensitive practices and actions implemented during the project cycle. The main focus of these practices has been to contribute to reducing gender gaps and to strengthening the integration of gender considerations throughout the project. The sections below identify moments and corresponding elements when the implementing companies took action to strengthen the integration of gender considerations throughout the project cycle.

³⁰ BURGEAP (2011)

³¹ AfDB (2014)

³² BURGEAP (2011)

³³ World Economic Forum (2018)

³⁴ World Bank Group (2018)

³⁵ AfDB (2014)

Design phase

NOOR Ouarzazate is a project co-financed by different international financial institutions, including the Bank and the CTF. Under this construction, the Bank gender and safeguards policies are the main guidance for funded projects, as the CIF's gender strategy, which governs the CTF investments, is subordinated to the Bank's own strategies and is only applied as main framework for assessment when supporting investment plans at national level.

Within this context, even though the Bank did not request the development of a **gender analysis** for the communities in the area of the project, the Bank's policy requires the development of studies and assessments to identify social impacts of the projects it funds. MASEN therefore conducted such an assessment for the work of constructing NOOR Ouarzazate phase I. The assessment was expanded during the design phase, when studies were updated for NOOR Ouarzazate II and III. As an independent power producer (IPP) bidder to the complex, ACWA Power joined the MASEN-led process after the first assessment was conducted.

Environmental and social impact assessments

The NOOR Ouarzazate complex has received two rounds of funding from the AfDB and the CTF. As part of the procedures for the first contract for the construction of NOOR Ouarzazate I, MASEN was required to comply with the **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)** requisites of donor agencies, including the African Development Bank and the World Bank,³⁶ and Law 12-03, which is the national legislation guiding the implementation of ESIA. The first of these studies was a **Framework Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (FESIA)**, conducted in 2010. The FESIA contains relevant social information about Ghesate, the locality of the project, including demographic characteristics, migration patterns, gender roles in agricultural practices, and identification of key infrastructure (or lack thereof) in the region, including schools.³⁷

A **Specific Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (SESIA)** was conducted in 2012 and involved both MASEN and ACWA Power. The SESIA reiterates some of the key gender and social information identified in the ESIA. It further expands on the characteristics of the pastoralist activities and identifies the lack of technical skills as one of the potential bottlenecks for the local population to immediately benefit from the job opportunities that would arise from the construction of the solar complex.³⁸ This is an important difference with the ESIA of 2010, where such constraints had not been identified, showing an increase in understanding of the social context of the communities in Ghesate.

The SESIA includes the identification of mitigation measures for potentially negative impacts, including seeking to employ local workers and offering training to enhance the development of skills within the local workforce. Additionally, by this time MASEN had already purchased the land where the complex was to be constructed. As part of those negotiations, the company had already agreed to several compensation mechanisms, including shouldering the costs for construction of a new road and other mitigation actions included in the SESIA.³⁹

The **FESIA was updated in 2014** as a consequence of the process for securing the second lending contract for the construction



³⁶ Policies include the AfDB Environment Policy of 2004, the Involuntary Resettlement Policy of 2003, the Gender policy of 2001 and the Policy and Guidelines on Cooperation with Civil Society Organizations of 2001; and the WB Environmental Assessment and Involuntary Resettlement of Persons. As per AfDB (2010) Summary Environmental and Social Assessment.

³⁷ BURGEAP (2011)

³⁸ 5 Capitals (2012a).

³⁹ Idem

of the NOOR Ouarzazate II and III CSP sites. The report builds on the socio-economic and demographic data identified in 2010, expanding on some key gender and social information, such as access to health care centers and physicians, and women's and men's participation rates in the labor market. Moreover, this assessment is used to report on key implementation milestones relevant to gender and social inclusion actions (see section on Implementation).⁴⁰

The updated ESIA reiterates the positive benefits the construction of the complex will bring to the rural electrification programs, and its contribution to ensuring connections for the social groups that tend to be excluded from these services, hence reducing the isolation of some regions. The report further reiterates that women will benefit from improved energy access, which will allow them to engage in new economic activities.⁴¹

Elaboration of the project document

In accordance with Moroccan legislation and with the requisites of the lending banks, a series of **public consultations** were conducted during the design of the project and in accordance with the procedures outlined for the FESIA preparation. These meetings included:

- First public consultation to introduce the project concept (November 3rd, 2010)
- Meeting with the CNEIE to discuss the framework of the ESIA (December 10th, 2010)
- Public enquiry for the FESIA (September 2011)
- A presentation of the ESIA framework and environmental acceptability given to the CNEIE (February 22nd, 2012)
- Second public consultation to provide an update of the ESIA framework (March 6th, 2012)
- MASEN presented results of the FESIA (April 24th, 2012)

Moreover, MASEN and ACWA Power carried out an additional consultation

on November 2nd, 2012, to share the ESIA results for the NOOR Ouarzazate I project. The meeting was held in Arabic and French, and 40 people attended.⁴² During these consultations, stakeholders were mainly concerned or asked about employment generation, land acquisition, specific environmental impacts (on cattle, electromagnetic fields, etc.) and water (scarcity).⁴³

Furthermore, a public consultation was held on June 9th, 2014, at the headquarters of Ghesate rural council in Ouarzazate during the update of the FESIA study for the whole NOOR Ouarzazate complex, to: (i) inform stakeholders about the results of the updated FESIA; (ii) present the project status (including common and related infrastructures, such as roads, electricity, water and other infrastructure); and, (iii) answer the questions of various participants, and gather their views, questions, objections and proposals on these changes. The meeting was attended by the President of Ghesate Rural Council, the naibs or representatives of the community lands, representatives of the communities in the douars of Ghesate municipality, representatives of Ouarzazate province, and representatives of MASEN.⁴⁴

MASEN personnel reports that women were also part of community consultations and information sharing in Ouarzazate. This was affirmed by some of the women engaged in training and income generation activities interviewed during the field visit to Ouarzazate under this assignment.

The project development also included a **Construction Environmental and Social Management Plan (CESMP)** as part of the requirements of the lending development banks. The CESMP sums up the mitigative and compensatory measures to be instituted under the complex. It outlines the different roles and responsibilities of team members, identifying the Project Director as the person responsible for delivering actions on environmental and social management requirements.⁴⁶ **Placing this responsibility at the highest level of management** is important, as it confers strong authority to the guidance on social and environmental aspects, increasing the likelihood of such actions to be implemented by the project staff.

⁴⁰ AfDB (2014a)

⁴¹ AfDB (2014b)

⁴² AfDB (2012c)

⁴³ Lakhssasi, M. Interview, February (2019)

⁴⁴ AfDB (2014)

⁴⁵ AfDB (2010)

⁴⁶ 5 Capitals (2012c)

As each power plant requires a CESMP, new management plans were developed in 2015, as part of the process for constructing NOOR Ouarzazate II and NOOR Ouarzazate III. The plans reiterate the commitments from the implementing companies to mitigate the impacts of the construction of the complex and similarly provide important attention to job creation and skills development as appropriate tools to increase benefits for the local workforce. In this version of the CESMP, there is also special attention to encourage the recruitment of women and disadvantaged groups (e.g. disabled people).⁴⁷

Implementation phase

MASEN selects developers for the plants through a competitive tender process in accordance with international procurement rules. On 2012, the consortium led by ACWA Power was awarded the NOOR Ouarzazate I CSP project, and in 2015, another consortium led by the same company was awarded the contract for NOOR Ouarzazate II and III. MASEN acts as a lender to finance the project debt by providing concessional loans to the project companies, in this case ACWA Power. It also acts as an off-taker and shareholder of the project companies. Under this construction, 80% of each project is financed by debt as mentioned above and 20% by equity (from ACWA Power and MASEN).

Under the public private partnership agreement for constructing and managing the NOOR Ouarzazate complex, it is

important to note that activities by MASEN and ACWA Power are closely related. For example, a company is created for each power plant, with MASEN sitting on the supervisory board of each project company – ACWA Power Ouarzazate I, ACWA Power Ouarzazate II, and ACWA Power Ouarzazate III. Moreover, MASEN holds shares in each of the companies –25% for ACWA Power Ouarzazate I and III and 20% for ACWA Power Ouarzazate II.

Meanwhile, as project developer, ACWA Power has signed contracts with two EPC consortiums, the first of which involved three companies for NOOR Ouarzazate I (Acciona, TSK and Sener) ,while the second contract involved two companies for NOOR Ouarzazate II and III (SEPCO III and Sener).⁴⁸

Under this construction, ACWA Power and the EPC consortium are the main responsables for implementing the actions under the SESIA and approving all procedures, including hiring of personnel, monitoring implementation of mitigation measures through environmental protection, and the development of reporting templates. MASEN, in turn, is responsible for monitoring and follow up of these actions, which is done in coordination with the project developer and the EPC consortium.⁴⁹

The sections below will therefore refer both to gender mainstreaming practices and actions implemented by both companies, highlighting cooperation and making distinctions in their actions when it is possible to identify these as being distinct from one another.



⁴⁷ World Bank (2015b)

⁴⁸ Benjelloun, A. Interview (2019)

⁴⁹ Lakhssassi, M. Interview, January, 2019.

Institutional level

One of the key elements for ensuring **gender equality** is the existence of institutional policies that call for the achievement of such an objective. When interviewing personnel from MASEN and ACWA Power, members of both companies mentioned these policies do not exist. However, all of the interviewees were adamant in their response that gender equality is part of their respective **corporate culture** and that there is mandate that the companies make no difference between women and men, either as employees or as project beneficiaries. As reported, gender equality is a conviction and this message is **strongly emphasized by the highest levels of management**.⁵⁰

The implementing companies, MASEN and ACWA Power, comply with the national labor laws and recognize their employees have equal rights. Moreover, as per the **CESMP actions**, these companies are called to ensure appropriate labor conditions, ranging from compliance with norms from the International Labor Organization (ILO), to provision of workers' accommodation, social and health facilities in line with international good practice, and promotion of fair treatment, non-discrimination and equal opportunity of workers.⁵¹

Recruiting women to work in the plant is difficult. For one, the energy sector remains male oriented, making the number of women in the pipeline less than that of their male counterparts. Additionally, women's education rates in Ghessate are low, and traditional roles dictate that they are expected to stay in and work within the household.⁵² As an illustration, 1,409 people were recruited for NOOR Ouarzazate I, including 587 persons (42%) from the region. From the total number of persons recruited, only 35 were women, of which 25 were Moroccan. The women in the plant work mainly in supporting roles (i.e., in the kitchen or cleaning the facilities), with few of them working as engineers.

Both companies have **HR policies** that support recruitment based on achievements and qualifications of applicants, making it possible to attract both women and men as staff. In addition, both companies report following Moroccan labor law when it comes to maternity leave and other employment

benefits. The equal treatment of women was confirmed through the interviews conducted, with women mentioning they had access to the same benefits as their male counterparts (e.g., linked to relocation, annual bonuses, holidays, access to sporting facilities, transport to the plant, etc.), and that they felt their treatment was equal to that of their male counterparts.

In the case of MASEN, the company has a **women's group** that supports different initiatives, such as charities and the organization of a marathon, and its staff mention their impression that there are more women working in MASEN than in other companies working in the energy sector.

ACWA Power encourages the EPCs it works with to promote gender equality when filling in new positions, which other EPCs seem to be taking on board. For example, SEPCO III, the EPC working on NOOR Ouarzazate II and III, encourages the National Agency for Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC; the government's entity acting as intermediary between the companies and the people being recruited,) to include women in their proposal for new positions. SEPCO's HR manager also requested at times for only women to be presented as candidates, particularly when the job description does not require previous labor experience. This is, however, harder to do when openings are for specialized jobs, where candidates need to have specific experience. At the time of this assignment, out of the 596 employees at SEPCO III, 40 were women who work on the site, including as mechanical or electric engineers.⁵⁴

Notably, as the construction process comes to a close and the company reduces its staff, these women whose capacities and skills have been improved thanks to investment made in them by the company, are able to find new job opportunities, with a large number of them being reported to have found other placements in large companies after leaving NOOR Ouarzazate.⁵⁵

Additionally, women are finding jobs in other non-traditional roles; for example, HGC Security has two women as part of its 200 security personnel. Despite that this job is typically considered hard on women because they need to be out (in a difficult terrain) all day, the two women hired are

⁵⁰ Mouddeh, T. Interview, 2019 and Benjelloun, A. Interview 2019

⁵¹ World Bank (2015b)

⁵² Lakhssassi, M. Interview, January, 2019.

⁵³ Benjelloun, A. Interview, 2019

⁵⁴ Agoujdani, K. Interview, 2019

⁵⁵ Idem

from Ouarzazate and had no previous experience in such jobs; they were trained, just like the men were trained (here, the men also had no experience in this type of activity).⁵⁶

Both organizations have developed their own **CSR policies**, with the aim of developing projects that can benefit the population in the location of their infrastructure plants, as NOOR Ouarzazate is not the only power plant they are implementing. Gender equality is part of the company's culture and permeates their CSR policies.⁵⁷ During the individual interviews, different representatives of both companies expressed strong beliefs in the positive social impact of their work and their desire to ensure both women and men benefited from their actions.

Although both companies have different approaches and priorities under their CSR actions, they collaborate on activities, and this normally means they fund activities in equal amounts. This is the case of, for example, the yearly medical caravans and summer camps. Other projects, those that do not fall under the individually set pillars of intervention, will be taken up independently by each of the companies. Decisions for collaboration on local development happens both in Ouarzazate and Rabat, as both companies report having good collaboration and relationship among their staff in the field and in head offices.⁵⁸

As per the CESMP, the companies were expected to identify a **person responsible for implementing CSR activities**. Both companies have a local representative in Ouarzazate for this function, who serve as the official communication channel with the communities in Ouarzazate. Both persons, a woman and a man, have long experience working with communities, one of them having also experience working particularly with women in previous postings.⁵⁹

Outreach and relationship with the community members

The community development activities implemented by MASEN and ACWA Power

are **funded directly by the companies** from their equity contributions. These activities are not linked to the loan from the development banks, as such expenses are non-eligible under the loan conditions.⁶⁰ Both companies have identified education, agriculture and health as key areas of intervention in Ghesate and collaborate closely on those actions.⁶¹

The **identification of CSR activities** with a gender or women-only component is **done in a participatory manner**. For example, the target areas for support have been identified as a result of the initial consultations around the project. Later on, the companies, through their community development representatives in Ouarzazate, have been able to highlight and follow up with development project ideas to solve the expressed needs of women and men in the community.

ACWA Power holds its own studies, with the help of social development experts, and collaborates with the local authorities to join local consultations and community meetings. After determining key areas of interest by the communities, the company organizes follow-up meetings with local authorities to validate the priorities and expectations identified by the communities during the consultations.⁶²

As of 2018, MASEN developed a call for proposals system under which local associations can put forward their project ideas. The **proposal evaluation criteria included gender** elements, specifically for example to assess whether or not there are women in the board of the associations. Half of the proposals obtained either had women on the board of the associations behind the proposal or were women's associations.⁶³ As of 2019, MASEN will have additional evaluation criteria to further refine the social targeting and activities of the projects, including ensuring women's access to and participation in the funded project activities. The new criteria also take into account benefiting children and people with disabilities.⁶⁴

Initiatives to improve the lives of women, and men, have targeted different levels of intervention to **solve reproductive, productive and strategic needs**. For example, as part of its CSR activities,

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ In the case of ACWA Power, they roll out its yearly CSR plan each December and their goal is to reach 50% female and 50% male beneficiaries.

⁵⁸ Taoufik, K. Interview, March (2019)

⁵⁹ The MASEN team in Rabat includes two men and three women, while the ACWA Power team is comprised of two men in the Rabat offices.

⁶⁰ Taobane, N. Interview (2019)

⁶¹ MASEN further identifies infrastructure (roads, electricity supply and drinkable water), sports and socio-cultural activities as regular areas of intervention under its CSR policy.

⁶² Benjelloun, A. Interview (2019)

⁶³ Mouden, T. Interview (2019)

⁶⁴ Hamdouch, F. Interview (2019)

MASEN financed 50% of drinking water provision for the community, which is now supported by the use of water pumps within the households. This intervention has directly benefited women, not only freeing time during the day but also reducing the amount of weight they have to carry, which positively impacts their health, too.

Ghessate is mainly an agrarian community, where traditional norms dictate much of the roles women and men play in this context. The companies have developed a series of strategies to **improve the productive activities of both women and men in the region**; however, in this report, attention is paid to those interventions targeting women.⁶⁵ For example, women and men receive theoretical and practical training to improve sheep rearing. Coaches visit the beneficiary families on a daily basis to check if old habits are being let go and improved techniques adopted. A total of 400 women benefit from this intervention.

The new sheep rearing techniques enhance the animals' health, thus adding value, as their price has increased. These women have a good reputation as livestock handlers, and customers go now directly to the women to buy the sheep, making a middle-person no longer necessary.⁶⁶

Women are in charge of growing spices and vegetables within the households. Training to improve production is therefore provided only to women. Improved agricultural techniques include the use of grooves to optimize the use of water in agriculture and improve the quality of products. Women have increased their agricultural yields and are able to sell them to an intermediary. This person buys the vegetables in advance and brings them to the market. The project in charge of the agricultural capacity development activities, advances the money to transport the products to the markets through a "revolving fund". This arrangement saves money and time, as the women are able to sell in volume and reduce the number of trips needed to the market.⁶⁷

Handicraft production is another **economic activity women** can traditionally engage in. A training course was organized in 2015, where 30 women received 5-6 months of training on handicraft production

(i.e., sewing). The training was held at the Traditional Art Institute in Ouarzazate and was implemented through a partnership agreement signed between ACWA Power and the Ministry of Handicraft. At the end of the training, 15 women decided to create a cooperative. The women in the cooperative have also received training on accounting and management. The training was conducted in their workshop, to ease their travel and facilitate attendance.⁶⁸

The cooperative produces a variety of products for the local market and its members are exploring partnerships with local actors to increase their business. Their workshop is on a location donated to them by the president of their community and ACWA Power subsidizes the bus that transports them to the workshop. The women are also supported by the company to attend different handicraft markets/fairs to present their products.

Women in the region do not tend to work outside of the household. They are typically mothers of large numbers of children and need to take care of them, particularly before they are of school age, limiting the possibility of working outside of the household. For these reasons, MASEN and ACWA Power have supported a pre-school **day care facility**, allowing women to work on different products, such as carpet weaving, handicraft, catering.⁶⁹

The CSR activities of the companies have also increased women's and men's **access to services** in Ghessate and Ouarzazate. For example, before the complex was built, there was only a small health post with one doctor and one nurse available to attend the whole of Ghessate. The health post had no obstetric and gynecology service, and women needed to travel about 45 minutes by taxi/car to receive **check-ups during pregnancy**. ACWA Power has established a health center that has an ultrasound unit, which the doctor has been trained to use. The center also has a blood testing unit, for conducting basic tests, diminishing the need to travel to the city for check-ups. Moreover, it donated two ambulances to the community, to facilitate access to health services.

Additionally, there are two ambulances that can transport patients to a clinic in

⁶⁵ For example, almond trees and palm trees for dates are typically tendered by the men. Interventions here are meant to support men to improve their techniques. Through this support, almond production increased from an average of 4-6 kg per tree per year to more than 20 kg per tree per year, more than doubling the earnings. Moreover, producers are hired as assistants by the company that trains them, so they can have an income while they learn good agricultural practices. (Interviews with Abdelmajid Benjelloun and Mustapha Mechmoum; 2019)

⁶⁶ Field notes, January (2019)

⁶⁷ Field notes, April (2019)

⁶⁸ Idem.

⁶⁹ Hamdouch, F. and Taoufik, K. Interview, February (2019)

Ouarzazate when needed. The companies also support annual medical caravans, which include ophthalmology and pediatric check-ups. As of 2019, women in the communities will be trained on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid. This will be done in cooperation with the Red Crescent, to provide first aid techniques to operators.

Illiteracy, particularly among women, is a big problem in Ghesate, as mentioned above. Adult women, now have time to attend **women-only adult literacy programs**. The women attending the classes learn to read and write in Arabic and seem to be very enthusiastic.⁷⁰ They are taught in the mosque by a local woman who has a higher level of education than the rest.

The companies also invest in different manners to increase **access to education by school-aged children, particularly girls**. In Ghesate, children need to walk on average 4-5 km a day (back and forth) to attend the nearby schools. This is hard for children, particularly when it is cold, dark, and rainy. Parents of girls are concerned about their safety when they travel to school, a fear that increases as the girls grow up.

There are several reasons for girls to drop out of school, though these are strongly related to the financial costs of sending them—with parents not seeing the worth of investing in their girls, who they may marry at an early age.⁷¹ Additionally, parents fear their daughters walking to school or the situation that may result if they stay with people they do not know in the city, as their reputation may be compromised. To combat some of these elements, a **boarding school for girls** has been built. Increasing the possibility for further education, girls can spend the weekdays there and then return home to their families over the weekend.⁷²

Furthermore, the companies have supported **improvements in schools' infrastructure**, for example improving sanitation/toilets, which improves the hygiene of these centers and has a positive impact on girls' school attendance—commonly an issue when sanitary facilities are unavailable/lacking after reaching the age of menstruation. ACWA Power and

MASEN have donated school buses, so that children can have access to transport and attend school.

MASEN also has a program to support attendance of young women and men to higher education. At the time of the interviews, it was reported that MASEN supports 20 outstanding students from different regions in Morocco with full scholarships. Ten of these students are from Ouarzazate, half of whom are women.⁷³ Furthermore, the companies support special summer and holiday camps targeting school age girls and boys. Through these camps, children have the opportunity to travel outside of Ouarzazate (i.e. to Agadir, Mohammedia, Casablanca, Marrakech, the beach, etc.), giving them a broader view of the country and the context in which they live. Although there were initial fears from parents, these have been overcome and now girls and boys attend the camps with the consent of their parents.

Monitoring and evaluation

The main objective for the development of NOOR Ouarzazate is to provide Morocco's national grid with electricity generated from solar power. According to the project documents, when the number of direct beneficiaries is measured, it is assumed that electricity customers are actually households, whose gender composition is similar to that of the national average of men to women in the population.⁷⁴ This is standard practice, and yet does not afford the project the opportunity to identify if it is meeting specific households' or consumers' unique needs, such as those of women-headed households.

Reporting to the lending institutions is done through a sole supervision visit to the project, on a six-month basis. The social and environmental aspects of the report are presented in a separate session where activities are presented for the whole of NOOR Ouarzazate.⁷⁵ Activities are reported based on the guidance provided in the CESMP, which calls, for example, to report for the number of local population employed in the project to be monitored, using a ratio of local to immigrant labor, when reporting employment data. The CESMP does not

⁷⁰ One of the women said they wanted to learn until she died. Field notes, January (2019)

⁷¹ Hassoune, B. Interview, April (2019); Field notes, April (2019)

⁷² Moussa, A. Interview (2019)

⁷³ Taoufik, K. Interview, March (2019)

⁷⁴ World Bank (2014a)

⁷⁵ Moussa, A. Interview (2019)

mention the need to disaggregate this monitoring in a sex-disaggregated manner, as the assessments have not included a specific target for increasing women's participation in the work force.⁷⁶

In spite of the above, the companies have included sex-disaggregated data on their labor force composition when reporting to the lending banks. For example, as mentioned earlier, from the 1,409 persons recruited for NOOR Ouarzazate I, 35 were women (25 of whom were Moroccan nationals).⁷⁷ Meanwhile, 2018 data shows that 70 local women were employed directly by the project, holding a wide range of positions within the CSP plant, ranging from catering, administration, and quality control to health and safety, welding, and topography. Women also made up about 10 percent of the operations and maintenance staff (7 women).⁷⁸ Most recently, the Status & Results Report on NOOR Ouarzazate presents labor data disaggregated by site with women accounting for 13% of the 70 workers on NOOR Ouarzazate I site and 3% of the 709 workers on NOOR Ouarzazate II site. No disaggregated data is presented for the workforce in NOOR Ouarzazate III in the report.⁷⁹

The CESMP further calls for a monitoring of the environmental and social impacts and calls for the establishment of a grievance procedure. In this sense, MASEN is responsible for establishing the requisites for community engagement, while the ACWA Power as developer, is responsible for defining the methodology and for undertaking the monitoring of activities. When monitoring visits are conducted, MASEN's social development team

accompanies the monitoring team from ACWA Power to remain informed of the process and information collected.⁸⁰

In addition, MASEN organizes annual internal monitoring missions to the local areas. These are important to increase the credibility of their work, boost reflections on the processes and understand the impacts of the company's CSR actions. Information on CSR project beneficiaries is kept in a database; however, its sex disaggregation is not always possible, as it depends on the type of project—for example it is possible to know how many girls and boys are supported through education projects but it is harder to track the number of attendees to a cultural or social event in a disaggregated manner.⁸¹ During the latest monitoring visit by the African Development Bank, in March 2019, MASEN reported having implemented 129 community development activities for NOOR Ouarzazate between 2010 and 2018, reaching a total of 64,837 direct and indirect beneficiaries.⁸²

ACWA Power also tracks the number of projects and amounts invested in their CSR activities. According to their records, they have spent about US\$3 million in CSR projects in Ouarzazate, between 2013-2018, with an average of US\$ 650-700,000 per year. A list of initiatives, disaggregated by sector and beneficiaries, has been put together recently, for supporting the development of an impact study in 2019.⁸³ ACWA Power also presented its CSR activities in March 2019, as part of the African Development Bank's monitoring mission. Perhaps the most salient of its elements being a recent identification of impacts on women's lives as identified through the W+ Standard,⁸⁴ including 400 women benefiting from livestock component, showing an increase of 66.6% income per women over the period of 24 months.⁸⁵

Internal grievance procedures that address HR complaints presented by staff working in the complex are dealt with and monitored by the respective companies.⁸⁶ Grievances by members of the local community are directed to MASEN, as per the CESMP. The complaints are recorded and included in the periodic reports to the lending banks; the reporting also covers the actions taken to address them.⁸⁷

⁷⁶ World Bank (2015b)

⁷⁷ AfDB (2014)

⁷⁸ IEG Review Team (2018)

⁷⁹ Cherif, M. (2019)

⁸⁰ Interview Lakhssassi, M. Interview, January (2019)

⁸¹ Taoufik, K. Interview, March (2019)

⁸² MASEN (2019)

⁸³ Benjelloun, A. Interview (2019)

⁸⁴ W+ Standard at: <https://www.wplus.org/>

⁸⁵ ACWA Power (2019b)

⁸⁶ Taoufik, K. Interview (2019)

⁸⁷ AfDB (2014)



Lessons learned

Project level

Design phase

When MASEN approached the development of NOOR Ouarzazate, the first solar complex construction it would oversee in Morocco, the company realized it had to comply with different sets of safeguards and with national legislation as well as the requisites from different lending institutions.⁸⁸ The company took then the decision to identify the most stringent elements of each institutional requirement and build those into the internal guidelines that were under development at the time.⁸⁹ This proactively including gender elements.

For example, in Morocco, infrastructure projects are only required to hold a public survey, where all stakeholders can write their comments on proposals in a book. MASEN has added a step for **public consultations to overcome illiteracy and other barriers to participation** from local women and men, including:⁹⁰

- providing communities with non-technical summaries of the project (using understandable language);
- facilitating translation (Arab, Amazigh [Berber], French);
- supporting transport to the location of the consultation by making buses available to the local stakeholders;
- providing lunch to make sure women do not have to excuse themselves to tend to these tasks when meetings are organized between 9:30 or 10:00 am and 1:00 pm.

Although the consultation in itself is not conducted with gender-responsive methodologies, the stakeholder engagement plan is developed based on inputs of focus groups (with women, youth, etc.). Additionally, vulnerable groups are identified during the consultation process and given additional information, to ensure they are aware and understand the implications of the project. Four good practices are implemented by MASEN to ensure **appropriate outreach to vulnerable groups**.⁹¹

- Ensure clear and realistic information is shared with regards to assistance from and expectations of the project;
- Plan specific meetings for women to attend;
- Share information with illiterate people by way of pictures, videos, photos, to have better understanding; and
- Possibility of oral communications (movies, for example) while using Amazigh language –adapt communication channel to one language.

NOOR Ouarzazate was the first example of holding a participatory consultation process, hosted by MASEN; it involved women's participation during the consultation and information-sharing processes. A series of studies by consultants were conducted to support gender work and increase women's participation. The social and economic studies undertaken at the moment included terms of reference that valued women and called for the identification of jobs or income generation opportunities for women.⁹²

⁸⁸ Donor requisites assessed included those by WB, EBRD, KFW, IFC, AFD, AfDB. These were synthesized into the Masen guidelines and modified to the Moroccan context. IFC performance 5 and WB 0.12 safeguards.

⁸⁹ Taobane, N. and Lakhssassi, M. Interviews, January (2019)

⁹⁰ Lakhssassi, M. Interview, January (2019)

⁹¹ Lakhssassi, M. Interview, February (2019)

⁹² Moudden, T. Interview (2019)

MASEN's environmental and social guidelines, including those set into place to ensure women's participation, are applicable to all of its infrastructure projects. They are also cross-cutting to all elements of the project, guiding internal action as well as those external to the company, e.g., the bidding process, which now includes these **gender relevant requisites as part of the identification of project developers through an IPP process**. In this manner, developers are required to identify and comply with the gender, social and environmental requisites established by MASEN since the beginning of their activities.⁹³

Implementation phase

Both companies' staff and stakeholders reflect positively on the CSR activities implemented in Ghessate, reporting important changes in women's attitudes in short time. They also report women having a stronger sense of ownership over the projects they are involved in; that they are less submissive to men, speaking up even in the presence of men;⁹⁴ and that they are more emancipated than in 2012.⁹⁵

The companies also report seeing differences in the requests for support from women and men, showing differences in community values and personal goals—information the companies can employ in their strategies. For example interviews note that men seek support for their continued growth in the energy value chain, meaning once they have the opportunity to join the energy labor market, they then leave the site to look for opportunities elsewhere. Women, on the other hand, ask for investments in infrastructure and education; their requests are longer-term and community-focused; even when asking for support for income-generation activities, they look for added value for rural development.⁹⁶

NOOR Ouarzazate has proven to be a learning opportunity for engaging with local communities not only for MASEN (section above) but also for ACWA Power. The site has been used as a pilot for CSR dimension and, as it has been seen as successful, the same approach is being used for different

infrastructure projects in the country. ACWA Power is also showcasing the wide success achieved in Morocco; showcasing Ouarzazate as an example of how they approach good CSR practices.⁹⁷

MASEN highly values experience working with women, as emphasized through the interviews, as it is that experience that teaches people how important it is to take women's roles and considerations into account. It is this experience that makes it possible to understand and change social patterns.⁹⁸ Job creation for women during and after construction of the complex was difficult, as women are traditionally not involved in civil works. In the project area, in particular, women and men do not work together; this is not customary. Women who worked in the plant during that time were mainly working on cleaning or providing food. When asked to reflect on future projects, the representative from the lending institutions suggested future projects could be done so that women in the neighboring communities can be trained to engage in economic activities around the plant's construction, through the provision of services such as washing clothes or cooking, and being the providers of the vegetables (tomatoes), butter, oil, etc., used to prepare the food for the construction crews.⁹⁹



⁹³ Lakhssasi, M. Interview, February (2019)

⁹⁴ Benjelloun, A. Interview (2019)

⁹⁵ Moudden, T. Interview (2019)

⁹⁶ Idem.

⁹⁷ Benjelloun, A. Interview (2019)

⁹⁸ Hamdouch, F. and Taoufik, K. Interview, February (2019)

⁹⁹ Moussa, A. Interview, 2019.

Boosting women's participation in the energy sector can be achieved through different interventions, which may include either direct HR actions or longer term approaches. Implementation has demonstrated that it is possible for HR managers to increase the number of female candidates for a job posting, either by directly asking ANAPEC to include women as candidates or by targeting women recruits for posts or activities where these women can be trained on the post. Other options, such as investing in scholarships for women to join technical trainings required for working in the energy sector, could be supported by MASEN and ACWA Power with a longer-term vision.

NOOR Ouarzazate has allowed MASEN to test and clarify its own development goals. As reported by the company, the goal to target local women and men to benefit from the new employment opportunities and to establish procedures for supporting local development was the company's idea, not a recommendation from the financing institutions. Additionally, MASEN has developed its own approach to funding social and community activities, which differ from those of the financing institutions or donors, seeking to address not the pre-identified areas of investment¹⁰⁰ but those chosen as priorities by the communities.

MASEN is very vocal about conducting local consultation processes that include women and the involvement of their social

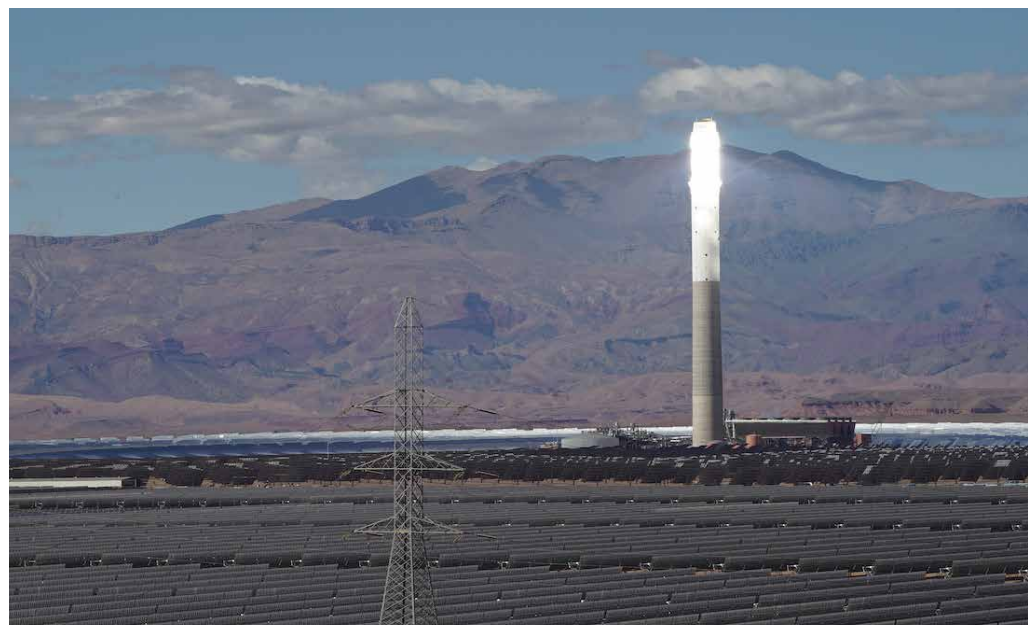
development specialist, in linking the local needs with the authorities both in Ouarzazate and in Rabat. The company is also adding new tools, which increasingly strengthen gender considerations, to the participatory approach with communities. One of these tools is the development of a call for proposals process, intended to increase the capacity of the women and men in Ghesate to identify their development priorities and secure funding on their own, supporting ownership of ideas and, in the long-term, increasing the sustainability of actions.¹⁰¹

At least one of the companies mentioned that the implementation process had shown disconnect between the requisites of the lending banks and the reality on the ground, for example when dealing with complaints. The complaint procedure developed under the requisites of the lending banks involves receipt of written complaints. The formality of the process means that in a community such as Ghesate, with high illiteracy rates particularly among women, the opportunities to present complaints are likely diminished. In reality what happens is that a parallel complaint process exists, with the women and men from the communities directly reaching out to the social development representative, who follows up and resolves any complaints put forward by the community members.¹⁰² This is yet another example of a context-specific enabler put in place by the company.

¹⁰⁰ MASEN has identified that donor agencies tend to invest as per their predefined areas of interest –i.e. energy efficiency for German donors or education for the World Bank— without coordinating among themselves or further inquiring the communities if these investments are the most useful in the long-term.

¹⁰¹ Mouden, T. Interview, 2019.

¹⁰² Idem.



Normative frameworks from lending institutions

The frameworks and requirements of lending institutions are important tools for guiding the manner in which projects address gender considerations. For example, in the case of the African Development Bank, its gender policy encourages projects to conduct gender analysis as part of their baseline or project design phase, although this is not compulsory. On the other hand, ESIA's are compulsory, but if their implementation is not gender-responsive, there is a risk that gender and social norms that affect women's and men's access to resources and benefits may be overlooked. The lack of information may then affect the type of mitigative or benefit-sharing activities designed and implemented, as they will be based on assumptions which do not reflect the cultural and social context of the project.

Promising practices

This project review identified a number of promising practices for key aspects of effective gender mainstreaming that may be considered for replication and/or scaling up in other IPPs or large-scale energy infrastructure projects, based specifically on the actions undertaken in NOOR Ouarzazate related to CSR activities and labor composition of the EPCs involved. Worth noting, the review does not delve into gender-specific strategies or practices related to the project's main objective of increasing the amount of electricity generated through solar-based power being transmitted over the national grid, nor its reach to specific target users/consumers, as gender-responsive actions were not identified or carried out in relation to this.¹⁰³

In order to ensure gender-responsive actions and outcomes, a set of enabling conditions need to be encouraged and embedded. At institutional level, for example, the implementing companies or governmental entities require an approach that strengthens their institutional culture for promoting gender equality. This means policies and strategies to promote gender equity in place across the organization, which are then accompanied by concrete actions; for example, establishing procedures to ensure the voices of women and men are properly heard and their concerns addressed through development actions, and setting HR rules into place to avoid discrimination against women (and others who may be in a typically more marginalized or underrepresented position) in the labor force.

Another enabling condition is to ensure that when a project is developed, including gender considerations related to policies, participation and inclusiveness throughout the process as a whole is necessary. This means conducting a context-specific gender

assessment, ensuring the identification of activities that contribute to reducing gender gaps, determining gender indicators and gathering gender information and data along the process, and allocating and distributing sufficient funds for implementation.

During the design phase of a large-scale energy project, it is important to conduct a gender assessment in the communities located in the project site. A gender analysis is a systematic approach that helps to identify gender-related risks and opportunities, constraints, social norms and beliefs, and patterns of power and decision-making. In relation to environment-sector projects, gender analyses should also look particularly at access, control, benefits and priorities related to natural resources. The gender analysis should provide recommendations to enable having the appropriate mechanisms to carry out gender-responsive¹⁰⁴ project activities narrowing gender gaps and improving the lives of the women and men in the communities. This approach aims to avoid, or at least proactively reduce, the possibility of having contradictory information in the initial stages of the project document—for example mentioning women and men will benefit equally from the implementation of the energy complex, while local data shows high illiteracy rates, particularly among women, and strong traditional roles that may, in reality, hinder women's participation in and benefits derived the energy sector value chain.

In project implementation, where different EPCs work together, it is important to ensure coordination between implementers. This is true both for the gender relevant CSR actions as well as for the internal HR procedures. In the case of NOOR Ouarzazate, there is a wealth of knowledge in terms of recruitment and retention of women staff that could

¹⁰³ To achieve gender targeted results from replacing fossil-fuel based generated electricity with solar generated electricity, special actions would have had to be set into place to guide or increase access of women to the grid. For example, by additionally presenting special subsidies for female-headed households to connect to the national grid, expanding access to the grid in far-to-reach areas with special targets on vulnerable or female headed households, or supporting women to exchange their old and inefficient appliances for new/modern ones, reducing their electricity bills and therefore positively affecting family budgets.

¹⁰⁴ Gender-responsive means that particular needs, priorities, and realities of men and women are recognized and adequately addressed in all project phases so that both men and women can equally benefit.

be further strengthened by encouraging exchanges between HR managers of the different EPCs and the identification of common good practices.

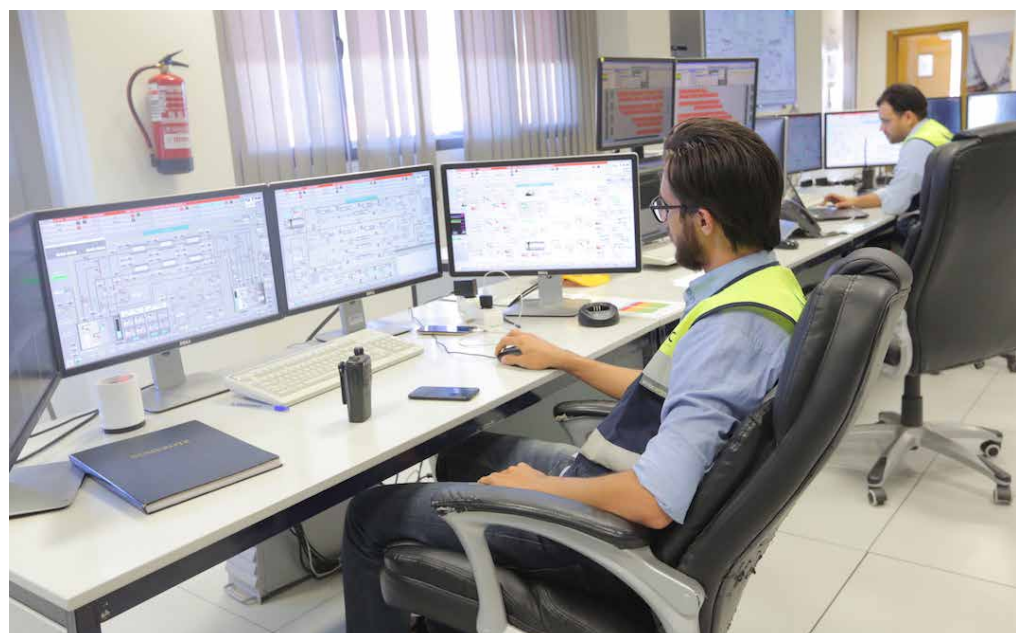
Furthermore, the coordinated approach shown by MASEN and ACWA Power, where actions are not duplicated but rather co-funded when these align with the targets of both organizations, means that the amount of resources available for local development can be used in an efficient and effective manner. Moreover, the day-to-day coordination between the social development specialists of both companies, and the constant communication with the women and men of the communities, ensures a good flow of information and understanding of the needs and aspirations of women and men in Ghessate.

Respect for and understanding of the local context is also important for replicating actions. Ghessate is a very traditional community, where the roles of women and men are difficult to change in the short term; MASEN and ACWA Power have chosen to work within the boundaries of these social norms to identify development opportunities appropriated to the context they find themselves in. At the same time, these companies are further highlighting interventions to increase access to education by girls and boys. These actions

may, in due time, encourage changes in social norms to increase women's equality in Ghessate.

The implementation of the gender actions in projects requires dedicated funding. It is a good practice to allocate budget for the project to support activities promoting gender equality and equity. If the funds are not allocated or the implementing project company does not have funds to implement specific actions, the gender mainstreaming process will be adversely impacted and delayed. MASEN and ACWA Power have demonstrated that funds are not only allocated, but distributed as such.

Finally, progress can only be understood if tracked in a sex-disaggregated manner, as a minimum. Looking into the activities implemented by MASEN and ACWA Power, as well as building on literature reports and the experience of the consultants involved in this assignment, a series of indicators are suggested as an indication of the different results large-scale energy infrastructure projects can have and how these can be tracked in a gender-responsive manner. These indicators can be found in Annex 3 and can support the work of African Development Bank gender and monitoring and evaluation specialists when reviewing and suggesting gender indicators to energy related projects.



Conclusions

In the process of developing good practices and tools to mainstream gender into the project, MASEN and ACWA Power have created an enabling environment to strengthen their gender equality strategies and outcomes through the institutionalization of gender considerations into the companies' policies and actions. The strong support of management for gender equality has contributed to the establishment of institutional cultures where women and men feel indeed treated as equals, and where opportunities are provided to both, based on their professional skills and qualities and not their gender.

These institutional cultures have also made a mark in the approach to the local communities, where consultations and engagement with women and men—both during the design phase as well as through implementation—ensure a good understanding of the needs and aspirations of the community of Ghessate. This open communication also allows for complaints and concerns to be addressed in a prompt manner, reducing the risk of misunderstandings or conflicts with the local community.

The inclusion of gender considerations in the project document contributes to guide gender mainstreaming throughout project implementation. These have been expanded through implementation, with additional actions being identified, increasing the potential for reporting benefits by further developing sex-disaggregated indicators and targets to inform and guide strategic implementation activities that improve women's wellbeing, support their income-generation activities or increase access to fundamental services, such as related education and health, which in turn increase gender equality outcomes—together with wellbeing outcomes for whole communities.



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List of annexes

Annex 1. Gender analysis through the project cycle

PROJECT CYCLE	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Design phase	
1. Gender analysis and equal participation of women and men prior to proposal development	<p>Were the differential needs of women and men addressed in the design of the project?</p> <p>What are the major gender gaps that the project activities face and will contribute toward reducing?</p> <p>Was there equal participation of women and men in management arrangements and as beneficiaries, partners and key stakeholders?</p> <p>Was there equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes?</p>
2. Manner in which the analysis shapes the project proposal and implementation	<p>What is/are the explicit gender objective/s objectives as described in the project proposal?</p> <p>What type of tools, actions identified to address possible gender inequalities emerging from the project?</p> <p>Does the project proposal include gender indicators?</p>
3. Identification of budget lines that accompany gender-responsive activities	<p>Are the gender-responsive activities accompanied by budget to ensure their implementation?</p>
Implementation phase	
4. Gender-responsive actions implemented by the project	<p>Did women and men have equal access to resources, services and capacity development?</p> <p>Track if the following engagement –pre-requisite for designing a gender-responsive project– are continued during implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal participation of women and men in management arrangements and as beneficiaries, partners and key stakeholders? • Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes? • Type of tools and actions identified to address possible gender inequalities emerging from the project?
5. Degree to which the projects have gender expertise to carry out activities	<p>Does the project staff include gender and/or social inclusion experts?</p> <p>Does the project develop the capacity of staff to address gender considerations and the use of gender-responsive and participatory tools in the context of the project and its implementation?</p> <p>Does the project liaise or coordinate with gender stakeholders and/or experts?</p>
Monitoring and evaluation phase	
6. Review of logical framework to identify gender indicators	<p>Does the project track sex-disaggregated data as part of its monitoring system to follow its indicators?</p> <p>Do the project indicators track changes in the situation of women and men, including their access to job creation and benefit-sharing by the project?</p>

Annex 2.

List of informants and key stakeholders interviewed

PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

AfDB in Morocco

Adama Moussa, Renewable Energy Task Manager. March 29th, 2019.

ESMAP/World Bank

Nadia Taobane, Senior Energy Specialist. January 29th, 2019.

MASEN

Bouchra Hassoune, Local Development Project Manager. January 29th, April 1st and 2nd, 2019.

Fatima Hamdouch, Strategic Steering Director. February 22nd, 2019.

Kenza Taoufik, Local Development Analyst. February 22nd and March 29th, 2019.

Meryem Lakhssassi, Sustainable Development Project Manager. January 28th and February 15th, 2019.

Sahar Bouaddi, Chargé R&D and Industrial Integration. April 2nd, 2019.

Tarik Moudden, Local Development Director. March 29th, 2019

ACWA Power

Abdelmajid Benjelloun, Assistant Manager, CSR & Corporate Events. March 29th, 2019.

Hanane Bouaddi, Document Controller, NOOR I, II and III. April 2nd, 2019.

Jamila Aitmoudoud, Cleaning Crew. April 2nd, 2019.

Mustapha Mechmoum, Local Development Project Manager. April 1st and 2nd, 2019.

SEPCO III

Khadija Agoujdam, HR Manager. April 2nd, 2019.

Ghessate community representatives

Interview with close to 20 women participating in adult literacy program. January 29th, 2019

Interview with 12 women and 2 men participating in the improved agricultural practices program; together with a woman and a man responsible for the ANAN project. April 1st, 2019

Interview with 7 women members of the handicraft cooperative. January 29th and April 1st, 2019.

Annex 3.

List of suggested gender indicators for measuring results in large-scale energy projects

Sample of output indicators

GENDER EQUALITY ASPECT	POSSIBLE INDICATORS
Access to benefits and compensation	Number of women and men involved in the public consultations and discussions on benefit sharing, compensation Evidence of the type and amount of compensation provided, by sex, type of household head, and socio-economic group, compared with the value of assets lost due to the project Number of projects supported by communal funds that align with women's expressed interests
Access to benefits and compensation	What is/are the explicit gender objective/s objectives as described in the project proposal? What type of tools, actions identified to address possible gender inequalities emerging from the project? Does the project proposal include gender indicators?
Market expansion	Number of women and men employed in energy utilities (EPCs) Number of women and men employed by firms accessing improved electricity sources Number of households connected to the grid, disaggregated by sex of head of household Number and percentage of households with subsidized electricity connections, disaggregated by sex of head of household; socioeconomic group
Women and men have equitable access to CSR activities	Number of women and men trained in agricultural practices Number of women and men trained in cattle-rearing practices Number of women and men with access to income-generation trainings or skill development opportunities Number of women and men with access to financial resources to start/improve their income generation activities
Mechanisms put in place to ensure gender is mainstreamed into project to promote equal benefits for women and men	Project budget includes allocations related to gender mainstreaming, including hiring of gender experts, conducting gender analysis, and collecting sex-disaggregated data Procedures for responding to complaints are publicly available and accessible to women; standards for responding to complaints are implemented and monitored. Equal employment opportunity policy and practices are implemented for staff and contractors (core labor standards, equal pay for work of equal value, occupational health and safety, and separate sanitation facilities).

Sample of outcomes indicators

GENDER EQUALITY ASPECT	POSSIBLE INDICATORS
<p>Increased access to clean energy / increased supply of energy</p>	<p>Number of female- and male-headed households with improved access to energy sources Number of individuals, disaggregated by sex, with improved access to energy sources Number of women and men starting/expanding other enterprise due improved access to electricity % of women energy users reporting improved change in access to energy services, compared to men Perceived change in access by women to time-saving energy technologies Perceived satisfaction of women and men user, with electricity services or energy technologies</p>
<p>Increased employment opportunities for women and men</p>	<p>Evidence of the type of incentives designed to recruit women, increase their capacity, and provide career development in energy sector agencies and service providers</p>

Sample of impact indicators

GENDER EQUALITY ASPECT	POSSIBLE INDICATORS
<p>Reduced energy poverty and increased energy security</p>	<p>Women and men users consider themselves better off now in terms of labor/time use, e.g. time spent on unpaid domestic Percentage change in expenditure on purchasing fuel for household energy needs by women Evidence of users' satisfaction with compensation, transitional support, special assistance, and resettlement, disaggregated by sex</p>



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