

## Powering Equality:

### *Accelerating gender equality and women's economic empowerment through clean energy investments in Africa*

UNDP's **Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025 (GES)** has elevated the ambition of the whole organization to help governments shift economic, social, political and environmental systems that generate and perpetuate gender inequality. Priorities of the GES include **closing gender gaps related to modern clean energy**. This includes ensuring that **access, productive uses and benefits of clean energy propel transformative results for gender equality**, such as reducing women's time poverty and unleashing women's economic empowerment.

Energy access is a precondition for development, including for health, education, and economic prosperity. Three-quarters of those living without modern energy live in Africa, with disproportionate impacts on women and girls across the region. Through flagship initiatives supported by multiple partners, UNDP works with countries across the continent to build sustainable energy systems that advance development and climate goals – both closing energy access gaps for women and men and driving towards a people-centered just energy transition. **With a moonshot goal to help close access gaps for 500 million people – half being women – UNDP has major opportunities to close gender gaps, too.**

In 2023, **Powering Equality** will support UNDP Country Offices (COs) in Africa that are already implementing flagship energy programming to strengthen gender integration and boost gender equality results. Aligned to the energy moonshot, the project will increase women's economic empowerment, strengthen gender-responsive energy governance and enhance policy frameworks that accelerate gender equality. By injecting dedicated resource for gender equality into existing high impact programmes, the value for money will be enhanced and results will grow exponentially, including by influencing future policy and programming.

**Powering Equality** projects will join a new **Global Learning Lab on Energy and Gender Equality**, accessing dedicated technical expertise and support, as well as building mutual knowledge, sharing promising practices and enriching south-south cooperation. Projects participating in the Lab will all contribute towards new evidence-based research, strengthening knowledge and know-how to propel gender equality through energy programming. High-visibility flagship products, publications and events will be organized by the Lab, featuring the leadership of the projects.

### Scope and eligibility

**Up to seven (7) COs in Africa will be selected**, each receiving **between USD 50,000 and 150,000**. COs will be considered for selection if they meet the following criteria:

- COs already **implementing at least one large-scale energy initiative contributing towards the energy access moonshot**. This would include COs implementing the African Mini-grids Programme as well as Action Opportunities, Solar for Health, and/or others; and



- COs already supporting governments to strengthen or develop **gender-responsive clean energy policy** frameworks.<sup>1</sup>

To be selected, countries will submit a short proposal prioritizing the following interconnected results:

- **Women's economic empowerment**, e.g., through capacity building to develop new businesses or technical skills for women energy entrepreneurs to join renewable energy markets; boosting support to women-led energy associations and networks; and/or stimulating demand for existing or emerging women-led or gender-responsive products and services; *and*
- **Gender-responsive governance**, e.g., supporting measures to boost women's participation, influence and leadership in energy decision-making; strengthening feminist / women-led networks' capacity to influence renewable energy policy processes; enhancing state readiness for gender equality, for example through the Gender Equality Seal for Ministries of Energy or by fostering public-private dialogues for advancing gender equality in the clean energy sector; *and*
- **Policy frameworks that power equality**, e.g., facilitating policy dialogues that aim for clean energy policies, strategies and plans that accelerate gender equality, for example those related to the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) energy targets; cultivating or strengthening cross-sector policy cooperation, for example between national women's machineries, local women's movements and energy ministries; and/or direct technical support on gender equality to governments.

Country offices must explain how this injection of additional resources into existing energy portfolio(s) will **multiply measurable results for gender equality on the above interconnected areas**.

Selected COs will agree to engage in the **Global Learning Lab**, with gender and energy specialists engaging in monthly exchange sessions, peer-to-peer learning and other learning components. The Lab will support COs to test indicators useful for reporting progress related to the GES, generating new evidence that will inform broader actions of the Sustainable Energy Hub, continued scale-up of energy flagships, as well as tailored technical support by the Gender Team.

## Proposal development and budget

A proposal development process will kick-start in late March, including consultation with regional gender and energy advisors to select COs. Proposed budgets will include:

- Activity budget (including required fees) and cost-sharing modality;
- Global Learning Lab investment: a pre-determined amount (15%) to contribute to learning and knowledge product costs;
- A gender specialist working in the project from the moment of funds disbursement.

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<sup>1</sup> This might include convening policy dialogues on gender-energy nexus issues, fostering cooperation between gender and energy ministries, providing technical support on policy development and planning, etc.



## Indicative implementation process and knowledge management

1. **March 2022. Finalizing criteria and consultations.** Consultations to refine and finalize scope of initiative. Consultations across regions, with CO eligibility vetted by Regional Gender and Energy Advisers and Regional Hub/s.
2. **April – May 2023. Proposal development and final selection.** Meetings are conducted to identify any necessary assistance, advise, or support from across teams. Identification of national and regional partners takes place. Indicators are proposed.
3. **May 2023 – May 2024. Funds made available for implementation.** Technical guidance accompanies inception and implementation. Learning Lab is established and operationalized, including through regional dialogues.
4. **June 2023– May 2024. Implementation, with learning and knowledge-sharing sessions,** including those that may be embedded in NCE regional retreats or other relevant opportunities.
5. **February – April 2024. Next step development.** Scale-up strategy development, including engagement with COs to further position the work with potential partners, including donors.
6. **April – May 2024. Reporting results.** Capturing lessons learned and consolidation of results in a knowledge product including highlights and identification of opportunities for scale-up.

**Table: Powering Equality key actors and roles**

| Key actors include:    | Indicative roles/functions include:   |
|------------------------|---|
| Country Offices        | -Implement energy programming contributing to moonshot<br>-Implement, monitor, report on Powering Equality activities, including participating in Learning Lab  |
| Regional teams         | -Provide technical support and facilitate knowledge generation and exchange<br>-Contribute to and participate in Learning Lab   |
| Sustainable Energy Hub | -Supports co-creation of Lab, in complement to Energy Academy; facilitates knowledge generation and exchange, ensures energy and gender Communities of Practice exchange, guides policy   |
| Gender Team            | -Manages FW process and reporting<br>-Spearheads Lab in line with GES and leads Lab product development; ensures gender and energy Communities of Practice exchange<br>-Steers Powering Equality gender equality technical advice |



## Annex I: Expression of Interest template

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| <b>Name and email address of CO focal point:</b>  |
| <b>Country Office:</b>  |
| 1. Provide a short description of <b>why</b> your CO is interested in implementing Powering Equality and how it complements existing energy programming, boosting support to gender equality outcomes (max 150 words):  |
| 2. Describe how your CO fulfills eligibility <b>criteria</b> articulated in the concept (max 150 words):  |
| 3. Indicate briefly how your CO has adequate <b>capacity</b> and conditions (e.g., gender equality and/or energy technical capacity; operational and budget capacity) to implement this program (max 150 words):  |
| 4. Describe the overarching outcome/goal or results your CO envisions achieving through Powering Equality (max 150 words):  |
| 5. Describe the <b>activities</b> your CO aims to implement (or enhance implementation of) to contribute to the three interlinked gender equality results referred above (women's economic empowerment, gender-responsive governance, energy policy that powers equality) (approx 250 words):   |
| 6. Indicate the <b>budget</b> amount requested and indicative budget breakdown, as well as the total amount available (already being implemented in flagship energy programming and/or being actively mobilized) by your CO in 2023-2024. <i>(Note a detailed workplan will be developed in the next stage of this process for selected COs):</i> |
| 7. Describe <b>partnerships</b> involved already in the energy programming or to be engaged through Powering Equality support (max 150 words):  |
| 8. Confirm agreement to participate in the <b>Global Learning Lab</b> , including e.g., allocating time to knowledge generation and sharing, testing new approaches, data and analysis and development of flagship products:  |
| 9. Confirm agreement to allocate <b>15% of the total budget</b> to the Global Learning Lab, to contribute towards provision of technical advisory and expert support, platform and product development, and facilitation:   |
| <b>10. Management sign-off:</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, [insert the name] approves this Expression of Interest.   |

