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## Annex G: Gender Analysis and Action Plan

### 1 Background:

UNDP prioritizes gender mainstreaming as its main strategy to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing any planned action in all areas and levels to determine the implication for women and men. It is a strategy for making women's, as well as men's, concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects so that women benefit equally. Gender mainstreaming aims to transform unequal social and institutional structures in order to make them profoundly responsive to gender, and, when realized, it ensures that both women and men benefit equally from the development process. It involves much more than simply adding women's participation to existing strategies and programmes. Special attention and action is often required to compensate for the existing gaps and inequalities that women currently face.

The UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021 is aligned with the 2030 Development Agenda and UNDP's Strategic Plan. The strategy recognizes gender equality as a human right as well as instrumental to the achievement of sustainable development. It considers women and men as active agents of change and development, not simply beneficiaries and vulnerable groups and it recognizes how working with men and boys is of critical importance to change gender norms and attitudes and achieve gender equality.

The GEF Council approved a new GEF Policy on Gender Equality<sup>1</sup>, in November 2017. The policy outlines the need to address gender equality and promote women's empowerment across GEF operations, and, in particular, in its projects and programs. The policy requires gender-responsive actions, from design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that GEF programs and projects are not only designed with a good understanding of relevant gender differences, roles and needs, but also actively pursue activities that contribute to equal access to and control over resources, decision-making, and empowers women and girls.

Both UNDP and the GEF require a gender responsive approach, an approach in which the particular needs, priorities, power structures, status and relationships between men and women are recognized and adequately addressed in the design, implementation and evaluation of activities. The approach seeks to ensure that women and men are given equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from an intervention and promotes targeted measures to address inequalities and promote the empowerment of women.

### 2 Context and gender situation in Eswatini:

**As an absolute monarchy with male head of state, it is a *de jure* and *de facto* patriarchy.** Decision-making power and wealth are concentrated at the top of government. The head of state, by one

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<sup>1</sup> GEF/C.53/04 ([http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN\\_GEF.C.53.04\\_Gender\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.53.04_Gender_Policy.pdf))

estimate, is tied for 31<sup>st</sup> largest landowner in the world,<sup>2</sup> with 1 million hectares (60% of the nation's land) in his possession and he is able to evict citizens, including women, from this land at will via appointed officials.<sup>3</sup> The head of state maintains a polygynous marital status and has faced allegations of both early<sup>4</sup> and forced<sup>5</sup> marriage. While the status and actions of the head of state are certainly not representative of all forces within the country, neither should they be completely ignored.

**UNDP/GEF project measures supporting gender equality in Eswatini will likely need to:** a) be locally acceptable and realistically achievable, b) be incrementalistic in nature, c) emphasize win-win outcomes for both women and men, d) and proceed with broad engagement and buy-in from community stakeholders, including area chiefs and *inkhundla* officials.

## 2.1 Demographics

Eswatini's population is around 1.1 million, with 1% annual population growth, generally negative levels of net annual migration (approximately -40,000), and a crude birth rate of around 25 (per 1,000).<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1 Eswatini Demographics (2019)<sup>7</sup>**

Sex	Population	Percent of Total
Male	562,789	49%
Female	585,341	51%

**Women's life expectancy of 64 years is considerably higher than that of men (55 years).** These are 2018 estimates, up from the 2005 averages of 45 and 41 years, respectively, at the height of HIV/AIDS-related mortality.<sup>8</sup> The full range of causes of national male excess mortality from 2005 to 2020 is not entirely clear (life expectancy rebounded 19 years for women vs. 14 years for men) but further investigation is warranted to see if electricity services could potentially play a role in helping close the gap for men.

**The fertility rate (births per woman) has been steadily falling since the early 1980's and currently stands at three births per woman** (2018 estimate).<sup>9</sup> Thirty-eight percent of the population is under the age of 15 (more than half are under the age of 25) and three quarters live in rural areas.<sup>10</sup> The youthful nature of the population means that there is a high dependency ratio, with women and older children predominantly shouldering the responsibility of caregiving. At least one nationally present organization active in women's economic empowerment urged that due to this fact, patience is required on the part of programs supporting women's income generating activities. Women's business activity, even cottage industry, may have to be paused for periods of time to cope with family illness, childbirth, childrearing, or periods of intense own-farm production. Swazi women are reported to be highly likely to restart their activities once their time poverty conditions have improved. Thus, program Monitoring and Evaluation

<sup>2</sup> "The World's 101 Biggest Private Landowners."

<sup>3</sup> Dlamini, "Traditionalist Elliot Mkhathjwa Calls for Nation-Wide Protests against King's Decision to Evict Women Vendors at Mafutseni."

<sup>4</sup> "Swazi King Drops Sex-Ban Tassels."

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International, "Swaziland: Human Rights at Risk in a Climate of Political and Legal Uncertainty (AFR 55/004/2004)."

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, "World Bank Open Data."

<sup>7</sup> World Bank.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank.

<sup>9</sup> World Bank.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank.

Frameworks should correspondingly prioritize long-term results and not “penalize” the temporary cessation of activities.

## 2.2 Legal rights and framework

**In Eswatini, two legal frameworks apply.** The first is uncoded Eswatini law and customs (together known as customary law), and the second is a combination of partly codified Roman and Dutch legislation (civil law).<sup>11</sup> The 2005 Constitution provides for equality before the law and three separate organs of government (executive, branch, legislature, judiciary), but the King’s supreme executive authority over other branches of government, created via a 1973 Emergency Decree, has been upheld by the courts, giving him control over many appointments and effective veto power across the board. This dynamic has resulted in the halting progress and/or delayed enactment of several constitutional provisions related to gender equality. There have, however, been recent legal developments of interest, including the passage of legislation related to gender-based violence and women’s political participation, as well as rulings of the High Court relevant to gender equality.

**Started in 2009,<sup>12</sup> but not receiving Royal assent and becoming law of the land until 2018, the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence (SODV) Act** domesticates some of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals and African Union Agenda 2063 approaches to tackling gender-based violence.<sup>13</sup> Gender-based violence remains an important social issue, though recent statistics are scarce. A 2007 survey found 38% of young women (ages 18-24) experienced sexual violence, 9% experienced coerced sex, and 5% experienced physically forced sex, all before turning 18.<sup>14</sup>

**The Women in Elections Act, like SODV, also became law in 2018.** In 2019, of the 73 members in the House of Assembly, seven were women (10%) whereas out of 30 Senate members, 12 were women (40%).<sup>15</sup> In the event that women hold fewer than 30% of House seats, the Constitution calls for the House to elect one woman from each region (four total), and this happened in November 2018.<sup>16</sup> In the Senate, where 10 of the 30 members are indirectly elected by the House, the Constitution stipulates that half shall be women; while of the 20 senators appointed by the king, eight are required to be women.

**The concept of *marital power*, until it was struck down by the high court in 2019,<sup>17</sup> granted husbands the right to conclude contracts and administer property without wives’ consent** but required wives to seek their husbands’ consent before doing the same, effectively “relegating married women to the legal status of minors under the guardianship of their husbands.”<sup>18</sup> Even though the institution of *marital power* contradicted equality provisions in the Constitution, it persisted in some legal form for more than a decade. Care may have to be taken during MG program implementation to address lingering social norms related to marital power, especially insofar as they affect intra-household decisions to purchase electricity-using appliances for home or work or for women to champion productive use ventures.

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<sup>11</sup> Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Kingdom of Eswatini.”

<sup>12</sup> Social Institutions and Gender Index.

<sup>13</sup> Southern Africa Litigation Centre, COSPE Onlus, and Foundation for Socio-Economic Justice, “Eswatini’s Sexual Offences & Domestic Violence Act: A Summary.”

<sup>14</sup> Together for Girls, “Eswatini.”

<sup>15</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, “Eswatini - House of Assembly.”

<sup>16</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, “Eswatini.”

<sup>17</sup> Southern Africa Litigation Centre, “PRESS STATEMENT.”

<sup>18</sup> Southern Africa Litigation Centre, “Eswatini.”

**The Constitution permits women and men equal access to land for domestic use but in practice landholding is skewed.** There are two types of land in the country, Swazi National Land (SNL) and Title Deeds Land (TDL). SNL can be granted via the area chief, but traditionally as it is governed by customary law, women could only make requests to access this land through a male relative.<sup>19</sup> TDL is bought and sold on the market, meaning women's lower ownership rates could also reflect their lower access to resources to purchase land in addition to any complicating factors resulting from their marital status. The abolition of marital power is expected to improve the situation of women's landholding, but still does not fully resolve the pluralistic legal framework that applies to SNL in a way that protects women's land rights across the board (see, for example, the recent court case of Ethel Dlamini as widow<sup>20</sup>).

Gendered dynamics of land tenure could potentially affect the MG pilots in at least two ways:

- Through the ownership over the actual MG site and environs, influencing feelings of control, decision-making and governance over the project;
- Through providing a sense of long-term security in productive use endeavours, giving assurance to entrepreneurs and those enabling them that they won't be dispossessed;
- Through the potentially rising value of land around the Energy Hub pilot, which if successful could in the future become an important commercial centre of gravity.

**A MG support program would do better to rely on persuasion and consensus building for its gender inclusion efforts rather than being overly proscriptive and legalistic.** This is because the legal framework for gender rights and protection, due to the existence of mixed and overlapping sources of law as well as the supreme power vested in the monarch, is uneven and sometimes unreliable.

### 2.3 Marriage customs

**Eswatini's is a patrilineal culture where, according to tradition, women join their husbands' households,** children remain with their fathers if the marriage is dissolved, and male children inherit from their fathers. (Though the Constitution calls on Parliament to ensure the best interests of children are accounted for in custody matters and that children can inherit regardless of sex—this is not always put into practice.) These traditions can render houses—and by extension any associated electricity connections—predominantly male property by default. Also, these marriage customs can have the effect of weakening women's social influence across a range of issues because, for example, wives may lack allies when living among in-laws, they may fear losing their children over a disagreement, and finally, disadvantaged in inheritance matters, many have fewer economic resources at their disposal. Since 2005, children are only able to be granted citizenship through their fathers.<sup>21</sup>

**With regards to marriage, while the Constitution stipulates that no woman uphold any custom to which she is opposed, and that polygamy is prohibited in civil marriages, polygamy and customary practices do still exist.** This includes *inhlanti* (where a younger sister or paternal niece is given for marriage to a woman's husband if she cannot bear children) and *kwendzisa* (an arranged marriage which often takes place at a young age).<sup>22</sup> There also exists a cultural practice of bride price (*emalobola*) whereby the husband's family pay a price to the bride's family, often creating normative expectations

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<sup>19</sup> Kelly et al., *Women's Equal Property and Land Rights Hold Key to Reversing Toll of Poverty and HIV/AIDS in Swaziland: A Human Rights Report and Proposed Legislation*.

<sup>20</sup> "Eswatini Court Upholds a Widow's Rights to Customary Land Use – A Beacon of Hope?"

<sup>21</sup> "World Report 2020."

<sup>22</sup> Coordinating Assembly of NGO's (CANGO), "Shadow Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women."

for the woman to serve her husband and in-laws and reducing her bargaining power since the bride price will have to be returned in case of marital dissolution.<sup>23</sup> There is no civil divorce in the legal sense, which conflicts for example with religious marriage customs of the country's Muslim minority, but marriages can be dissolved on a number of grounds, including death, adultery, and desertion.<sup>24</sup>

**For widows of both civil and customary marriages, the Constitution offers the right to inherit the estates of their spouses, but some widows are nevertheless dispossessed, or pressured to marry their deceased spouses' brothers.** Mourning customs are still prevalent whereby a widow is expected to withdraw from public life and also wears special garments (*kuzila*), which can create social stigma and negatively affect her ability to work.<sup>25</sup> In pluralistic Swazi law, some traditional authorities may only recognize a male heir, complicating the inheritance process, especially if customs prevent women from approaching or petitioning a chief during the mourning period, which can last two planting seasons.

**Special program considerations may be needed to be able to fully include widows** in stakeholder consultation meetings within the pilot sites and assist them with any travel and logistical barriers preventing them from benefiting from the project. To the extent allowable and feasible, the pilot projects should encourage couples to view and treat electricity connections and appliances as joint property and decisions regarding their use as joint as well. If a female beneficiary becomes widowed or divorced during the program implementation, there may a desire for program implementers to advocate on her behalf to maintain or restore her access to any rightful business assets, including land and equipment, directly implicated through the program's support.

## 2.4 Education

**The net enrolment rate in primary school is similar, and approaching universal, for boys and girls** as seen in Table 2.<sup>26</sup> Completion rates are significantly lower than enrolment rates, however, and there is a fair amount of student attrition overall moving into secondary education. On average, boys are slightly more likely than girls to drop out of primary education and girls are slightly more likely than boys to drop out of secondary education. Pregnancy was the primary motivating reason of 10% of the boys who dropped out of secondary school, but 42% of girls who left at this stage in their education did so because of pregnancy (2017 estimate).<sup>27</sup>

**Table 2 Enrolment rates by schooling level (2014-2017)<sup>28</sup>**

Year	Primary school level (%)		Secondary school level (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	female
<b>2014</b>	93.7	94.4	23.6	34.2
<b>2015</b>	93.9	94.8	23.7	32.1
<b>2016</b>	93.4	94.9	22.6	34
<b>2017</b>	94.5	93.5	26	38.7

<sup>23</sup> Tadesse and Daniel, *Gender Mainstreaming Experiences from Eastern and Southern Africa*.

<sup>24</sup> Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Kingdom of Eswatini."

<sup>25</sup> Owen, "Issues of Discrimination in Widowhood in Swaziland That Require Addressing in the Context of CEDAW."

<sup>26</sup> Department of Gender and Family Issues, "The Kingdom of Eswatini's Country Progress Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action."

<sup>27</sup> Department of Gender and Family Issues.

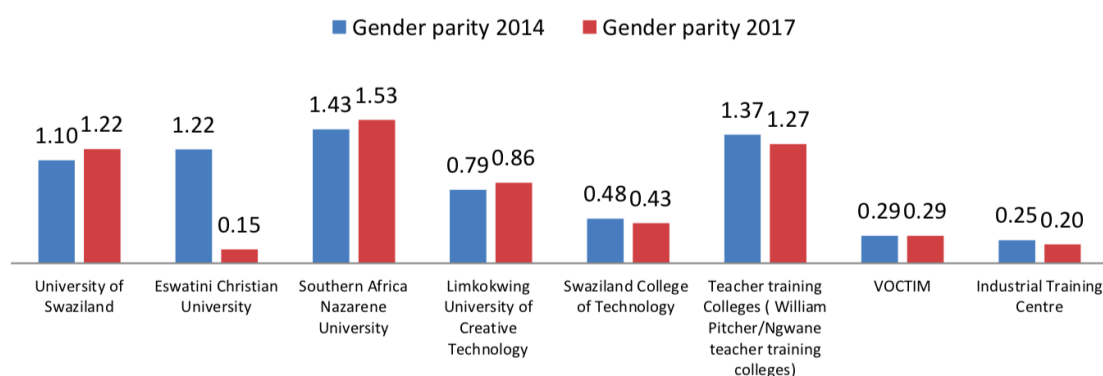
<sup>28</sup> Department of Gender and Family Issues.

**Table 3 Schooling completion rates (2014)<sup>29</sup>**

Primary education completion (%)		Lower secondary education completed (%)		Upper secondary education completed (%)	
Male	Female	Male	female	Male	Female
64	76.7	47.09	54.33	31.09	33.4

In tertiary education, there are slightly more women enrolled but these enrolments are highly uneven depending on the institution, with technical/STEM-focused enrolling disproportionately more young men (see Figure 1, note that a score of ‘1’ indicates gender parity, numbers greater than 1 mean more women than men are enrolled). This signals two potential gender hurdles for MG development. First, it will be difficult (though not impossible<sup>30</sup>) to attract balanced numbers of men and women to work as MG designers, installers, technicians, and entrepreneurs. Second, there are likely gender norms associating certain pieces of electrical equipment and machinery with male ownership and use, potential hindering the gender equitable rollout of certain PUE activities unless certain support measures are put in place.

**Figure 1 Gender Parity in Tertiary Institutions in 2014/17<sup>31</sup>**



## 2.5 Labour force

The male participation in the labour force in general is increasing from 2016 to 2018 while the female participation is low compared to men and is also decreasing over the time period. Table 4 below shows the detailed labour force participation and unemployment rate for men and women.<sup>32 33 34</sup> The unemployment rate is also higher for women than men. In addition to differences in labour force participation, men also earn significantly more than women (67% more in 2014, <sup>35</sup> for example), though

<sup>29</sup> Department of Gender and Family Issues.

<sup>30</sup> A professional recruiter reported having a number of strong female applicants for an executive level opening at the energy regulator in 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Pg. 29 from: Department of Gender and Family Issues, “The Kingdom of Eswatini’s Country Progress Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.”

<sup>32</sup> Department of Gender and Family Issues.

<sup>33</sup> UNDP, “Human Development Reports.”

<sup>34</sup> International Labor Organization, “Labour Force Survey 2016, Eswatini.”

<sup>35</sup> Department of Gender and Family Issues, “The Kingdom of Eswatini’s Country Progress Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.”

much of this difference likely stems from the structural composition of the workforce (i.e. men being overrepresented in higher productivity sectors and careers) compared to overt wage discrimination.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 4 Labour Force Participation and Unemployment**

Percent of men/women in adult labour force (aged 15 and above)	2007	2010	2014	2016	2018
<b>Male</b>	59.2	58.8	55.3	55.5	65.9
<b>Female</b>	45.2	55.2	46	46.5	41.4
Male/female unemployment rate (aged 15 and above, percent)	2007	2010	2014	2016	2018
<b>Male</b>	25.7	38	24.4	21.2	-
<b>Female</b>	31.2	30	32.2	24.8	-

## 2.6 Women in the MSME sector

**Women are overrepresented in Eswatini in the MSME sector.** Out of a total of 92,000 MSMEs, 65% of them are owned by women.<sup>37</sup> Women-owned MSMEs tend to be small and have low productivity, are often survivalist in nature (as opposed to opportunistic) and mostly do not employ other people.<sup>38</sup> In 2017, only 31% of the women-owned MSME businesses were classified as “high impact.”<sup>39 40</sup>

**Women-led businesses cluster more so than men-led businesses in the informal market** due to factors like: the high operating cost in formal markets, including high rents; the lack of business development and networking skills; mostly lower education levels among women entrepreneurs; and limited access to resources such as tenders and call for proposals.<sup>41</sup> Business informality has important implications for access to commercial credit and loans, which are generally restricted to entities with registration documents.<sup>42</sup>

**As such, female-led businesses appear to depend relatively more than male-led ones on informal credit** mobilization (from family and social networks) and microfinance solutions.<sup>43</sup> Some microfinance providers include:

**Inhlanyelo Fund:** This seed capital fund aims to promote grassroots entrepreneurs to the point they can connect with formal financial institutions. It offers collateral-free financing to women in all 55 constituencies of Swaziland. The loan application and follow-up process are carried out in close cooperation with the local community leaders. It is based on group lending and peer-

<sup>36</sup> Brixiová and Kangoye, “Gender Disparities in Employment and Earnings in Sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence from Swaziland.”

<sup>37</sup> Department of Gender and Family Issues, “The Kingdom of Eswatini’s Country Progress Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.”

<sup>38</sup> Brixiová and Kangoye, “Gender Disparities in Employment and Earnings in Sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence from Swaziland.”

<sup>39</sup> High impact refers to a business employing from 4 to 50 people and a turnover of E250 000 to E8 million.

<sup>40</sup> FinMark Trust, “Eswatini: Roadmap 2018-2022.”

<sup>41</sup> UNESCO, “Revised Small, Micro, & Medium Enterprise Policy of Eswatini.”

<sup>42</sup> Department of Gender and Family Issues, “The Kingdom of Eswatini’s Country Progress Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.”

<sup>43</sup> Brixiová and Kangoye, “Gender Disparities in Employment and Earnings in Sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence from Swaziland.”

pressure is used to ensure loan repayment. The maximum loan size is around USD 1765 (E25,0000).<sup>44</sup>

**Imbita Women's Finance Trust:** Imbita is membership-based savings and credit group that uses local Management Committees (LMCs). For group lending, LMCs are used to mobilize the community and receive regular training and support from the head office. The beneficiaries are also not required to have collateral and the loans have a flat interest rate of 2.33% for individuals and 2.5% for groups.<sup>45</sup>

**SWEET Microfinance:** It provides emergency (up to E50,000) and group loans (up to E113,000) to microentrepreneurs. The loans are from six to nine months with a flat 2.5-3% interest charge, depending.<sup>46</sup>

### Box 1 Vukani BoMake

#### Business Women Eswatini (BWE) – Vukani BoMake Project

*From Facebook:* “Vukani BoMake Project is a Business Women Eswatini initiative. This project aims to empower rural women through vocational and business skills training. This will help them set up village textile factories so they can produce and sell their own products. Vukani BoMake Project was initiated in response to job losses as a result of the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Business Women Eswatini saw it as an opportunity to empower unemployed women with vocational and business skills so they could sustain themselves. The three Tinkhundla that are part of this project are: Lobamba, Nhlambeni and Manzini South Inkhundla. The project supports production of face masks, reusable sanitary pads, clothing and more.”

Conversations with a project proponent revealed that while there is a strong need for electricity to enhance productivity in the textile sector, access to land and security of land tenure are arguably larger impediments to women's income generation, “*Without land, you have a serious problem.*”

Another benefit of the Vukani BoMake project was that it allowed women to remain near their homes to work. This was a precaution in light of covid-19 to keep them from crowding together in distant factories, but also had other beneficial effects according to the U.S. Ambassador,<sup>47</sup> notably:

- More of their income was spent in their local communities;
- It allowed them to be closer to their families to have a better work-life balance;
- It may reduce their exposure to certain types of gender-based violence, to HIV infection, and to unwanted pregnancies.

There are reasons to believe the above may also, in the right circumstances, be collateral benefits of MG-assisted women's PUE promotion in rural areas of Eswatini.

**Multiple respondents cited electric energy services as both a potentially productivity-enhancing business input and also a domestic, labour-saving strategy** that could free up time for women to dedicate more hours each week to their MSMEs. Swazi women are reported to be very time-constrained multi-taskers, mostly on account of their competing domestic, agricultural and other income-generating activities, though recent detailed national time use surveys could not be located.

**Due to the characteristics of female-led MSMEs, mini-grid projects may have to adapt in order to maximally serve them.** For example, this could entail developing connection modalities, pricing and

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<sup>44</sup> Alliance for Financial Inclusion, “Agricultural Finance Intervention in the Kingdom of Eswatini.”

<sup>45</sup> Alliance for Financial Inclusion.

<sup>46</sup> Alliance for Financial Inclusion.

<sup>47</sup> Peterson, “Remarks by Ambassador Lisa Peterson.”

tariff structures adapted to women's business activities; relaxing or reimagining certain criteria for project support; providing extra means to female-led businesses to grow and be in a position to exploit electricity for productive use; deliberately seeking out producer groups and cooperatives (see next section on the Microprojects Unit below); or other techniques.

## 2.7 Women and the Microprojects Unit

**The Micro Projects Coordinating Unit (MPCU) is a semi-autonomous department lodged in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.** In addition to managing projects for line ministries, its core function is the management of two funds, the Regional Development Fund (RDF) and the Community Development Special Fund (CDSF). The RDF is a grant facility provided through the annual government budget (E2 Million per *inkhundla*) meant to promote rural economic development. Local community groups of 10 or more people with a 10%, usually in-kind, equity contribution are able to apply through the *inkhundla* Constituency Centre for these grant funds in order to build infrastructure, such as for rural electrification or irrigation and potable water supply, or for other projects to improve local livelihoods. The CDSF has essentially the same modality but a 25% equity requirement.

**Though there are no funding requirements related to the gender composition of applicant groups, women's participation is sought after** as, reported by a staff member, over time this has been associated with project success/sustainability. *"If you want the project to succeed, you have to have women; women remain local and hardly travel, so they end up involved in the ongoing operations and maintenance."*

**Though information isn't readily compiled about the gender breakdown of the portfolio, anecdotally, women's groups are reported to be most interested in income generation opportunities** (such as chair and tent rentals, and agricultural processing equipment such as hammer mills) as compared to 'pure' infrastructure projects. One of the few projects that was financially successful enough to have repaid the 90% RDF capital contribution (had it needed to) was a group investment in a hammer mill.

**The main barriers to accessing the RDF or the CDSF are the equity contribution (often labour and materials) along with a credible business plan.** It should be considered that some women may have lower asset levels, literacy (reading, writing, business, financial, digital), time availability, mobility, and agency/confidence to complete successful grant applications compared to male counterparts and thus may need additional support. If the applicant is a co-op interested in income generating activities, the Department of Cooperatives in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade (MCIT) is often able to provide assistance developing the business plan. Local leaders have lent varying degrees of support to women's group's projects, with some being much more progressive than others.

### 3 Gender Action Plan

**The Gender Action Plan for Eswatini attempts to accomplish two primary tasks**, first to make women—their needs and potential contributions—visible in the sector (including to government planners, development partners, and infrastructure developers), and second to demonstrate the techniques and processes that can make mini-grids an engine for opportunity for all individuals regardless of gender. Documentation and analysis of results from the latter, then, are also expected to help strengthen the former.

**The gender strategy as applied to Component 1 (Policy and Regulation) is to increase the visibility of women in the sector.** As women remain historically disadvantaged with respect to landholding and asset accumulation, as they own and manage (on average) smaller businesses, as a large share of their production is not monetized/quantified, traditional yardsticks for spotting mini-grid opportunities (e.g., geospatial economic indicators, national statistical accounts) likely present a view biased towards *male-centred* opportunities.

**For this reason, it will be important to deliberately explore the concept of “hidden” female opportunities as well**, for instance by ensuring that both male- and female-dominated crops, agro-processing value addition steps, and small commercial ventures are included and tagged as such. Similarly, domestic/household productive use that can lead to income generation, either directly through cottage production or indirectly by relaxing women’s time poverty constraint, should not be overlooked. And women-centred institutions, such as self-help organizations, savings and credit groups, MFIs, agricultural coops, and more, should also be inventoried as potentially enabling infrastructure (like roads or proximity to markets) increasing the likelihood of success for PUE uptake. Data completeness at the opportunity mapping stage is a first critical step towards women’s inclusion in the sector, inclusion which will also be strengthened by also raising women’s profiles through the National Dialog to be established (Output 1.2) and via the activity that supports capacity building of public officials (Output 1.3).

**The gender strategy for Component 2 (Project and Business Model Innovation) calls for women and men to be co-equal beneficiaries of two productive use pilots.** In this, the project should seek to execute concrete transactions of the type that are theoretically explored in the opportunity mapping/inventory activity (i.e., Output 1.1). This will likely involve additional effort “selling” the idea, finding and connecting with women, especially widows who may be secluded, establishing trust, convincing some women who are at first hesitant. “Selling” the idea also involves convincing male relatives and other community members and leaders that women’s PUE is coherent with broader aspirations and presents a win-win proposition for all concerned. Promoting women’s participation in PUE will also entail employing differentiated support strategies, building agency and soft skills in parallel, compensating for lower asset levels and financial inclusion, addressing a potential lack of formal premises from which to conduct business, and renegotiating expectations around reproductive work during the adoption of new appliances, for example.

**Ultimately, the project hopes to confirm that it is feasible, even economically desirable, to expand mini-grid services to a wider swath of individuals, men and women, taking up PUE.** The Project activities geared toward monitoring, capturing lessons learned, and exchanging knowledge with a wider community, and especially with national mini-grid developers, will also include insights from the gender mainstreaming and empowerment tasks. It is theorized that, under the right circumstances, access to electricity and to electricity-enabled lines of business might not only lead to rising incomes for women, but raise women’s status within the household, strengthen their influence over expenditures and other major life decisions, and potentially even expand their roles in public life. At the very least, the Project

must ensure that electricity provision does not lead to the disproportionate accrual of benefits to men and a weakening of women's relative bargaining position.

**Based on the results on the gender assessment, the following action plan in**

**Table 5 has been drafted to provide a “gender lens” over the project,** ensuring equitable participation and benefit incidence among women and men across the various program components. In the leftmost column are the overarching program objectives and main activities. In the column entitled “Gender Action” are strategies for ensuring appropriate mainstreaming and equitable benefit incidence.

Table 5 Gender Action Plan

Objective	Gender Action	Indicator and Targets	Responsible / Institutions	Timeline	Budget (USD)
<b>Component 1: Policy and Regulation</b>					
<b>Output 1.1</b>  Mini-grid potential for the country mapped incorporating a value chain analysis, productive uses, MSME activity and mobile network coverage.	<p>Include presence of women’s co-ops, trade organizations, and finance providers as an added layer of MG opportunity map.<sup>48</sup> <b>Rationale:</b> MG in locales with strong women’s organizations are more likely to have a positive gender impact.</p> <p>Tag value chains and value chain steps as “predominantly male,” “predominantly female,” or “mixed/neutral.” <b>Rationale:</b> Enable later stage gender-informed analysis and decision-making.</p> <p>Ensure that gender analysis is performed during site selection. <b>Rationale:</b> Facilitate project screening and reporting; detect and mitigate any skewed gender impacts.</p>	<p><b>Baseline:</b> No map in existence</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of women-focused organizations included in mapping</li> <li>• Percentage of PUE/MSME activities that are gender tagged</li> </ul> <p><b>Target:</b> At least two dozen organizations in mapping and 50% of PUE/MSME activities gender tagged</p>	MNRE, with data from UNCDF, ESMAP, telecoms		15,000

<sup>48</sup> Organizations such as these could function as apex productive users of electricity, grassroots empowerment organizers, providers of training or credit providers, etc. but with a special ability to reach and work with women.

Objective	Gender Action	Indicator and Targets	Responsible / Institutions	Timeline	Budget (USD)
<b>Output 1.2</b>  An active National Dialogue established among mini-grid policy role-players in Eswatini with strong link to AMP regional project knowledge platform to formulate a national mini-grid vision and roadmap	<p>Include stakeholders in National Dialogue that promote gender equality, or that are active in issues or sectors or great importance to women.</p> <p>Ensure that the leadership group is representative and gender-balanced.</p>	<p><b>Baseline:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of organizations/agencies included in Dialogue with strong gender inclusion or empowerment focus</li> <li>• Percentage of core working group individuals that are female</li> </ul> <p><b>Target:</b> At least three organizations and 40% individuals</p>	MNRE, EEC, ESERA, Gender Coordination Unit, Department of Cooperatives, and others		No additional budget
<b>Output 1.3</b>  Capacity building provided to public officials (regulator, ministries) specifically to design procurement / tender processes that incorporate cost-reduction levers and innovative business models	<p>Ensure existing male and female staff have an equal opportunity to train and benefit from capacity building (e.g., by ensuring a minimum number of women included, requiring that recipients reflect overall organization gender balance, having a gender balanced committee review the selection process, etc.).</p>	<p><b>Baseline:</b> Unknown staff gender balance, unknown number trained on MG</p> <p><b>Indicator:</b> Number of existing male and female staff directly aided through capacity building and reporting satisfaction</p> <p><b>Target:</b> At least on third of staff trained are female and</p>	MNRE, ESREA, EEC, with UNDP Regional AMP		No additional budget

Objective	Gender Action	Indicator and Targets	Responsible / Institutions	Timeline	Budget (USD)
		90% of all beneficiaries report that efforts were useful and relevant to their work			
<b>Output 2: Project and Business Model Innovation with Private Sector Engagement</b>					
<b>Outputs 2.1</b>  Expansion of public utility mini-grid pilot to incorporate Productive Use of Energy (PUE), innovative appliances and small business development, to demonstrate opportunities for improved feasibility of mini-grid systems for rural households	<p>Identify existing and potential productive electricity use applications led by women and men.</p> <p>Build the necessary comprehension and buy-in among women and men of the community, including among leaders and between spouses, about the benefits of electricity-enabled businesses and women's involvement in them.</p> <p>Provide women and men, and paying special attention to the status of widows, with access to the ongoing business/financing/peer/agency-based support needed to start or grow their ventures. If necessary, help facilitate land transactions.</p> <p>Support the ethical uptake of domestic electric appliances, especially those that reduce women's time burdens, through initiatives such marketing promotions,</p>	<p><b>Baseline (A):</b> TBD number and type of productive electricity users at start of project</p> <p><b>Indicator (A):</b> Number of new, relative to baseline, productive users of electricity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender of lead, if sole prop or family partnership, or gender composition if group (mostly M/mostly F/mixed)</li> <li>• Type of activity and electric equipment in use</li> <li>• Improved income (informational indicator only)</li> </ul> <p><b>Baseline (B):</b> TBD Number and type of domestic electricity</p>	MNRE, EEC		10,000

Objective	Gender Action	Indicator and Targets	Responsible / Institutions	Timeline	Budget (USD)
	linkages to product and finance suppliers, defraying warranty or after sales support costs, etc.	<p>appliances in use (not counting lights)</p> <p><b>Indicator (B):</b> Number and type of domestic electricity appliances in use (not counting lights or phone chargers)</p> <p><b>Baseline (C):</b> TBD average monthly MG revenue per connection</p> <p><b>Indicator (C):</b> Average monthly MG revenue per connection</p> <p><b>Target:</b> At least five new productive users, over 50% of them women, women-led enterprises, or women-majority groups; 5% increase in home appliances; and 10% increase in per customer revenue.</p>			
<b>Output 2.2</b>  Pilot a mini-grid 'energy hub' model demonstrating productive uses as anchor off-	Similar to above, ensure that the energy hub serves businesses owned by,	<p><b>Baseline:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Indicator:</b></p>	MNRE, developer, possibly EEC		20,000

Objective	Gender Action	Indicator and Targets	Responsible / Institutions	Timeline	Budget (USD)
taker of electricity that enables household electrification	<p>employing, and serving both men and women in equitable numbers.</p> <p>Ensure composition of the Project Board is reflective of the gender balance in the community (e.g., by disseminating information widely, mandating representation, and providing training support to both women and men in operations and management).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Businesses connected to 'hub' by type (individual, group, etc.) and gender</li> <li>Male and female employment (including owners) sustained directly by 'energy hub' and indirectly by businesses located there (# individuals impacted and FTEs)</li> <li>Improved income (informational indicator only)</li> <li>Gender balance of Project Board</li> </ul> <p><b>Target:</b> At least 10 businesses, 20 individuals and 8 FTE created and sustained with at least a 40/60 F/M split; representative balance on Project Board</p>			
<b>Output 2.3</b>	Develop a 2-5-page knowledge product for developers drawing on local examples that "makes the business	<b>Baseline:</b> 0	MNRE		1,500

Objective	Gender Action	Indicator and Targets	Responsible / Institutions	Timeline	Budget (USD)
Strengthen capacity of potential developers and operators to consider design parameters, innovative business models and cost-reduction levers, to improve project feasibility, with practical experience drawn from both pilot projects	case” for training and hiring women in local O&M, supporting them as potential business customers, and approaching them as adopters of electricity-consuming household technology.	<p><b>Indicator:</b> Presence and dissemination of pamphlet, Y/N</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Pamphlet prepared and distributed to target audience</p>			
<b>Component 3: Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation</b>					
<p><b>Output 3.1</b></p> <p>Lessons learned captured and disseminated at national level</p>	Include a 1-2-page section on specific gender lessons learned and examination of how barriers can be overcome in the future.	<p><b>Baseline:</b> None</p> <p><b>Indicator:</b> Analysis complete, Y/N</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Analysis complete</p>	MNRE, with support from UNDP		Included in full task
<p><b>Output 3.2</b></p> <p>Data from pilot projects analysed and shared and learnings packaged into case studies, communication and training material made available online to support future developments</p>	<p>Use gender disaggregated data collection during both pilots to analyse M/F differences in electricity-linked decision-making, purchasing, use, ownership, custody, profit-making, etc.</p> <p>Open-ended ‘outcome harvesting’ can be used to explore other welfare impacts, such as changes to gender relations, time use, health, leisure, etc.</p>	<p><b>Baseline:</b> None</p> <p><b>Indicator:</b> Gender learning packages prepared and disseminated to target audiences.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> One.</p>	MNRE, with support from UNDP		10,000

Objective	Gender Action	Indicator and Targets	Responsible / Institutions	Timeline	Budget (USD)
	Package and share learnings with target audiences (National Dialogue, AMP, Community of Practice)				
<b>Output 3.3</b>  Knowledge network / Community of Practice established to promote MG development / rural energy access	None	<b>Baseline:</b> None  <b>Indicator:</b> None  <b>Target:</b> None	N/A		Included in full task
<b>Output 3.4</b>  Quality Assurance and Monitoring Framework for measuring, reporting and verification of the sustainable development impacts of MGs, including GHG emission reductions is developed and operationalized	Develop standard gender impact tracking indicators (e.g., % of appliance custodians who are women, % of residential connections jointly registered to household members, improved income of female-led PUE ventures, etc.)	<b>Baseline:</b> None  <b>Indicator:</b> Number of indicators defined with associated detailed data collection and measurement methodologies.  <b>Target:</b> One	MNRE, with support from UNDP		5,000

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