

Empowering Women in the Energy Sector

through

Development of Gender-Inclusive
Energy Policy Guidelines

SAARC Energy Centre

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Why Do Gender-Inclusive Energy Policies Matter?



— Policy Pathway to Sustainable and Inclusive Energy Systems —



GLOBAL EVIDENCE



Global Energy Workforce

Women account for around

20%

of the global energy workforce
(around one in five energy sector positions).

Source: IEA – Energy and Gender (2024)



Renewable Energy

Women comprise around

32%

of renewable energy employment
worldwide.

Source: IRENA – Renewable Energy:
A Gender Perspective (2025)



South Asia

Women remain significantly
underrepresented in technical,
managerial and decision-making
roles across the energy sector.

Sources: World Bank, IEA and
official national sources

Where Does South Asia Stand Today?

A regional snapshot of energy progress and gender inclusion across South Asia.



REGIONAL SNAPSHOT



Afghanistan

Energy sector recovery and electricity access remain national priorities.



Nepal

Community-based renewable energy programmes strengthen local participation.



Bhutan

National Energy Policy 2025 adopted.



Pakistan

Institutional focus on women in the energy sector.



India

Women in renewable energy initiatives promoting participation and entrepreneurship.



Maldives

Renewable energy transition linked with climate resilience.



Sri Lanka

Energy efficiency and renewable energy programmes with public engagement.



Bangladesh

Renewable Energy Policy 2025 approved, providing an updated framework for accelerating renewable energy deployment.

Current Policy Landscape Across SAARC



HOW MEMBER STATES ARE ADVANCING GENDER INCLUSION IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

Country	Lead Energy Institution	Current Policy & Institutional Progress	Next Policy Opportunity
 Afghanistan	Ministry of Energy and Water	Renewable Energy Policy recognises women's participation in renewable energy development.	Continue strengthening implementation in line with evolving national priorities.
 Bangladesh	Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources	Approved Renewable Energy Policy 2025 (June 2025) promotes sustainable and inclusive energy transition. While the policy recognises inclusive and sustainable energy development, explicit gender mainstreaming remains limited and continues to be supported through development partner initiatives.	Integrate explicit gender provisions, workforce targets, sex-disaggregated monitoring and implementation guidelines into the approved Renewable Energy Policy 2025 and related sector programmes.
 Bhutan	Ministry of Energy & Natural Resources	National Energy Policy 2025 emphasises sustainable, resilient and inclusive energy development.	Mainstream gender considerations throughout energy planning and institutional practices.
 India	Ministry of Power; Ministry of New and Renewable Energy	National initiatives promote women's participation in renewable energy and clean energy entrepreneurship.	Expand women's representation in technical, regulatory and leadership positions.
 Maldives	Ministry of Tourism and Environment	Renewable energy transition is linked with climate resilience and sustainable development.	Strengthen women's participation in energy planning, implementation and leadership.
 Nepal	Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation	Community-based renewable energy programmes have created opportunities for local participation.	Increase women's participation in technical professions, leadership and decision-making.
 Pakistan	Ministry of Energy	Growing recognition of gender inclusion through institutional initiatives and policy discussions.	Strengthen gender-responsive implementation, accountability and sector-wide monitoring.
 Sri Lanka	Ministry of Energy	Strong institutional focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy and public awareness.	Incorporate gender-responsive approaches into energy sector planning and workforce development.

Why Are Existing Approaches Not Enough?



Current Approaches

-  Capacity building
-  Awareness campaigns
-  Pilot projects
-  Mentoring initiatives
-  Short-term funding
-  Project-based results



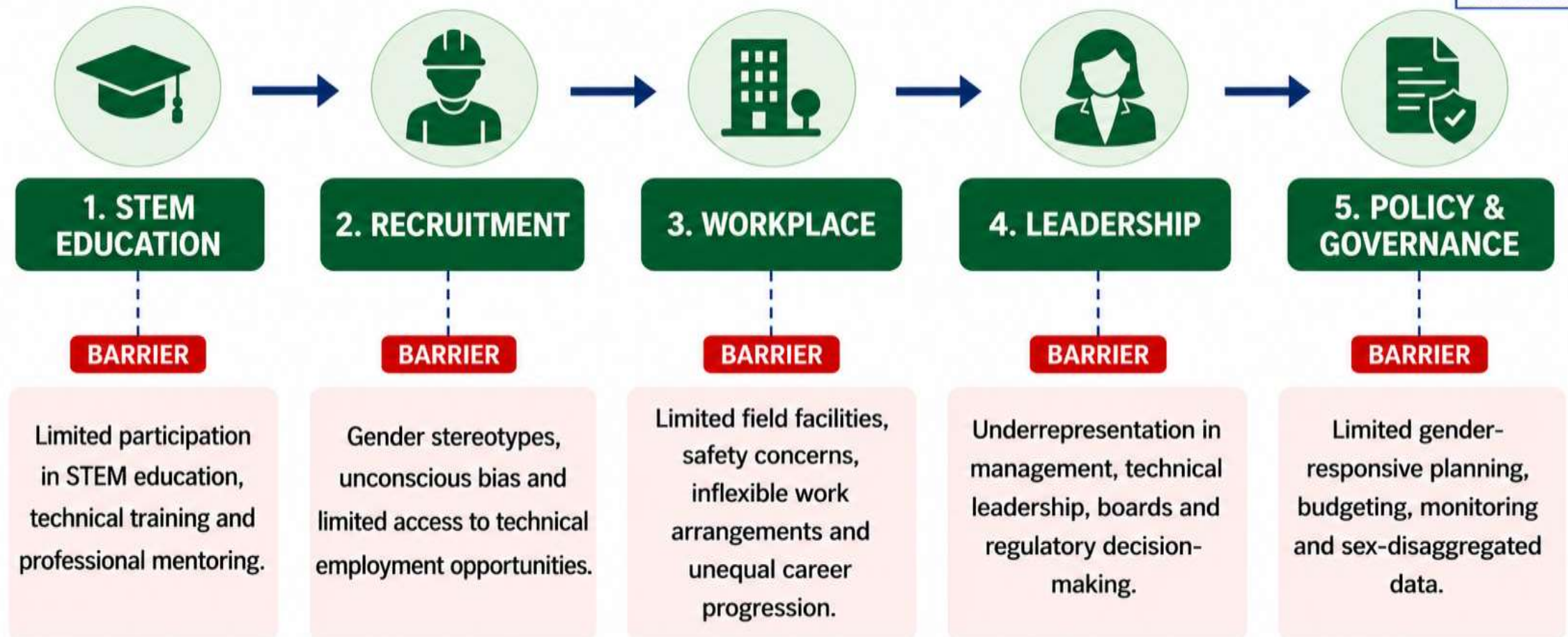
What Enables Lasting Change

-  Gender-responsive policies
-  Institutional leadership
-  Inclusive recruitment
-  Equal career progression
-  Gender-responsive budgeting
-  Sex-disaggregated data
-  Monitoring & evaluation
-  Accountability mechanisms

Key Barriers to Women's Participation in the Energy Sector

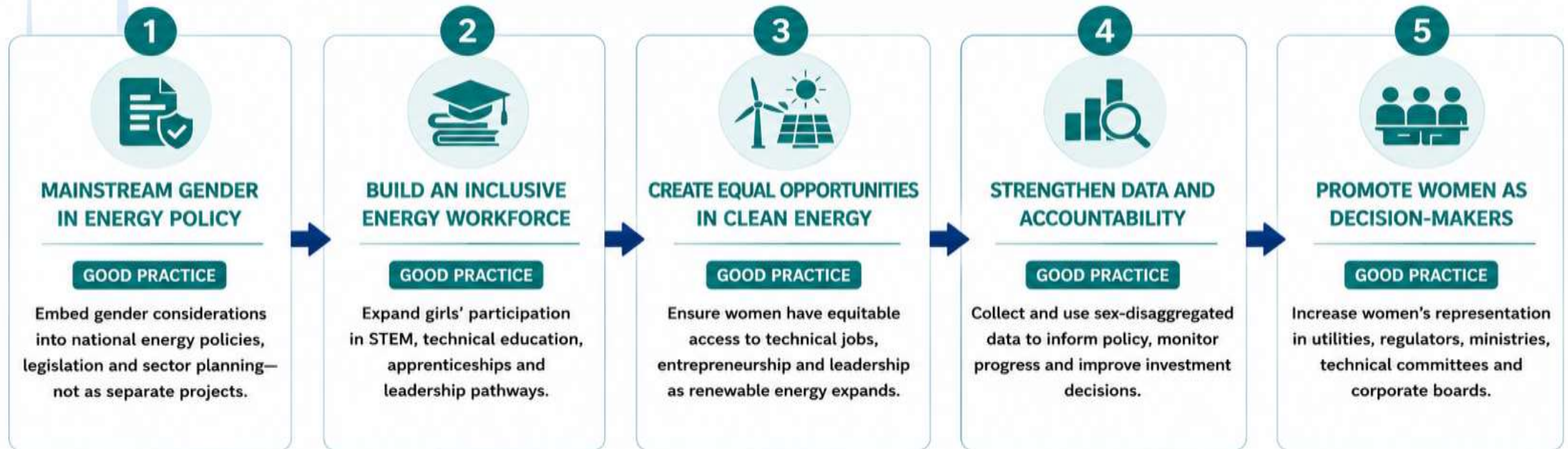


ENERGY WORKFORCE JOURNEY



What Can SAARC Learn from International Good Practices?

Global experience shows that sustainable progress comes from institutionalising gender within energy policies—not treating it as a standalone programme.



KEY LESSON FOR SAARC

The transition from participation to empowerment requires moving beyond isolated initiatives towards institutionalised, gender-responsive energy governance.

Essential Components of Gender-Inclusive Energy Policy Guidelines

Evidence from international organisations points to a common set of policy components that governments can adapt to national contexts.



COMPONENT	WHAT THE POLICY GUIDELINE SHOULD INCLUDE
 1. POLICY COMMITMENT	Clear gender-responsive objectives within energy, renewable energy and climate policies.
 2. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY	Defined roles for ministries, regulators, utilities, renewable energy agencies and gender focal points.
 3. WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION	Measures for recruitment, retention, promotion and technical career pathways for women.
 4. LEADERSHIP & DECISION-MAKING	Women's representation in boards, regulatory bodies, project committees and energy planning processes.
 5. SAFE & ENABLING WORKPLACES	Workplace safety, anti-harassment measures, field facilities, flexible work arrangements and equal opportunity systems.
 6. GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING	Dedicated budget lines for gender actions, training, capacity building and institutional reforms.
 7. PROJECT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION	Gender analysis, stakeholder consultation and inclusion measures in energy access, renewable energy and infrastructure projects.
 8. DATA, MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY	Sex-disaggregated data, measurable indicators, reporting systems and periodic review.



KEY INSIGHT

Effective guidelines should answer three questions:



Who is responsible?



What actions are required?



How will progress be measured?

From Policy to Practice: An Implementation Pathway

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES



MINISTRIES

- Develop gender-responsive energy policies.
- Allocate resources and coordinate implementation.
- Ensure policy coherence across energy, climate and education sectors.



REGULATORS

- Integrate gender considerations into regulations and licensing.
- Include gender in reporting requirements and compliance frameworks.
- Monitor utility performance on gender indicators.



UTILITIES & ENERGY COMPANIES

- Promote equitable recruitment and retention.
- Ensure safe workplaces and zero tolerance for harassment.
- Invest in technical training, leadership development and inclusive culture.



ACADEMIA & TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

- Expand access to STEM education for girls and young women.
- Offer technical training, research and mentoring opportunities.
- Build pathways to professional and leadership roles.



INDUSTRY & PRIVATE SECTOR

- Support apprenticeships and skills development for women.
- Promote innovation, entrepreneurship and women-led solutions.
- Encourage supplier diversity and women's participation across the clean energy value chain.



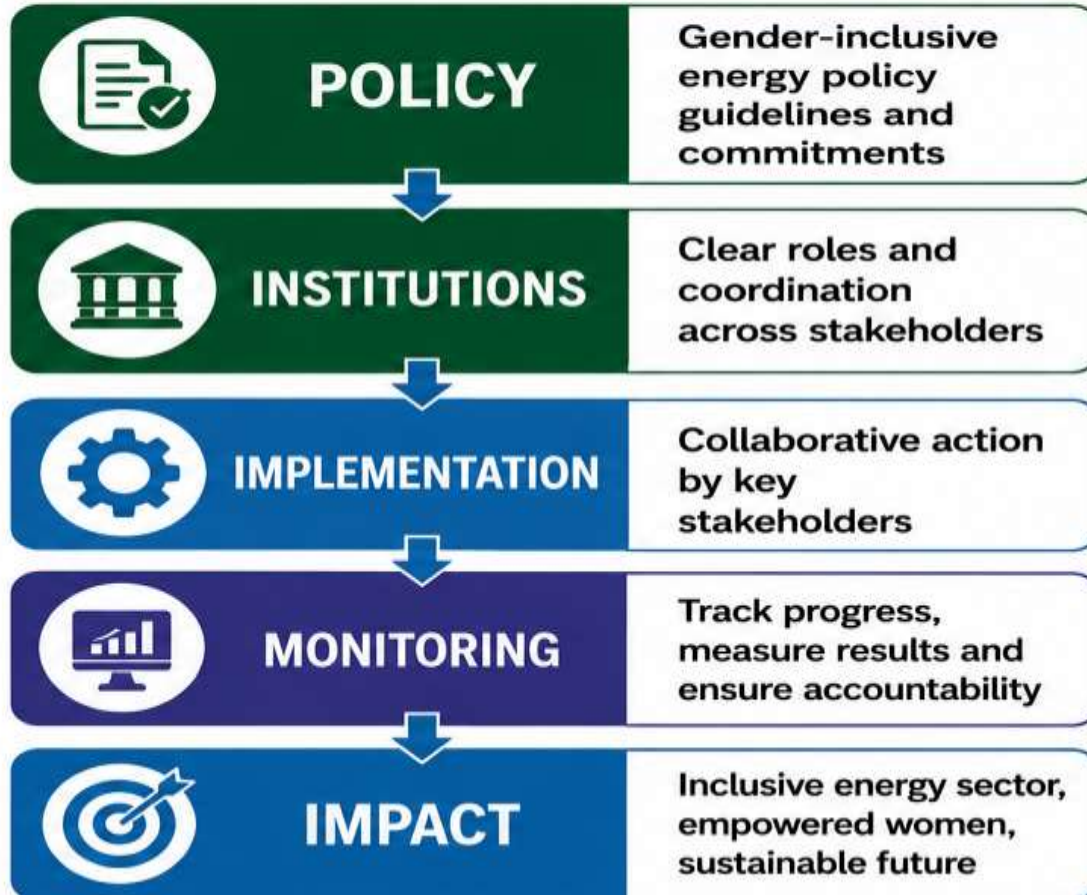
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS & CIVIL SOCIETY

- Provide technical assistance, financing and capacity building.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning exchanges.
- Support independent monitoring and advocacy for accountability.

From Policy to Practice: An Implementation Pathway



KEY MESSAGE: Gender-inclusive energy policies achieve lasting impact only when responsibilities are clearly assigned, institutions work collaboratively and progress is continuously monitored.



CROSS-CUTTING ENABLERS



POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Strong leadership and visible championing at all levels.



INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION

Alignment and collaboration across institutions and sectors.



SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

Adequate and predictable resources for gender actions.



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Build skills, knowledge and institutional capabilities.



EVIDENCE-BASED MONITORING

Use data and evidence to track progress and drive continuous improvement.

Measuring Progress: Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators



KEY MESSAGE: What gets measured gets managed. Gender-inclusive energy policies should include clear indicators to monitor participation, leadership, institutional performance and policy implementation over time.



1



WORKFORCE & EMPLOYMENT

SUGGESTED KPIs

- ✓ Percentage of women in the total energy workforce
- ✓ Percentage of women in technical positions
- ✓ Percentage of women recruited annually
- ✓ Staff retention rate by gender

2



LEADERSHIP & DECISION-MAKING

SUGGESTED KPIs

- ✓ Percentage of women in senior management
- ✓ Percentage of women on utility boards and governing bodies
- ✓ Percentage of women serving on technical committees and regulatory bodies
- ✓ Women leading energy projects and programmes

3



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

SUGGESTED KPIs

- ✓ Women participating in STEM and technical training
- ✓ Number of women completing professional certification programmes
- ✓ Number of women receiving mentoring or leadership development
- ✓ Participation in energy sector scholarships and internships

4



POLICY & INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

SUGGESTED KPIs

- ✓ Gender-responsive provisions included in national energy policies
- ✓ Utilities with gender action plans
- ✓ Institutions applying gender-responsive budgeting
- ✓ Energy projects conducting gender analysis

5



MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY

SUGGESTED KPIs

- ✓ Availability of sex-disaggregated workforce data
- ✓ Annual gender performance reports published
- ✓ Periodic policy reviews completed
- ✓ Progress against national gender and energy targets

Measuring Progress: Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators



KEY PRINCIPLE

Monitoring should measure not only **participation**, but also **influence**, **leadership**, **institutional change** and **long-term outcomes**.



CROSS-CUTTING PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE MEASUREMENT



Use **sex-disaggregated** data



Align with national gender and energy targets



Ensure data quality, consistency and comparability



Engage stakeholders in data collection and review



Use evidence to improve policies and programmes

RECOMMENDED REPORTING CYCLE



Annual workforce reporting



Policy review every 3–5 years



Utility performance monitoring



Continuous improvement through evidence

Priority Actions for SAARC Member States

A Regional Action Agenda for SAARC Member States

Regional priorities for advancing gender-inclusive energy governance across South Asia



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EXPECTED OUTCOMES



More diverse and skilled energy workforce

A stronger pipeline of women leaders and professionals driving the energy sector forward.



Stronger institutions and governance

Robust, accountable and gender-responsive institutions that deliver inclusive and effective energy governance.



Better policy implementation

Well-designed policies implemented effectively for lasting change and measurable impact.



Greater innovation and productivity

Inclusive approaches that unlock creativity, efficiency and sustainable energy solutions.



More inclusive and resilient energy transitions

Equitable, sustainable and climate-resilient energy systems that leave no one behind.



KEY MESSAGE: South Asia has the opportunity to move from isolated initiatives towards institutionalised, gender-responsive energy governance through coordinated policy, institutional and workforce reforms.

Empowering women in the energy sector is not solely a workforce objective—it is a **governance strategy that **strengthens institutions**, **improves decision-making** and **accelerates sustainable energy development**.**

Key Takeaways

Four messages to guide gender-inclusive energy governance across SAARC



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**Thank
you**