

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Gender Inclusive Recruitment and Selection

An overview for clean energy incubator and accelerator programs

September 2019



This document was prepared for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Resources to Advance LEDS Implementation (RALI) Program by ICF under Agreement No. AID-OAA-LA-14-00010. The contents are not the responsibility of USAID and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Government. The contents are not the responsibility of USAID and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Government.

Acknowledgments

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For More Information

Please visit climatelinks.org/projects/rali to learn more about the Resources to Advance LEDS Implementation (RALI) project.

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Published September 2019
Prepared by ICF under the USAID Resources to Advance LEDS Implementation (RALI) activity. Visit: climatelinks.org/projects/rali
Period of Performance: 2014-2019

Introduction to Gender Measurement and Evaluation (M&E)

Clean energy has become a major growth sector, with ever increasing entrepreneurial and business opportunities arising as countries seek to transition to low emission energy systems. Clean energy startup incubators and accelerators are helping drive this charge by serving as an important catalyst for innovative leadership in the sector. Given their leading role in driving innovation, it is important that these incubators and accelerators provide equal opportunities for women entrepreneurs and business leaders through the prioritization of gender equity in their operations.

Recognizing this need, the USAID Resources to Advance LEADS Implementation (RALI) project has developed a gender equity toolkit to support the institutional prioritization of gender equity (gender mainstreaming) for clean energy incubators and accelerators. Quantifying the impacts of improvements in gender equity and representation through monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks is an important step for entities within the clean energy startup space to assess gender equity initiatives they may adopt and to track and communicate their progress.

M&E is particularly important if considered in terms of the significant role that it can play in fundraising and marketing activities. While gender equity is an important goal in its own right and has been shown to help businesses achieve higher performance on financial metrics and growth, innovate, and improve performance on complex challenges, it is also a priority for many donors and programs, including USAID, GIZ, and the California Clean Energy Fund (CalCEF). An M&E framework will allow incubators and accelerators, and their supporting partners to work towards the goal of providing gender equitable services and track their progress along the way.

Since 2015, through the Engendering Utilities program, USAID has supported enhanced women's participation and gender equity in the utility sector. Through demand-driven engagement, the Engendering Utilities program has applied evidence-based best practices, including human resource interventions across the full employee life cycle, to advance gender equity across 14 global utilities (USAID 2019).

GIZ recently published their 2019 Gender Strategy, which is a binding framework for embedding and promoting gender equity throughout the company and services they provide (GIZ 2018). Additionally, GIZ signed the UN's Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), which vows to establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality; promote education, training and professional development for women; and measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality, among other objectives (GIZ 2015, UN 2019).

CalCEF has also participated in initiatives that promote gender equity improvement in clean energy businesses. For instance, 80% of CalCEF explorers in residence (XIRs) are female, and these women and people of color are given the financial launch pad (ranging between \$10,000 and \$25,000) and mentorship to develop clean energy businesses over three months of research, analysis, and other pre-investment stage activities.

Having evidence from M&E will help donors such as these to understand whether their expectations are realistic or not, whether these expectations have been met, or are in the process of being met and whether the resources allocated to the incubator have been allocated appropriately.

Identifying the results of gender equity improvement efforts is integral to ensuring a successful and effective program. The selection of an appropriate Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework that contains meaningful gender equity outcomes and indicators will strengthen accountability of the efforts through two overarching objectives:

- To track the activities, inputs, and outputs under the gender equity initiatives to assess whether the initiatives are having the intended effects (answers the question – are things being done the right way?)
- To assess if the gender equity initiatives have achieved the desired results in terms of outcomes and impacts (answers the question – are the right things being done?)

Each gender equity intervention includes a set of relevant SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) indicators tracking implementation, progress, and outcomes. The SMART indicators cover aspects of training and recruitment, finance, the project cycle, and capacity building, which will be used to measure program outcomes. Gender-based indicators quantify sex-disaggregated data in a project activity by tracking changes in men and women's resources and opportunities. Identifying and monitoring gender-specific results and indicators measure progress toward gender equity (Sibyl and Kuriakose 2017). As part of the M&E plan, a data collection program should be implemented to compile relevant data for measuring each indicator.

Identifying Gender-Based Indicators

Identifying indicator types to measure outcomes from planned activities is a key component of developing an M&E Framework. When evaluating gender representation in clean energy initiatives, it is important that a variety of indicators be used, including those to measure recruitment, economic, social, policy, and capacity building outcomes. By selecting indicators in multiple areas, implementers can monitor gender inclusion efforts more comprehensively. A review of commonly used M&E indicators in the gender and clean energy field showed a range of indicator types, including those from the following categories:

- **Recruitment:** Number and proportion of female attendees at pre-application recruitment events, and who applied for the program
- **Perceptions, Beliefs, Attitudes:** Proportion of staff/participants by gender who assess themselves to be competent to mainstream gender equity
- **Training:** Number of staff who participated in the gender equity trainings, number and percentage of women and men brought in to be speakers, mentors, or other leadership roles
- **Start-up Success Metrics:** Capital raised, revenue, product launches, cash flow, commercialized operations, disaggregated by gender
- **Start-up Success Post-Program Metrics:** Return on investments, valuations, revenue, employees, survival rate, disaggregated by gender

All indicators should be considered in the context of institutional capacity and data availability, which may be more limited in smaller incubators or accelerators (UKERC and IRENA 2014). If, for example, data for one indicator is more resource intensive to obtain, it may be necessary to consider other indicators. Because resource constraints may limit the number of indicators that can be considered, program implementers should ensure that they select the most effective indicators. Furthermore, a variety of both quantitative and qualitative indicators is recommended to evaluate gender equity programs. Qualitative gender equity indicators assess perceptions, beliefs, or attitudes, and how these change, which is key when determining the effectiveness of a training program (ADB 2013). When surveys are used to attain information, however, it is effective to quantify changes in qualitative dimensions.

Best Practices for Effective M&E

Effective M&E frameworks ensure that the goals, purposes, or objectives of the program or project explicitly refer to gender or reflect women's needs and priorities as well as men's. Managers need to follow best practices to formulate clear, measurable objectives and indicators and link them with available annual information sources. M&E must be an integral part of project design, not added as an afterthought.

Utilize SMART Criteria

Outcome indicators should all be formulated in accordance with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) criteria (IKI 2016). GIZ notes that although the SMART formulation is helpful and frequently used, further and more specific guidance should be used when setting gender-specific indicators (GIZ 2014). IKI (2016) defines SMART criteria as follows:

- **Specific** – Defined unambiguously and precisely.
- **Measurable** – Provide measurement constructs (quantitative measures or descriptions of qualitative conditions) and methods of data collection/sources of verification.
- **Achievable** – It should be possible to reach the target value of the indicator with the available resources and under the prevailing conditions.
- **Relevant** – The information provided by the indicator should be of relevance to describing the outcome and outputs.
- **Time-bound** – Equipped with a timeframe and achieved no later than by the end of the project.

USAID (Undated) also emphasizes the importance of selecting **culturally appropriate** indicators that are relevant to the cultural context. What makes sense or is appropriate to use in one incubator or accelerator may not be in another depending on the specific cultural context of where they operate.

Assessing Baseline Capacity and Commitment

It is important to consider whether incubator and accelerator staff and supporting partners have the **capacity** and **commitment** to collect, retrieve, and analyze data on gender equity indicators.

Incubators and accelerators can reinforce staff **commitment** to gender equity objectives by clearly linking them to the overall objective of facilitating the creation of smart energy startups. Incubators and accelerators, and their supporting partners, should emphasize that equitable gender representation in business and leadership positions can help businesses achieve higher performance on financial metrics and growth, promote innovation, and improve performances on complex challenges.

Incubators and accelerators, and their supporting partners, will also need to build **capacity** to not only implement but also monitor and evaluate progress towards gender equity. Incubator and accelerator program staff, and supporting partner staff, including both men and women, should be trained to track, analyze, and report on gender disaggregated data.

Ensuring a Transparent Evaluation Process

Ensuring transparency is important for the success of the M&E process. Standard best practices recommend that M&E frameworks include internal or external quality control mechanisms such as a peer review, which can be conducted within the company or by an external evaluator. Because donors, government bodies, and some investors have an interest in promoting gender equitable clean energy entrepreneurship, it is also recommended that communication systems be developed to ensure that results are effectively communicated to key stakeholders, including investors and employees (OECD Undated, OECD 2010, and UNDP 2009). This communication could take the form of annual reports that benchmark the progress of gender equity goals for incubator and accelerator cohorts.

Employing a Participatory Approach

Wherever possible, gender equity results and indicators should be developed in a participatory way with key stakeholders such as clean energy incubators and accelerators, investors, and individual employees. While this principle is true for all types of projects and indicators, it is even more important for gender equity indicators because they assess changes in gender relations in the economy and in social institutions, which are based on deeply held beliefs about social norms and behaviors (ADB 2013). Both men and women should be involved in all steps of the program, the collection of data, and the analysis of program outcomes.

Incubators and accelerators should engage all key stakeholders in the clean energy startup space, including new and mature clean energy businesses, investors, past program participants, and supporting partners. Benefits of this approach may include improved data access, greater transparency, and enhanced stakeholder participation in the process. In order to facilitate effective participation and coordination, programs should establish and/or strengthen arrangements with these stakeholders to collect data on recruitment and cohort outcomes. This can include creating a framework that defines clear roles for staff at the incubators and

accelerators, coordination plans and schedules, and a process for gathering and synthesizing input. Throughout the program, it is important to constantly elicit feedback from all stakeholders, including incubator and accelerator staff, cohorts, and funders (Sibyl and Kuriakose 2017).

M&E Framework for Gender Equity in Clean Energy Startups

The proposed M&E Framework for clean energy startups in Table I describes the indicators chosen to measure gender equity intervention outcomes.

Adopting some indicators will require higher levels of effort, in terms of staff time, financial resources, and technical capacity, than others. For example, post-program metrics using survey data may be more difficult to develop, while programs may be able to repurpose existing data for recruitment and training activities. It is recommended that incubator and accelerator programs consider these indicators in the context of their existing capacity, resources, and the type of gender equity intervention implemented. Table I indicates the likely level of effort required to adopt each indicator; however, this may vary by program.

As this M&E Framework is implemented, indicators can be refined to meet new needs and incorporate new data sources as they become available. This can facilitate a more complete picture of gender equity progress.

Data Sources

Data sources for the M&E Framework will vary by indicator; however, they can generally be categorized as either existing data sources or new data sources.

- **Existing Data Sources:** These data sources are those that incubator and accelerator programs may already have and could include email lists, event agendas, sign-in sheets (printed or electronic), and program recruitment and selection documents. Some of these data sources may need to be combined in order to provide data for specific indicators. For example, a program may need to compile multiple sign in sheets to evaluate the overall proportion of women at their recruitment events.
- **New Data Sources:** These data sources are those that incubator and accelerator programs may need to develop. If not already collected, this could include staff and post-program cohort surveys as well as reviews of recent investor and startup industry news.

Data Collection

When developing an M&E Framework it is important that a **person, committee, or unit responsible for data collection** is identified and that they have the needed capacity to complete this task. Specifically, the responsible party should have the authority within the program to actually collect data and the human and financial resources needed to carry out the task.

A **timeline** for data collection should also be developed. This will likely vary by program. For recruitment and training indicators, data collection would likely need to occur when these activities are underway. Start-up success and post-program metrics should be collected in regular intervals, which can be determined by each incubator and accelerator program. A data collection timeline could also be determined by key stakeholders, including program funders.

In cases where data collection may require a higher level of effort, incubator and accelerator programs may decide to conduct less frequent data collection. Data collection could become more frequent if additional capacity becomes available.

Post-program Metrics Data Collection

Post-program metrics may be the most difficult to collect. If a survey is used, best practices, such as keeping surveys concise, avoiding too many open-ended questions, and offering incentives for completion, should be considered. For incubators and accelerators, incentives could include small monetary awards or additional access to networking or training opportunities for participants. Due to low response rates, cohort surveys may not always provide sufficient data for post-program metrics. When this occurs, alternative methods for

gathering data should be considered. For example, data from industry news, including press releases from investors and cohort member startup companies could be gathered to provide an indication of post-program outcomes.¹ Some of this data collection could be done through automated news alerts, such as Google Alerts.

¹ The website [e27](https://e27.co/startups) is one example of a startup industry data tracker that could be leveraged for the M&E Framework. For more information see <https://e27.co/startups>. Other trade publications in the region may provide additional resources.

Table 1: Proposed Measurement and Evaluation (M&E) Indicators

| Indicator # | Indicator | Units Measured | Data Source | Who is Measuring? | Level of Effort |
|---|--|----------------|---|--|-----------------|
| Recruitment | | | | | |
| 1 | Proportion of women at recruiting events | % | • Sign-in sheets/ recruitment database | Incubators/Accelerators | Low |
| 2 | Proportion of women subscribing to email lists | % | • Email list | Incubators/Accelerators | Low |
| 3 | Proportion of women targeted by social media advertising | % | • Social media advertising strategy | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 4 | Proportion of prospective women-led companies reached out to by the incubator/accelerators | % | • Program count | Incubators/Accelerators | Low |
| 5 | Proportion of women who apply to the program | % | • Program applications | Incubators/Accelerators | Low |
| 6 | Proportion of women accepted to the program | % | • Program acceptances | Incubators/Accelerators | Low |
| 7 | Proportion of women in the program | % | • Program statistics | Incubators/Accelerators | Low |
| 8 | Proportion of women who apply and are hired for jobs | % | • Supporting Partner • Job applications and hiring | Supporting Partner | High |
| Perceptions, Beliefs and Attitudes | | | | | |
| 9 | Proportion of staff/participants by gender who assess themselves to be competent to mainstream gender equity into decision-making processes. | % | • Staff interviews • Training feedback | Incubator/Accelerator and Supporting Partner | Medium |
| 10 | Proportion of male staff/participants who have publicly and privately advocated for equity, inclusion, and diversity | % | • Staff interviews | Incubator/Accelerator and Supporting Partner | Medium |
| Training | | | | | |
| 11 | Number of staff who participated in the gender equity trainings | Number | • Sign-in sheets | Incubator/Accelerator and Supporting Partner | Low |
| 12 | Percentage of women speakers | % | • Incubator/Accelerator count | Incubator/Accelerator and Supporting Partner | Low |
| 13 | Percentage of women serving as mentors | % | • Mentor sign-ups | Incubator/Accelerator and Supporting Partner | Low |
| 14 | Events that include dedicated gender sessions | Number | • Speaker session notes | Incubator/Accelerator and Supporting Partner | Low |
| 15 | Number of materials developed that discuss gender (e.g., blog posts, flyers, newsletter sub-sections) | Number | • Incubator count from blog posts, flyers, newsletters, and other advertisement | Incubator/Accelerator and Supporting Partner | Low |

| Indicator # | Indicator | Units Measured | Data Source | Who is Measuring? | Level of Effort |
|--|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| 16 | Procedures for handling harassment complaints | Level of Detail (Low-High) | • Incubators/Accelerators | Incubator/Accelerator and Supporting Partner | Low |
| 17 | Number of women aware and satisfied with procedures for registering harassment complaints | Number | • Anonymous staff surveys | Incubator/Accelerator and Supporting Partner | Medium |
| Start-up Success Metrics | | | | | |
| 18 | Capital raised during program, by gender | \$ | • Cohort surveys | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 19 | Average monthly cash flow during program, by gender | \$ | • Cohort surveys | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 20 | Commercialized operations during program, by gender | Number | • Cohort surveys | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 21 | Capital raised X years after program, by gender | \$ | • Cohort surveys, industry news | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| Start-up Success Post-Program Metrics | | | | | |
| 22 | Average monthly revenue X years after program, by gender | \$ | • Cohort surveys, industry news | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 23 | Product launches X years after program, by gender | Number | • Cohort surveys, industry news | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 24 | Average monthly cash X years after program, by gender | \$ | • Cohort surveys, industry news | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 25 | Commercialized operations X years after program, by gender | Number | • Cohort surveys, industry news | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 26 | Return on investment (ROI) X years after program, by gender | %, \$ | • Cohort surveys, industry news | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 27 | Average valuations X years after program, by gender | \$ | • Cohort surveys, industry news | Incubators/Accelerators | High |
| 28 | Survival rate of businesses X years after program, by gender | % | • Cohort surveys, industry news | Incubators/Accelerators | High |

*Supporting Partners may include donors or other stakeholders funding or working with a specific incubator or accelerator program.

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