

**GENDER ANALYSIS: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT WATER RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT IN MALAWI**

PART OF THE REPORT ON STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

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1. Introduction

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) is a multi-stakeholder action network dedicated to working with countries towards the equitable, sustainable, and efficient management of their water resources. It comprises 3,000+ partner organisations in over 180 countries. Its network of 65+ Country Water Partnerships (CWPs) and 13 Regional Water Partnerships (RWPs) convenes, and brokers coordinated action by government and non-government actors. As an action network bridging the global to the local and the local to the global, GWP seeks to lead systems changes at all levels, as they pertain to providing water solutions, effective policy and financial planning for water, and catalysing gender responsive climate-resilient development. GWP accomplishes this by initiating steps with its local partners which lead to incremental shifts, resulting in a larger system change.

GWP, together with partners, is implementing the Global Water Leadership in a Changing Climate (GWL) programme, with the support of the Government of the United Kingdom, through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCDO). The objective of the GWL programme is to strengthen leadership and collaboration in water resources and WASH governance at national and global levels, in addition to supporting the enabling environment for resilient and sustainable WASH services. The programme supports 10 countries from 2021 to 2024, including Malawi.

As part of the programme, GWP is supporting an inclusive and participatory government-led, multi-stakeholder change process to identify systemic and financial constraints in water resource management and define strategies to overcome them. In Malawi, UNICEF is also supporting a multi-stakeholder change process focusing on inclusive and climate resilient WASH services under the programme.

This part of the report focuses on Gender-Sensitive Analysis of the water resources management and WASH sector in Malawi.

2. Aims and Objectives

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3. Key Findings

3.1 Policy Gender Analysis

The policy analysis was based on the Desk Review that was done as part of the Stakeholder Identification and Mapping exercise. Selected key policy documents in the water resources management and sanitation sector were subjected to analysis using the “Feminist Policy Analytical Framework”. Analysis using the framework was done to understand aspects of policy responsiveness to gender equality in the sector. Areas of assessment covered were:

- a. *Policy content.* Whether or not the policy:
 - Background and/or situation analysis adequately explores issues of women

- Whether or not sex disaggregated data is presented throughout the document
 - Issues of gender are mainstreamed throughout the document
 - Recognition that different categories of women experience conditions differently
- b. *Policy process*. Whether or not the policy:
- Refers to women’s empowerment with respect to women’s agency, resources, and/or achievements
 - Mentions consulting women, or women civil society groups and associations in the policy development process
 - Aims to increase women’s leadership roles in the sector
- c. *Transformation (policy Outcomes)*. Whether or not the policy:
- Aims to transform unequal roles and relationships
 - Considers ways to overcome gender norms and social traditions that impair women’s involvement in the sector
 - Aims to address the specific needs and interests of women working in the sector
- d. *Regional and international contextualisation (compliance)*. Whether or not:
- The policy complies with international and regional conventions, policies, laws and commitments that safeguard women’s rights
- e. *Rigour of policy conclusions*.
- Whether or not the policy conclusions include specific targets, commitments, indicators, or next steps regarding planning so as to ensure accountability for implementation

3.1.1 The National Water Policy (2005)

The review was with the recognition that the Policy was undergoing review. In its unrevised form, the policy analysis using a gender lens showed that the situation analysis of the policy document does not mention gender, nor address gender inequality as one of the root causes of poor water governance and access in Malawi. Out of the twelve sections in the document, gender issues are mentioned only in one section that deals with Rural Water Supply. A gender-responsive policy should have provided guidance in almost all the sections, for example, water resources management and development, water quality and pollution control, Urban, Peri-Urban and Market Centres Water Services, agriculture, irrigation, disaster management, etc.

In addition, data presented in the document is not disaggregated by gender. Even in the Rural Water Supply section where gender is mentioned, the policy document does not mention empowerment of women, girls, and other vulnerable groups except for an “increase in proportion” of such groups in water point committees. Besides, it does not set specific targets of the proportions to be met. In this regard, the policy document portrays women and other gender categories as vulnerable recipients of water services, and not as active players in the water resource management, development, supply, and WASH activities. This perpetuates the gender bias that women are passive recipients of development interventions.

Moreover, the policy document does not specify if women or women groups representing women or other vulnerable categories were consulted in the process of policy development. Again, women are seen as passive recipients of services, who do not, in themselves, have a voice. Negative norms that constrain women's participation in water resources management and WASH are not mentioned, neither are specific needs and interests of women, girls, and other vulnerable gender categories mentioned, therefore no indication is given of how they will be addressed..

Since the policy document falls short of these critical gender issues, it does not meet the regional or international requirements for a gender responsive policy.

Overall assessment is that the **policy falls short of being gender responsive, let alone gender transformative**. The outcomes of implementation of this policy will certainly not transform inequalities that exist between men and women, boys and girls in the water and sanitation sector. Therefore we recommend that something should be done in the review of the policy to make it more gender responsive and transformative.

3.1.2 The Water Resources Act of No.2 of 2013

The second document reviewed was the Water Resources Act of 2023. The review shows that the Act does not mention anything on gender. It establishes the National Water Resources Authority (NWRA) and Catchment Management Authorities, but does not guide on the gender composition of both the Board and the Catchment Management Authorities. As for the composition of the NWRA, the Act says:

“The powers and functions of the Authority shall be exercised and performed under the direction of a governing board, which shall consist of__ (a) The following members appointed by the Minister__ (i) a representative of one of the established catchment management committees; (ii) one representative of associations of water users; (iii) one representative of a non-governmental organization (NGO) engaged in the water sector; and (iv) one member as the Minister may, in his discretion, appoint from the private sector as representing key private sector stakeholders.

It further says:

“In making the appointments, other than of the ex-officio members, the Minister shall have regard to__ (a) the educational qualifications, experience, expertise, character and integrity of potential candidates for membership; and (b) the degree to which water users, or water users of particular kinds, are represented on the board at the time the appointment is made....”

This in effect, sustains status quo on gender inequality since most women may not have the requisite qualifications and experience in the field of water that has traditionally been dominated by men.

General assessment is that the Act is not gender responsive. A review of similar policy and legal frameworks in the water and related sectors showed similar trends of non-responsiveness to gender equality.

3.2 Gender participation in policy and management decisions

Fifteen institutions across the water and related sectors responded to the tool which was sent to them by email. The following is the summary of their responses.

Gender composition at senior management and policy level

Of the top five positions in the institutions that responded to the questionnaire, women comprised of only 29%, which indicates low female participation at senior management and policy levels.

Institutions' key functions, responsibilities, or mandates

The institutions involved in this study were mostly operating at Advocacy/networking (58.9%), Capacity building (46.4%), Research/consultancy (35.7%), and programme/project implementation (33.9%), and few operated at financing level (17.9%, mainly International NGOs), or at policy level (16.1%, mostly high level. government institutions).

Service coverage and primary target groups

The contacted institutions mostly operated at community level (51.8%), district (32.1%), and national (28.6%) levels, primarily providing services to men (64.3%), women (64.3%), boys (42.9%), and girls (42.9%). In principle, services were provided equally across sexes, but the main focus was on adults, more than the youths, who were said to be mostly in school.

Stakeholder potential roles

Participating institutions indicated the following as potential roles for enhancing inclusive gender transformative and resilient water resources management and WASH:

- Community mobilization,
- Climate change adaptation and resilience building capacity development,
- IWRM capacity-building,
- Gender mainstreaming capacity development,
- Research/Consultancy, and
- Advocacy and/or networking

