

InnWater Article

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion



INN WATER

Promoting social innovation to renew multi-level and cross sector water governance



Context

As parts of projects funded by the European Commission under the Europe Horizon Programm, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) are essentials. Since 2022, the European Commission requests that certain organisations dispose of a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) to be eligible at funding.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion are crucial issues in natural resources management and public services. Historically, policies and decisions in terms of water management have often been developed without taking into account the specific needs of different groups, especially women and marginalised/under-represented social groups. However, these groups play a key role in the access, use and management of water, particularly in domestic, agricultural and community activities. Making sure to adopt an inclusive and fair approach allows not only to better meet everyone's needs but also to strengthen the durability of policies and infrastructures.

What is Gender Equality and Social Inclusion?

“Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a concept that addresses improving access to livelihood assets and services for ALL, including the women, poor, and excluded. It supports more inclusive policies and mindsets and increases the voice and influence of all including of the women, poor and excluded.”¹

GESI are not just ethical principles, but are also essential leverage for a fair and sustainable management of water resources. In many cases, gender inequalities and social disparities influence directly water access, decision-making in terms of water governance and resilience to water crisis. GESI's integration thus allow to guarantee a better sharing of water policies' benefits and to encourage a pro-active participation of all stakeholders.

¹https://un.org.np/sites/default/files/doc_publication/202009/Gender%20Equality%20and%20Social%20Inclusion_1.pdf

GESI at the core of InnWater

With this in mind, InnWater is engaged to actively integrate GESI in all activities throughout a 5 fundamentals principles charter :

- **Inclusive Management Practices** ensuring that all voices, including under-represented groups' ones, are heard during the internal project life.
- **Integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Objectives** in every phases of the project, from conception to implementation, in the different activities (meetings, workshops, on-site experimentations...).
- **A special attention to Inclusive Communication** to avoid stereotypes and raise awareness on this topic.
- **An assessment of InnWater's Impact on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion**, by gathering feedback, lessons learned, recommendations.
- **A regular Monitoring of Gender Equality** in the project, especially thanks to a dedicated team of partners.

A self-assessment checklist has been distributed to project partners to regularly remind these principles to be applied as much as possible during meetings and activities.

Because access to safe drinking water is a fundamental human right, at InnWater Consortium we believe that sustainable and effective management requires a truly inclusive approach.

CHARTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

1 INCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES for the duration of the project.

- Ensure gender diversity in the project's decision-making bodies,
- Raise awareness and initiate discussions on gender issues,
- Actively encourage the participation of all genders, with particular focus on disadvantaged groups
- Creating an inclusive working environment.

2 GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION in InnWater ACTIVITIES

- Move towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5) "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls",
- Pay attention to gender balance and representation of vulnerable groups in InnWater activities,
- Test and validate the results of the project from a gender point of view,
- Use the checklist.

3 SPECIAL ATTENTION TO INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

- Use inclusive language,
- Pay attention to gender diversity in communication products,
- Avoid gender stereotypes in visuals,
- Avoid communication that reinforces gender stereotypes,
- Communicating the integration of the gender dimension into the project.

Social characteristics to be aware of include, but are not limited to:

- *Gender*
- *Race*
- *Class*
- *Disability*
- *Marital status*
- *Immigration status*
- *Geographical location*
- *Level of education*
- *Religion*
- *Ethnicity*

4 IMPACT OF InnWater IMPLEMENTATION ON GENDER

- Consider InnWater objectives under the light of gender balance,
- Identify inequalities, barriers and opportunities,
- Identify good practices integrating the gender dimension and lessons learned to pass them on.

5 MONITORING GENDER EQUALITY IN InnWater

- Carry out a gender analysis of InnWater activities,
- Define and use gender-specific indicators to improve knowledge (adapt UNESCO indicators).

Figure 1: Charter for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

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