République du Sénégal **-------** Un Peuple – Un But – Une Foi ---------- 	

ASER Solar Rural Electrification Project

Rural Electrification Project by Mini-grids of 1000 villages in seven (07) regions of SENEGAL.

Fatick, Kaffrine, Kaolack, Kolda, Kédougou, Tambacounda and Saint-Louis

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Gender Action Plan

Revised Version

PREPARED BY:

PYRAMIDE ENVIRONNEMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Cité Keur DAMEL 3e étage – Appt 3, Dakar- SÉNÉGAL /
Tél. : 77 645 38 73 /
E-mail : pyramideconsultants@gmail.com

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AGENCE SENEGALAISE D'ELECTRIFICATION RURALE
SENEGALESE AGENCY FOR RURAL ELECTRIFICATION (ASER)

Incorporating the gender dimension into ASER Solar Rural Electrification Project




Table

I. Introduction

Senegal's National Rural Electrification Programme (PNER), piloted by ASER, aims to make electricity an instrument in the fight against poverty through the creation of wealth and jobs in rural areas. To achieve this, it wants to adopt a dynamic strategy, particularly with regard to alternative energies to hydrocarbons, which have an invaluable potential.

Statistics show that the share of renewable energy in Senegal's total energy production is still very low: **10.66% in 2017, with a target of 40% in 2030**. In a context of climate change, it is important to develop strategies including the installation of mini-solar networks for the benefit, in particular, of vulnerable groups that tend to take more wood resources than nature is capable of regenerating.

However, when formulating the programme, ASER did not take into account from the outset a differentiation between groups of men and women and their needs, taking as a reference the neutrality of energy policy. Projects have been designed specifically for women's groups to respond to the lightening of work, without this being part of a gender mainstreaming logic.

To remedy this, ASER, following a diagnosis of the level of gender mainstreaming in the PNER, recently decided to systematize gender mainstreaming in all its projects and programmes.

To this end, an action plan for the integration of gender in the national rural electrification programme using mini-solar grids has been drawn up accordingly.

For ASER, gender mainstreaming is a means of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development objectives by Senegal, through the PES, which considers rural electrification among its priority programmes.

II. Reminder of the context of gender mainstreaming in energy development policies and strategies in Senegal

II.1 The policy framework

Energy occupies a central place in the national development strategy up to 2035 and electricity is one of the most effective factors of production for reducing poverty among the population.

Senegal, like the international community, has committed itself to a new agenda setting out the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) towards 2030 after the evaluation of the MDGs in 2015. These SDGs cover all the development issues, including climate change, biodiversity, energy, water, poverty, gender equality, etc. There are 17 SDGs, all of which are well articulated with the three strategic axes of the Emerging Senegal Plan (ESP).

SDGs 5 and 7 converge in terms of a good management of gender and energy aspects.

In addition, Senegal has ratified international treaties on gender equality, namely the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

Women. Thus, several legislative and regulatory provisions have been adopted to punish gender-based violence, the most recent of which relating to the criminalization of rape and paedophilia was passed by the National Assembly in December 2019 and the promulgation decree was signed on 10 January 2020.

As for the empowerment of women, a number of prerequisites for the fulfilment of needs must be met in order to achieve this. Four types of needs exist: (i) practical needs, the satisfaction of which contributes to domestic well-being; the provision of mini-solar kits could well contribute to the improvement of women's living conditions; (ii) social needs, which refer to education, health, transport and training; (iii) productive needs which contribute to the integration of the target groups into the economic fabric, generally through income-generating activities such as product processing. For these three types of needs, energy can prove to be more than a service but a factor of production and development entering the process of the value chain; it ensures the operation of cold chains by guaranteeing the quality required for their good start-up; (iv) the fourth type of need is strategic because it is inherent to decision-making, participation in the life of associations or environmental protection. In our case, management committees of women and young people could be set up in the target villages of our project for a co-management of the solar networks. Several studies carried out in Senegal have shown the primordial place of women in the governance of natural resources based on the concept of gender and development.

II.2 The operationalization of policies

To operationalize the orientations and policies, the State of Senegal has developed framework documents (PSE 1 and 2; SNEEG 1 and 2) and LPSDs (sectoral development policy letters).

The challenge is to understand that energy in all its forms offers a wide choice to the population in terms of the technologies to be used and that its absence reinforces inequalities between men and women.

Currently, there is a timidity in taking gender into account in the energy sector. Admittedly, practical needs were taken into account in the National Action Plan for Women (PANAF 1997 - 2001), but it is with its evaluation in 2003 that the recommendations of Beijing (1995) were recorded in the national strategy: the SNEEG which today serves as a reference document on gender (SNEEG 1 and 2).

In this platform – PANAF 1997-2001, adopted as part of the implementation of the 9th Economic and Social Development Plan (PODES 1996-2001), whose Strategic Orientation No. 9 took the gender dimension into account – the use of improved cookstoves by rural women was mentioned instead. Performance was also achieved in the use of butane gas for cooking, but it was found that this programme had benefited urban rather than rural populations that use traditional energy (wood and charcoal), which greatly increases their vulnerability by exposing them to health problems related to smoke that is harmful to women and their children.

Ultimately, the concerns of men and women in vulnerable communities to access reliable, low-cost energy services and productive uses of energy are compounded by the lack of gender mainstreaming in the design, planning and implementation of most projects. (Example: Local Rural Electrification Plan of the concession of "Matam - Ranerou -Bakel", Project of Sustainable Development through Renewable Energies - South East Senegal - DPER-SE Senegal).

ASER wants to take up the challenge of gender and energy issues by proposing a programme including mini-solar grids for the benefit of 1000 villages far from existing power lines. This programme aims to reach 340,000 men and women disadvantaged by their isolation and affected by poverty by improving their living conditions through productive uses of electricity managed by women and young people.

III. Gender analysis

III.1 Gender situation in Senegal

III.1.1 The vision and institutional mechanisms

By signing international conventions, Senegal has committed to incorporate the gender dimension into policies, standards and programmes. The aim is to recognise gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue at the institutional level. A Ministry of Gender[1] was created for the first time in 2010 and during the same year,[2] the law instituting absolute parity in the totally- or partially-elective assemblies was adopted. This law was tested for the first time during the elections for the deputies on 1 July 2012, during which there was a high representation of women. From 22% (33 deputies) for the 2007-2012 legislature, the number of women deputies increased to 43.3% (64 deputies) for the 2012-2017 legislature.

The institutionalization of the gender dimension in public policies is effective through Decree No. 2017-313 of 13 February 2017 which creates and attaches gender units to the General Secretariat of each ministry. Moreover, in 2016, a gender-sensitive budget document will be annexed to the Initial Finance Act. In 2017, 12 sectoral ministries adopted the gender-sensitive budget, compared to 4 ministries in 2016.

However, despites these highly political decisions, women are still affected by inequality at all levels and gender issues affect poverty, health, education, access to finance, employment, access to land and means of production among others. Women are active in the productive sectors, the small market economy and the informal sector. Any action aimed at supporting them in these sectors has an impact on their economic power, their participation at the strategic level and the well-being of the family. Access to electricity can therefore be an important input, but also a bulwark against the constraints that affect gender relations.

[1] Within the same government, three ministries were in charge of women's issues: the Ministry of Gender; the Ministry of Family, Women's Groups and Child Protection; and the Ministry of Women's Entrepreneurship and Microfinance. However, the multiplicity of mechanisms has not always been conducive to decision-making on women's expectations and gender.
[2] 14 May 2010

III.1.2 Gender inequalities in Senegal

Senegal has made great strides in mainstreaming gender in the various development sectors, but there is still a long way to go, particularly in terms of translating intentions into practice.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that some achievements have been made, particularly with the adoption of the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality (SNEEG), which has seen many programmes initiated with a view to contributing to the alleviation of women's work. For example, in terms of women's access to modern energy services, the Multifunctional Platform Programme in Senegal, launched in 2002 for the period up to 2015, has helped to strengthen women's The programme has also supported them in the economic management of a processing unit. During the pilot phase started in 2001, 40 units were installed throughout the regions of Kédougou, Tambacounda and Thiès.

To this end, women have been able to benefit from the allowance: (i) equipment for processing agricultural products (millet mills, rice huskers, threshers, oil presses and groundnut paste mills); (ii) hydraulic equipment (motor pump units, sinking and rehabilitation of wells, water supply, boreholes, water towers, standpipes and electric pumps); (iii) equipment to support income-generating activities (sewing machines, carts and equipment, market gardening equipment). In parallel with these initiatives, access to land, credit, information, capacity-building, economic promotion, etc., have been strengthened through other partners such as NGOs. These initiatives have helped to strengthen women's participation in sustainable development.
Notwithstanding these improvements, it must be recognized that some approaches are still the concern of development partners, rather than a well-thought-out, well-considered national strategy integrated into the process of implementing a coherent policy. Gender mainstreaming as well as the march towards women's empowerment still suffer from certain constraints, in particular:

- weak gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes ;
- the inadequacy of sex-disaggregated data at all levels of activity for the development of indicators;
- the weak involvement of the private sector and professional associations in the advancement of women;
- the low level of education, training and literacy among women;
- high maternal mortality and morbidity;
- the high vulnerability of women and adolescent girls to STIs/HIV/AIDS.

The table below provides an overview of gender disparities in Senegal with respect to several socio-economic variables relating to the productive sectors, basic social services, well-being and quality of life.

Determinants	**Women (%)**	**Men (%)**
Access to property	13,40	86,60[3]
Agricultural exploitation	21	79
Rural activities (agriculture, livestock farming, fishing)	82,6	79,4

[3] Senegal - FAO, National agricultural census 1998-99

Literacy rate 15-24 y/o	48,8	65,7[4]
Net attendance rate in primary school	56,1	52,3
Gross primary school enrolment rate	83,30 (2011)	80,50
Completion rate in primary school	58,5 (2011)	60,2
Unemployment rate	28,2 - 13,3 (2011)	17 - 7,7 (2011)
Working population	45	54,91
Employer positions	0,7	1,2
Female employees in the non-agricultural sectors	21,6 (2001) - 26,5 (2005)	-
Maternal mortality rate (‰)	401 (2005)	-
HIV-AIDS prevalence rate (15-49 y/o)	0,8	0,5 (National)
Members of Parliament	19,2 (2005) - 42,6 (2012)	80,8 - 57,3 (2012)[5]

Source: OMD II and OMD 2011, ESPS 2005, Labo genre-Unifem

III.2 Gender mainstreaming in energy policy

Senegal's energy policy considers the population as a whole and it uses as references the indicators relating to the rates of access, service and rural electrification. The household is the basic reference that unites gender and energy as it is the first level of collection and use of energy data and the first level of gender analysis.
The proportion of the population with access to electricity has changed significantly; in 2017 - 2018, it is 68% (88% in urban areas and 38% in rural areas) against 62% in 2015 and 26% in 1990. Important steps have been taken with the implementation of concessionaires that have made it possible to connect 14941 rural households by the end of 2017.

In spite of the lack of proven attention to gender, the government has adopted the strategy of linking economic growth, human development and poverty alleviation through increased access to modern forms of energy, in particular electricity.
In addition, with the Emerging Senegal Plan, particular emphasis has been placed on increasing human capital through job creation and reducing inequalities through the potential of individuals, grassroots communities and regions. Connecting the target villages to solar grids would open up job opportunities for young people in various electricity using trades such as metal carpentry and electrical repairs.

For rural women, cooking and motive power remain the main gender issues in the energy sector. Wood collection is their exclusive domain and the use of biomass has adverse effects on their health and that of children, hence measures to modernize cooking fuels. As for electricity, its weight in mitigating gender inequalities is important because of the opportunities in access to modern energy services against the use of motive power. The programme would pave the way for productive uses of energy based on the gender-specific needs of households; it will no longer be a question of simple access to electricity for lighting but rather of a dynamic of individual and community development associated with improved energy efficiency.

III.3 Gender mainstreaming in the National Rural Electrification Programme (PNER)

[4] OMD Indicators, EDS-MICS Senegal 2010-2011
[5] Legislative elections, July 2012

Gender mainstreaming was not taken into consideration in the design of the national rural electrification programme, which provides for all forms of electrification (grid and off-grid). Energy documents have remained silent on the issue and individuals, both men and women, are not cited. At the institutional level, gender and social issues are not integrated into the more technically- and financially-oriented missions of ASER, something confirmed by indicators[6] that do not provide information on the real impacts of the programme in communities and households. Moreover, it is not discussed in the course of the activities and there is no defined strategy on the participation of target groups. These groups are considered as passive beneficiaries who therefore do not contribute to the decision-making process on the setting up of projects. The organisation and its implementing partners (concessionaires) do not have sufficient expertise to take gender mainstreaming into account in its action strategy. ASER's staff is very unbalanced according to gender, with twice as many men as women and very few women in decision-making positions.

The table above provides an overview of the distribution of ASER staff by status in relation to gender issues.

Breakdown of staff by status as of 31 December 2012

Status of staff with a permanent contract	Men	Women	Total
Employees	24	03	27
Supervisors	06	**14**	20
Executives	**28**	06	34
TOTAL	58	**23**	81

Source: ASER

III.4 The socio-cultural underpinnings of gender inequalities in the energy sector, discriminatory factors and their socio-economic implications

III.4.1 Access to energy in the face of socio-cultural realities

There is a very strong inequality in access to energy because the needs of men and women are not the same and the roles are not the same either. The sexual division of labour by society assigns women different social roles from those of men. Thus, women are confined to the reproductive role, i.e. the management of the household: cooking, fetching water, looking after and educating children, maintaining the home, health, and participating as labourers in agricultural production. In community life, she rarely occupies decision-making positions. And it is influential factors such as socio-cultural, religious, legal and political beliefs that justify this state of affairs. There is also the economic dimension: if we look at the profile of access and control, we notice that women, given the roles assigned to them, have very little access to energy in a global way and to productive energy in a specific way.

In other words, men and women use energy differently because their roles, needs and responsibilities in society are different. Also, depending on whether one is in the rural or peri-urban or urban environment, the production factor "energy" does not intervene in the same way in the functions that men and women occupy; men have more of an economic role which allows them to access and control resources, in this case energy; they determine the allocation of energy

[6] Rural electrification rate, coverage rate and geographical coverage rate, calculated on the basis of the number of electrified households, households in electrified rural localities and households in rural localities. (Mission letter of the ASER Director General 2007-2012.)

which, more than a production factor, is a development factor in the implementation of activities. Men's activities are generally remunerative (in Senegal, men are present in the production of cash crops: groundnuts, market gardening, fruit trees: mangoes, while women are in the domestic sphere and engage in arduous and low-valued tasks.

A specific category is made up of women heads of households who, apart from their traditional functions linked to their social status and the role assigned to women in society, in relation to the sexual division of labour, may find themselves assuming productive functions for the upkeep of the household, which makes them more vulnerable. However, there may be differences between them in terms of access to energy, which may arise from their location (town/country; whether they are connected to the electrification grid or not), levels of income, employment, age, dependents, financial support by family members or relatives, etc.

III.4.2 Socio-economic and environmental impacts

- Socially:

In terms of socio-economic consequences, the first constraint for women is the lack of time to carry out heavy and repetitive tasks using only their muscular strength. Thus, they devote themselves successively to milling cereals, collecting firewood, fetching water, working in the fields, preparing meals, etc., for 13 to 16 hours during the day. These tasks are unpaid and contribute to the lack of balance between the activities of men and women in society.

In the absence of services to facilitate these activities, women completely lack autonomy. The only alternative for them remains the support of their daughters who accompany them in carrying out these tasks. Girls are no longer able to attend school regularly, if they are enrolled, and thus find themselves in a situation of dropping out of school.

The heavy workload of women's activities leads to real health problems in a context where the health needs of the population are still very poorly met. Women are at risk of abortion and are exposed to fumes from the use of wood, cow dung, crop residues and other alternatives, at a time when the use of gas is widespread in urban centres.

The lack of time and services to facilitate women's activities leads to their exclusion from local decision-making spheres and obscures the development of productive activities to enable them in the long run to acquire income. However, the trend is evolving positively due to the gender dynamic.

- On the economic level :

In Senegal, women are very active in the agricultural value chain, as shown in Table 1, and increasingly, they are found in the processing and petty trade segments. In the processing chain, they are organized into women's promotion groups (GPF) or economic interest groups (GIE) or micro enterprises to jointly address the challenges and issues of empowerment. They face many constraints, especially those related to the correct supply of inputs and other factors of production such as energy.

This poor access to productive energy limits their activities of transformation, storage of raw materials, conservation and packaging of finished products.

There is interference or even complementarity between the different sectors and the high cost of energy is a burden on the operating accounts of many women's microenterprises, which inevitably limits their market share.

- On the environmental front:

The predominance of biomass in the satisfaction of household energy needs cannot evolve without consequences on the environment, whose regeneration capacities have been largely hampered by a number of factors, including: large forest extraction, successive droughts, soil degradation, reduced rainfall and the unsustainable practices of populations.

III.5 Gender mainstreaming in the implementation at the household and community levels

Gender mainstreaming is not taken into consideration in rural electrification concessions, which are characterized by a diversity of electrification modes and managed by private operators. Here, the beneficiaries' preference is for continuous electricity service guaranteed by the grid. The needs for electricity services are varied and huge.

In the places selected by our study, the process of rural electrification raises specific gender issues, notably on:

- the priority given to technical aspects in household access to electricity;
- the difficulties encountered in accessing electricity to stimulate regional development at the productive, economic, entrepreneurial and social levels;
- the lack of electricity for certain services and infrastructure in electrified localities;
- difficulties in accessing finance to strengthen the economic capacities of women and men through electricity;
- the lack of participation of the beneficiary populations in the electrification process due to the lack of a predefined role, with women feeling less concerned because they assume that men should take care of electricity-related issues;
- the privileged position of men to be the interlocutors of technicians and their decision-making power on taking out subscriptions because of their status as heads of the households;
- the very limited number of women heads of households and their economic situation, a parameter to be considered when it comes to connecting households and payment of bills;
- the travel made by women to electrified villages to meet the needs for milling, sewing, ice, etc., and the arrival of men because of the establishment of their professional activities (metallurgy, carpentry, vulcanization, etc.);
- the need for capacity building of men, women and youth, interested in the maintenance of indoor facilities, participation in infrastructure management, and the role of the focal point to ensure proximity between ASER and the beneficiaries;
- the pricing of electricity in off-grid areas, considered expensive by the beneficiaries because of the discontinuity of the service and the very low level of development of services and economic activities;
- the scope of ASER's actions limited to access to electricity for the population without taking into account paramount needs not related to electricity such as domestic fuel for women;

- the incomplete coverage of some villages by the network, which does not reach outlying neighbourhoods.

Therefore, a good key to the distribution of productive uses of energy among men, women, young people and even communities needs to be defined. Within the framework of the project, positive discrimination should be made against women's microenterprises by setting up mechanisms to take better advantage of the energy opportunities that will arise: training of target groups in trades, design of business plans around activities identified beforehand and search for financing (credits, subsidies), capacity building in equipment and provision of connection coupons to the most vulnerable, support for a good organizational and institutional structuring of women's organizations.

In addition, in view of the energy issues contained in the SDGs, the guidelines of the PES (Senegal Emerging Plan) and the letters of the Sectoral Policy for the Development of the Energy Sector (LPDSE), several measures have been taken since 2013 to improve the performance of the energy sector at lower cost, even though households still consider energy to be too expensive. In the rural world, faced with the problem of deforestation, several strategies have been designed with the popularisation of improved stoves, solar cookers or bio-digesters through programmes such as biogas or with the support of NGOs. The prepayment meters (commonly called Woyofal) instituted in recent years are working towards a good rationalization of electricity charges. If household members want to engage in economic activities, they usually use this option to better manage their electricity consumption and thus avoid resorting to loans that can be costly or to moratoria on bill payments.

Furthermore, taking into account current issues such as sustainable development, climate change, and gender issues related to energy in a dynamic of poverty reduction, it is important in energy communities to increase the resilience of women and girls. They must access and control energy services to better play their part in economic and social development. Hence the opportunity to study the multisectoral nature of energy with a cross-cutting approach that would consist in meeting both the practical needs related to the tedious nature of certain works and strategies (health, education/training/learning, business development, access to credit, transport, product marketing, leadership etc.).

Local energy communities have emerged all over the world both technically (use of renewable energy) and organisationally (definition of a mode of governance of the resource) involving all households in energy production; the motivations are both economic and environmental. It is a trend towards energy transition that facilitates local cooperation and the involvement of all citizens in the fight against climate change. In our project, the technologies based on mini-solar grids, once implemented and operational, will make the price per kWh produced competitive. And women grouped in micro enterprises should make important investments in order to reduce costs and risks and to add value to local products.

A reinforcement of the capacities of the system that will be put in place and will include :

- Energy networks; in our case, it will be mini-solar networks interconnected by cables;

- A system of governance in which women and girls will play a key role; their specific needs listed above will be prioritized and the card will be played of optimization in the productive uses of

energy. With such a model, energy communities will expect to improve living conditions by meeting productive needs.

In addition, it would be advisable before the intervention of the project to carry out popular consultations in order to better integrate women and young people in the governance of this project. Like the local natural resource management committees that define the different uses of wood in the communities and where rural women have an important role to play, within the framework of this project, inequalities in terms of access to and control of energy must be discussed so that :

- Men and women no longer resort to abusive wood cutting (timber and firewood) and that this renewable energy is the right alternative ;

- All gender-specific needs are taken care of and met.

As a strategy, much emphasis will have to be placed on advocacy, awareness-raising/communication and training on gender issues in particular:

- Advocacy by administrative (governors, prefects, sub-prefects) and local (mayors) authorities in favour of the most vulnerable groups for a good distribution of energy is necessary;
- Awareness raising of the men and women concerned by the project on the differences, the position of people in relation to decision-making bodies, the roles and potential impacts of project interventions on the lives of populations in general. In a gender mainstreaming dynamic, for each category of resources likely to be concerned and on which inequalities of access such as factors of production (including modern energy) weigh, awareness sessions on equitable distribution will be conducted. Also, in order to better manage possible disputes arising from the provision of this modern type of energy, a complaints management mechanism will have to be put in place; this is a relevant tool for correcting gender inequalities;
- Technical training on the different types of economic activities listed should be provided to women, as well as training on gender & development, gender & energy issues.

Finally, it should be noted that Senegalese society has been hit hard in recent years by recurrent acts of violence perpetrated against women and girls. Women who are victims of violence are very weakened psychologically. As such, both families and society should support them and help them to meet the challenges at all levels. However, it should be noted that, given the socio-cultural realities, these cases of violence are very rarely known to the public when they do not reach a certain level of seriousness. Consequently, it would be advisable to establish a complaints management mechanism that would make it possible to identify this category and to include it in awareness-raising programmes, in order to ensure positive discrimination in favour of these persons.

However, the intervention of the project could have advantages related to :

- education of children;
- lighting and security in public and private spaces;

- the promotion of economic activities of women's groups and consequently the strengthening of their leadership/participation in decision-making bodies;
- a proper water supply for the population (rural hydraulics) and other social actions that could be taken care of (electricity supply for health centres: maternity, paediatrics, etc.).

IV. Constraints and opportunities to incorporate gender considerations

Prior to the conduct of the analysis of gender mainstreaming in the national rural electrification programme, ASER was part of the audit of gender mainstreaming in energy policies and programmes conducted in 2005-2007. The audit exercise was initiated by the International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy (ENERGIA) in 5 pilot countries for the adoption of a more gender-oriented approach in the energy sector, which is known for its high degree of neutrality. Previously, two of its executives had been involved in discussions and all activities on gender and energy at the national level. After several attempts to develop a framework for monitoring programme impacts, a gender-sensitive manual to strengthen the results-based management of electrification programmes was produced in 2012. It is also a good opportunity for the institutionalization of gender in the agency.
The appropriate tool is the web that allows, from a diagnosis of the problems of a target group, to make a declination of gender management at the macro, meso and micro social levels taking into account the different spheres of influence.
From the perspective of our programme, ASER must use this tool (the gender institutionalization web). In our case, it will be necessary to question the gender roles of men and women who will be impacted by the connection to the mini-grids; To this end, ASER must ask itself a certain number of questions in this case: with the change that will take place, how will the situations of men and women evolve and how will the various actors in the villages concerned interfere? Faced with the stakes, what will be the pressure groups at the community level in relation to access and control of the electricity generated?
Also, at the household level, what will be the price to be paid to be able to widen the range of priority activities born of the opportunity (energy) offered? These are all sensitive gender issues that will challenge ASER and to which solutions must be sought by strengthening the intervention teams in terms of gender.

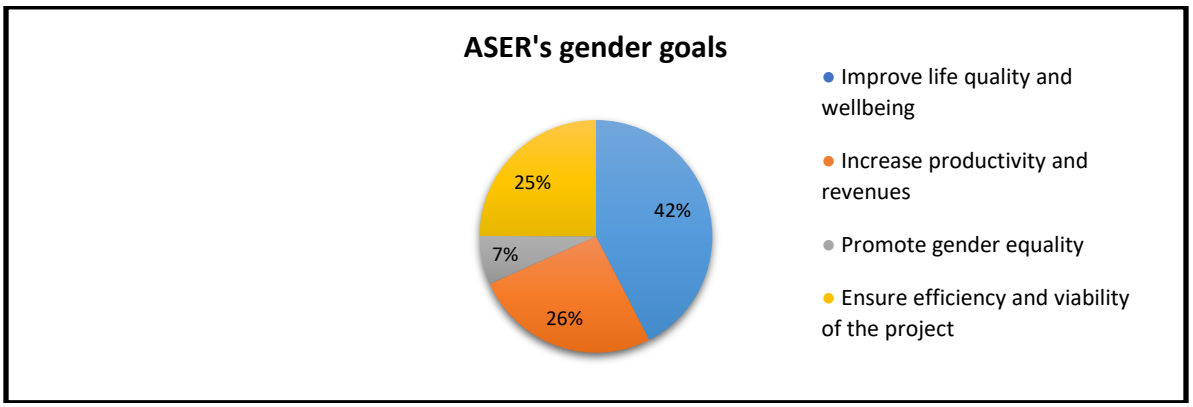
In addition, it should be noted that the ASER has recently (in 2019) completed its Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2020-2023 where gender mainstreaming becomes a reality in the formulation of planned intervention axes.

However, many factors still prevent ASER from achieving effective gender mainstreaming. These include the following:

- lack of sustained collaboration between ASER and the institutions in charge of gender issues; At this level, it is important to create a synergy of actions between ASER, the programme's implementing agency, and the projects initiated by the Ministry of Family and Gender and the Ministry of Agriculture (women and young people are very present in agricultural production, artisanal dairy and fisheries processing and throughout the value chain.

- lack of means of the beneficiaries for the initial investment necessary to start up professional activities and IGAs; the pooling of means between the various stakeholders is necessary.
- electricity pricing that does not include special tariffs for women and the poor;
- lack of energy services for an optimized use of electricity at the productive and professional level.

During workshop which presented the initial results of the analysis to the ASER management and technical staff[7], a gender target identification exercise was carried out. The exercise was carried out in groups using defined indicators[8] correlated to ASER's implementation tools.[9] Compared to the missions of the agency, it emerged that the achievement of the well-being of the populations, which obtained the score of 42%, constitutes a primary objective to be achieved through access to electricity. Moreover, the increase in productivity (26%) and the efficiency of the project (25%) clearly raise more concern than promotion of gender equality, which only obtained 7% of the scores.



V. Challenges to incorporating gender mainstreaming into ASER's energy projects

ASER will focus on the effects and impacts of electrification on households, groups and the community at large. Significant imbalances still exist in gender relations, particularly in terms of access to work opportunities, employment and access to electricity. The process of gender mainstreaming poses several challenges to ASER:

- Collaborate closely with institutions (decentralized and deconcentrated) support and advisory structures; Producer Organizations, men and women, CSAs, resource persons, local NGOs in charge of gender issues for an overall vision of the gender roles and needs of women, men and vulnerable groups in relation to energy, for a local approach to development sensitive to priorities.
- Increasing women's leadership as a prerequisite for women's socio-economic empowerment.

[7] The workshop was attended by 17 people, including 10 executives from ASER and the Director.
[8] Practical Handbook, Volume 2: Resource Pack. Elizabeth Cecelsky and Soma Dutta, ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy. Draft May 2010.
[9] Local initiative electrification projects (ERILs), priority rural electrification programmes (PPER), multisectoral projects (PREMs) and the State Emergency Programme (PUE).

- Strengthen the gender capacity of ASER staff, implementing partners, CIMES members, focal points, and social organizations with a focus on gender mainstreaming throughout the project cycle and gender-sensitive indicators.
- Strengthen the communication strategy in the different stages of project implementation and identify a contact or focal point, intermediary between ASER and rural populations for continuous information of actors with appropriate supports (in local languages using community radio).
- Collect and appropriately use disaggregated statistics (gender, age, income) on men, women and youth in all areas.
- Put into practice the monitoring framework and gender-sensitive indicators with a disaggregated database and reconsider each time the unsatisfied demand in electrified localities;
- Manage from upstream to downstream the entire technical process up to the indoor installations for household access to electricity by respecting the programming for the rapid promotion of productive uses at the community level in order to accelerate the changes that can eradicate poverty and give added value to electricity.
- Create multi-stakeholder committees responsible for supervision in the management of the networks.
- Promote energy sectors according to the economic potential of each region and support the establishment of a mechanism for access to microcredit for the development of productive activities.

Based on the identified constraints and challenges, a gender action plan for the rural electrification programme using solar mini-grids was developed. It will focus on three main outputs for which a series of actions to be implemented were identified: (i) gender is institutionalized in ASER; (ii) the energy needs of men and women are understood and met; (iii) access to finance for the development of economic and professional activities for access to income is supported. The implementation of this action plan calls for the active involvement of ASER and a synergy between all development partners and actors.

VI. Gender Action Plan for the solar mini-grids programme

- **General objective**

Improve access to clean energy from mini-solar grids to meet the differentiated productive use needs of men and women in the target villages and increase their resilience.

- **Results**

R1: Capacity building with the following activities on the technical, organizational and managerial levels:

- ✓ Training and sensitization of ASER and other project entities on Gender & Development, Gender & Energy and gender institutionalization issues.
- ✓ Elaboration of a gender sensitive communication strategy with emphasis on information and sensitization campaigns;
- ✓ Sensitization of men, women and young people on the existing energy potential, on the existing opportunities for : (i) meet the gender needs of different groups and the community, (ii) set up preferential tariffs for households below the poverty line, (iii)

support the introduction of easy metering and payment systems, (iv) raise awareness among the public on security issues related to the risks of tampering with lines (or batteries) or fraud.

- ✓ Sensitization of management committees and women's umbrella organizations on all cross-cutting issues such as gender, local governance of electricity services, climate change in order to achieve productive uses of mini-grids that can meet gender and community infrastructure demands.

R2: the Community's energy needs, in particular :

- ✓ health centres with the induced effects of reducing maternal and infant mortality and population morbidity;
- ✓ schools impacting on the education of boys and girls, training ;
- ✓ water works such as boreholes and households are satisfied.

R3: the energy needs of vulnerable men and women are understood and met :

- ✓ Installation of meters for poor female-headed households and for young people exposed to clandestine emigration: provide them with training, trainers in trades such as food processing, metal carpentry, silk-screen printing etc.; provide them with subsidies for adequate equipment for economic and professional activities
- ✓ Improved business opportunities for X energy efficiency enterprises owned by women's groups with agro-processing units; provide subsidies for solar kits and equipment to encourage them to increase their production and market share.

The implementation of this action plan calls for the active involvement of ASER and synergy between all partners and development actors (*see action plan in the form of a logical framework in the Excel table*).

R4: A program management unit is set up and is functional, namely :

- ✓ Updating the ASER monitoring and evaluation system and integrating and monitoring the project's gender indicators;
- ✓ To carry out the follow-up of the implementation of the gender action plan;
- ✓ Carry out an evaluation of the project's gender action plan.

Gender Action Plan

Components	Results	Activities	Indicators	Baseline	Target	Calendar	Roles	Budget
the solar rural electrification project using mini-grids targets a total of 1,000 villages remote from existing power lines where mini-grids will be installed to provide access to electricity to 344,000 persons among which 50.2% {ANSD, 2017] of women disadvantaged by their isolation and affected by poverty. 3,739 productive uses managed by women will have access to electricity (including boreholes, schools and health infrastructures), thus improving the living conditions of women and young people.								
Gender results:	* Gender is intitutionalized in ASER and other implementing entities of the programme * the energy needs of men and women are understood and taken into account in the dimensioning of equipment * access to facilitated financing for the development of economic and professional activities							
Capacity Building	**The capacities of ASER and its partners are strengthened**	Establish a sectoral committee headed by a focal point responsible for monitoring all activities related to gender mainstreaming	Memorandum establishing committee	0	1	2020, T1	ASER	10 000
		- Targeting women and girls as a priority, during training sessions in the trades proposed by the Project's capacity building programme, in order to enable them to apply for	At least half of the enrolments per region in the vocational training programmes offered as part of capacity-building are women and girls.	0		2020, T4	ASER/Local stakeholders (local authorities, administrative authorities, beneficiaries' associations)	-

		jobs, during works and commissioning. - To set up a recruitment mechanism favouring young people and women ; - Representation of women and youth in local recruitment committees ;						
		- Identify and support CBOs managed by women and young people in the villages targeted by the program. - Set up management committees of women and young people in the target villages or local structures with a strong focus on women and young people, in line with the	- List of CBOs identified by village - 100% of the communes have local committees or structures that give a large place to women and young people, created among the target villages and their operationality.	0	TBD	2020, T4	ASER	85 000

		organizational and operational mechanism defined in the stakeholder engagement plan, in which vulnerability aspects are given special attention.						
		A training programme for all stakeholders (ASER, operators, CBOs, etc.) is developed and implemented.	Training programme and number of people trained	0	TBD	durant le projet	ASER	132 000
		Develop and implement a gender-sensitive communication campaign on the project and its various components.	Communication strategy and number of campaigns carried out	0	TBD	durant le projet	ASER	50 000
Detail engineering study (execution)	**The Community 's energy needs for improved access to basic social services are**	Gender-sensitive survey forms are used for demand analysis A detailed preliminary	- Standard Gender Mainstreaming Form - Gender mainstreaming in the technical design and implementation modalities of the project	0	2	2020, T4	ASER, UGP	-

	understood, taken into account and met.	design and specifications for the creation of 1,000 mini-solar arrays, integrating gender-specific needs is produced						
		Mini solar power plants and LV networks are designed to meet the energy needs of households and productive and socio-community uses.	Planned plant capacity vs. demand	0	TBD	2020, T4	Consultant, Aser	-
Carrying out the work and connecting customers	**Realization of 1,000 mini-grids and connection of 39,000 households, and 4,500 productive and social uses**	In the targeted households, men and women are consulted during the construction of indoor facilities and the subscription	The number of positively impacted female heads of household subscribing	0	TBD	2021, 2022	opérateur, Aser	-
		A mechanism to facilitate the subscription of productive	The number of connected productive usgers	0	TBD	2021, 2022	opérateur, Aser	-

		uses managed by women is set up (Coupon system).						
		An easy access to financing allowing productive users to acquire production equipment is set up and operational with the MFIs.	Number of productive users benefiting, 60% of whom are women and young people.	0	TBD	2021, 2022	Aser, IMF	225 000
Programme management, monitoring and evaluation	**A programme management unit is set up and is operational.**	The ASER monitoring and evaluation system is updated and the programme's gender indicators are integrated and monitored.	ASER Monitoring & Evaluation System is updated - Existence of a performance framework	0	1	2021, T1	ASER	-
		Monitoring of the implementation of the gender action plan is being carried out	Periodic monitoring reports - Updated Performance Framework	0	6	2021, 2022	ASER	43 000
		A gender action plan evaluation of	Program evaluation report	0	1	2023	ASER Consultants	70 000

		the programme is carried out.						