

SADC-GMI GENDER EQUALITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI) STRATEGY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN





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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AF	Adaptation Fund
CBO	Community Based Organization
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DNAAS	National Directorate for Water Supply and Sanitation
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EIA's	Environmental Impact Assessments
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICWE	International Conference on Water and the Environment
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LIMCOM	Limpopo Watercourse Commission
LRB	Limpopo River Basin
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OKACOM	Okavango River Basin Water Commission
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RFP	Request for Proposals
RBOs	River Basin Organizations
RWP	Resilient Waters Program
SADC-GMI	Southern African Development Community Groundwater Management Institute
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
TFCAs	Transfrontier Conservation Areas
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WUA	Water Users Association
WWDs	Women with Disabilities
ZAMCOM	Zambezi Watercourse Commission

DEFINITION OF TERMINOLOGY

Gender	Qualities or characteristics that society ascribes to each sex. Perceptions of gender are deeply rooted, vary widely both within and between cultures, and change over time. But in all cultures, gender determines power and resources for women's and men's.
GESI Analysis	Systematic examination of the multiple roles, relationships, social institutions, agency and processes between and among women and men in different cultures and societies, focus focusing on imbalances of power, wealth, workloads, ownership and access to resources, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD, 2013)
Gesi Blind / Neutral	GESI blind or GESI neutral programmes intentionally or unintentionally fail to acknowledge the role of gender or exclusion in their theory of change. GESI blind or neutral programmes do not necessarily do harm but may indirectly support the status quo and often miss an opportunity to address an important determinant that would likely add impact to their programmes.
Gender Equality	Implies that women and men have equal value and should be accorded equal treatment, opportunities and benefits. (ICIMOD, 2013)
Gender Equity	Appropriate and fair allocation of human, material and financial resources for women and men in a given context to fulfill their needs.
Gender Mainstreaming	Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for different groups and individuals, of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns of these groups an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes.
Gender Mainstreaming Machinery	Government offices, departments, commissions or ministries that provide leadership and support to government efforts to achieve greater equality between women and men.
Gesi Mainstreaming Strategy	Also the "GESI Strategy" in this document
GESI Sensitive	GESI sensitive programmes include an understanding and an awareness of existing norms and inequalities between different groups and individuals based on their gender or sexual orientation. This awareness is applied through gender equality and social inclusion analysis to ensure that inequalities are addressed in strategies and plans.
Gender Transformative Change	Means changing the gender norms that shape current unequal relations and practices, and replacing these with more equitable relationships between men and women.
Intersectionality	The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability and social class, which overlap to create interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
Social inclusion	Removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase access by diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities. This requires changes in policies, rules, and social practices and shifts in people's perspectives and behavior toward excluded groups. Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2010) Disadvantaged/excluded groups such as persons with disabilities, elderly people and people living in remote areas who have been systematically excluded over a long time due to economic, class, ethnic, gender, disability, and geographic reasons and include sexual and gender minorities. (ADB, 2010)
Sub grantees	Government or other eligible legal entity to which a sub grant is awarded (by SADC-GMI) and which is accountable to the Grantee (SADC-GMI) for the use of the funds provided under a grant agreement.

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To our partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries who provided recommendations that shaped this document, I wish to thank you for the invaluable support, valuable insights and cooperation throughout the process. I wish to all express my very sincere gratitude to the SADC-GMI Staff for providing support throughout the development of this strategy. Your support made the process seamless. Let me also say that this GESI strategy has been long in coming and its development could not have come at a better time, with the current thinking around water resources management which increasingly promotes user oriented solutions. It has always been the aim of SADC-GMI to adopt a gendered approach to improve efficiency, effectiveness, equity and affordability, but the absence of a guiding framework and implementation rendered the attainment of this objective impossible.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the generous financial support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) without which we could not have produced this document.

Thank you again.

James Sauramba
Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This SADC-GMI Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Mainstreaming Strategy and implementation plan is a 5 year strategy covering the period 2021 – 2025. This is the first such strategy for SADC-GMI and its development was funded by the USAID Resilient Waters Program.

Its aim is "To promote meaningful participation of women, men, youths, persons with disability and socially marginalized groups in the design, implementation, delivery and operationalization of projects for the inclusive and equitable conjunctive use and management of surface and groundwater resources in the SADC region"

The strategy will create a stronger enabling environment to institutionalize GESI sensitive approaches in programme implementation at the technical and operational level among SADC-GMI, its partners and sub-grantees. It has been developed because SADC-GMI recognizes and acknowledges the effectiveness of GESI mainstreaming for its outcomes. As such, the Strategy will guide SADC-GMI, its partners and sub grantees in GESI mainstreaming within its footprint.

There are many GESI factors in water resources management which inhibit the full participation of women, persons with disabilities, youth, sexual minorities and other socially marginalized groups. These factors include access to land and land ownership, unpaid care and domestic work, geographic location, literacy levels, gender biased attitudes, sexual orientation, disability and general disregard of indigenous people's knowledge by project planners. This strategy is therefore an attempt to address these inhibiting factors and increase the participation of these groups.

The development of this strategy is a culmination of a number of activities and methodologies. The methodology specifically included a review of SADC-GMI internal project documents, virtual Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with sub grantees in Zimbabwe, Eswatini and Zambia. These KIIs came from a variety of backgrounds including special interest groups, government departments, beneficiaries and community based organisations (CBOs).

The results of the assessment showed that in the GESI continuum, SADC-GMI is GESI sensitive (minimum compliance) and that the different sub grantees are at different levels of GESI mainstreaming and because SADC-GMI did not have a GESI Mainstreaming Strategy, the application of GESI mainstreaming principles and subsequent monitoring has been inconsistent. Overall, the assessment noted three key gaps within SADC-GMI i.e GESI technical capacity (in both SADC-GMI and Partners), absence of a GESI policy framework and lastly a GESI neutral Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. These three are consequently the strategic areas of focus of this Strategy. As such, the objectives of the strategy are to:

- Strengthen the capacity of SADC-GMI staff for GESI Mainstreaming in projects design, implementation, operationalization and delivery.
- Enhance the capacity of SADC-GMI's stakeholders, partners and sub grantees to mainstream GESI effectively into their conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives.
- Create an enabling environment for the meaningful participation of women, men, youths, persons with disabilities and socially marginalized groups in the design, implementation, delivery and operationalization of projects for the inclusive and equitable conjunctive use and management of surface and groundwater resources in the SADC region
- Develop and implement a GESI focused monitoring and evaluation system framework for GESI mainstreaming in the design, implementation and operationalization of conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives in the SADC region.

The GESI strategy is aligned to regional and international policies and conventions related to GESI. These include the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, SADC Regional Water Policy (2005), SADC Regional Water Strategy (2006) and the Dublin Principles (ICWE, 1992) on Integrated Water Management.

An implementation plan is outlined for this strategy, spelling out each objective and activities and indicators and targets.

The strategy aims to build and strengthen the capacity of SADC-GMI and its partners to better mainstream GESI in programme implementation, while at the same time promoting the increase in participation and decision making of women, persons with disabilities, youth and other socially marginalized groups in project design, implementation, delivery and operationalization. This will ensure inclusive and sustainable infrastructure development and water resources management. Lastly, the strategy provides guidelines for monitoring, reporting and learning that will enable the review of the strategy and adaptive programming in line with emerging GESI mainstreaming trends.

The GESI strategy is a living document whose results and best practices will be widely shared in the region for the overall benefit of all sectors and groups of persons in water resources management.

ELABORATION OF THIS STRATEGY SUPPORTED BY:

RESILIENT WATERS PROGRAM



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01 INTRODUCTION

This document outlines a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) Mainstreaming Strategy for the Southern African Development Community Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI). GESI Mainstreaming is an indispensable tool for effective implementation of groundwater management projects including infrastructure development which are key deliverables in SADC-GMI's work.

In recent decades, GESI has become a crosscutting component of development work and this has necessitated the development of this GESI Strategy to guide SADC-GMI's work as well as that of its partners. The GESI strategy serves to improve SADC-GMI's GESI compliance in its work and, at the same time providing a standard GESI framework for its work with partners and sub grantees.

The main target audience of this GESI Strategy is the SADC-GMI and its partners as well as sub grantees and project beneficiaries. The target audience will be implementing the strategy for the overall benefit of target beneficiaries. In addition, other secondary audiences such as community Based Organizations, contractors, consultants, and organizations representing special interest groups can make use of the strategy.

The strategy provides a background of SADC-GMI's work and further outlines the current state of GESI in SADC-GMI as outlined in the SWOT analysis¹. The analysis reviews the GESI work and approaches of SADC-GMI and its sub grantees, the weaknesses, threats, strengths and opportunities. It also states the rationale for the SADC-GMI GESI strategy. Lastly, the document outlines the SADC-GMI GESI Strategy objectives and gives approaches for SADC-GMI, together with guidelines for implementation and monitoring.

The methodology for developing the strategy was participatory and as inclusive as possible, although there were no physical interactions owing to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

¹ Table 1 of this document

The key steps in developing the strategy entailed several key tasks as follows:

- TASK 01** Production and discussion of an inception report
- TASK 02** Undertake A Desk Review Of SADC-GMIs Project Documents
- TASK 03** Development of key informant interviews and focus group discussion guides which were then administered to key informant interviewees and identified respondents
- TASK 04** Virtual Interactions With SADC-gmis Focal Persons In Eswatini, Zambia and Zimbabwe
- TASK 05** Undertake gesi assessment of SADC-GMI's sub grantees in Eswatini, Zambia and Zimbabwe²
- TASK 06** Perform key informant interviews
- TASK 07** Undertake a swot analysis and development of three case studies of Zambia, Zimbabwe and Eswatini,
- TASK 08** Develop the draft strategy and sharing it with the SADC-GMI and resilient waters, stakeholders and partners
- TASK 09** Production of the final strategy development with internal (SADC-GMI) consultation for the operational plan.
- TASK 10**  **UP-COMING**
Final validation and adoption by the SADC member states through the SADC sub-committee on hydrogeology.

² Close out reports, Environmental and Social Management Plans, Concept Notes, Final Proposals, Revised Sub-grant manual, Sub grant agreements, Environmental and Social Safeguard Support Reporting Protocol, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports, Monthly Report and Funder Eligibility Report Templates.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

SADC-GMI is a regional institution driving the implementation of groundwater management projects to promote **inclusive** and **equitable** conjunctive use of water resources in the SADC region. Recognizing the increasing importance that groundwater and its management plays in the SADC region, the SADC-GMI was established to become a “Centre of Excellence” for groundwater management and groundwater dependent ecosystems in the region. SADC-GMI is in a unique position to serve as an intermediary with national, regional, Transboundary and international groundwater initiatives and institutions. As a subsidiary of the SADC Secretariat, it operates under the strategic guidance of the SADC Water Division and it draws its mandate from the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses of 2000 and from the SADC Regional Strategic Action Plans. As the primary convener of the integration of groundwater in the operations of River Basin Organizations (RBOs) in the past 5 years, SADC-GMI signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with LIMCOM, OKACOM and ZAMCOM that are currently under implementation. It is through such interventions that SADC-GMI led the establishment of the LIMCOM Groundwater Committee in 2019.

One of SADC-GMI’s strategic objectives is accessing funding from major donor organisations such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), World Bank, the Adaptation Fund (AF) amongst others. Thus, embedding and addressing issues linked to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in response strategies is critical for funds earmarked by SADC-GMI. However, SADC-GMI does not have a GESI mainstreaming strategy in place to address equity, diversity and inclusion challenges that various structures (e.g. river basin organizations, municipal entities, communities) face in accessing and managing groundwater in the region. Therefore, this strategy is a response to this critical gap in SADC-GMI.



Figure 1: PHOTO COURTESY OF SADC-GMI

However, one of the criteria in SADC-GMI’s sub grant Manual requires that all projects implemented through its sub-Grant Scheme include aspects of gender, such as ensuring 30% **participation** of women, development of sector specific gender **indicators** and accountability processes to ensure **equal** access to water and sanitation services. This benchmark is however below the regional minimum standards for gender equality which stands at 50% and has no provision for inclusion of persons with disability and other minority groups. It is also not supported by any SADC-GMI internal policies or implementation plans, which renders it impossible to execute.

Regardless of the existence of such a clause, SADC-GMI’s enforcement of this clause has been weak due to the lack of skills within the organization to first develop the necessary tools to measure the compliance and to subsequently follow-up with the respective project implementers (sub grantees).

It is against this background that the USAID Resilient Waters Program enabled the development of this strategy. USAID Resilient Waters Program’s goal is to build more resilient and water secure Southern African communities and ecosystems through improved management of Transboundary natural resources and increased access to safe drinking water and sanitation services. To achieve this objective, the programme collaborates with regional institutions, including groundwater management institutes such as SADC-GMI, River Basin Organisations (RBOs) and Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs), national governments, and communities to enhance cooperation, capacity, leverage partnership opportunities, and monitoring, evaluation and learning,

hence the support to SADC-GMI. Key to this objective is ensuring that issues related to equity (e.g. gender, distributional, procedural and recognitional equity) are embedded and addressed in project activities and that under-represented and marginalised groups are included and/or considered in all activities. This can either be through direct inclusion, or through consideration of how specific interventions might affect different groups in different ways (e.g. benefitting or burdening specific individuals or communities).

The programme provides support to regional institutions to position them as champions for integrating a GESI approach; and, where needed, strengthen the evidence and business case for inclusive water resources management to facilitate and provide tailored support to implement activities on the ground (e.g. enabling institutional commitment to mainstreaming GESI through development of strategies and action plans, facilitating gender and inclusion analysis that drive change, ensuring meaningful and inclusive participation of under-represented and marginalised groups in decision-making and enabling equal access to and control of resources) using a GESI approach. Given this context, a series of activities have been carried out with the ultimate goal to develop a GESI mainstreaming strategy for SADC-GMI. An assessment of SADC-GMI partners and its own projects indicated that within its limited scope, SADC-GMI has been mainstreaming GESI albeit in an ad-hoc and not so holistic manner.

SADC-GMI operates in the footprint of Southern Africa and therefore implements projects for and with the 16 countries in Southern Africa i.e. Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These countries are state parties to the regional SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which is the region's blueprint for equality and inclusion of vulnerable groups, in particular, women. They are also bound by the principles enshrined in the [SADC Water Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Handbook \(2015\)](#). The handbook was designed to facilitate practical implementation to enable mainstreaming of gender concerns in all practices and processes associated with water resources management. At country level, the countries have various gender mainstreaming machinery and gender focal persons for the water sector responsible for ensuring gender mainstreaming in water resources management. This means that the region has a good operational framework for GESI mainstreaming albeit with the necessary support from a regional institution such as SADC-GMI, the inclusion of women and vulnerable groups can be better implemented.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE SADC-GMI GESI MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY

A ([World Bank report, 1998](#)) stated that forty percent of the water supply infrastructure built during the Water Decade (1981-1990) was not working by 1998. The major reasons cited for this in the report were i) lack of community participation and (ii) the use of inappropriate technologies. Since then many efforts have been made to reconsider technologies, and to take into account the experience, knowledge, needs and expectations of local water users. Development agencies are increasingly recognizing the need to involve and negotiate with different stakeholders and establish joint management systems to protect and rehabilitate degraded or vulnerable ecosystems ([Maharaj et al, 1999](#)) "Community participation" has become a catchphrase. But there are black holes in the practice of community participation. A community is not a collection of equal people living in a particular geographic region, neither is it a homogenous group. It is usually made up of individuals and groups who command different levels of power, wealth, influence and ability to express their needs, concerns and rights. ([Maharaj et al 1999](#)).

Communities contain competing interest groups: the rich and the poor; farmers with fields and livestock to water; landless farmhands with children to care for; marginalized groups and members of minority religions, tribes or castes; businessmen who own industries which require water. Conservationists committed to protecting freshwater ecosystems; Housewives who need water for drinking and washing and Women and men. Where water is a scarce and vulnerable commodity, there will be competition for supplies and those at the lowest end of the power spectrum will go without. ([Maharaj et al 1999](#))

It is this same background and context that SADC-GMI and its partners plan and implement projects. As such the SADC-GMI GESI strategy places importance in the participation of users in decision-making to produce more efficient and more sustainable projects. When communities influence or control the decisions that affect them, they have a greater stake in the outcomes and are more committed to ensuring projects success. Participation helps to break down the cycle of dependence which characterizes much top-down development work.

Therefore, with this strategy, SADC-GMI will enhance the participation of all groups of people and ensure that all projects are inclusive and no one is left behind in all stages of SADC-GMI project life cycles. This will also deliver the human development and economic outcomes intended. Arguably, inclusive water management has the potential to reduce existing inequalities, enhance cost-benefit ratios, uphold human rights obligations, and improve programme sustainability, only IF it is participatory and inclusive. (Maharaj et al, 1999).

Understanding the role of gender in water resource management requires attention to the complex relationship between productive and domestic uses of water, to the importance of participation in decision-making of men and women, and to the equitable distribution of benefits and costs from improved infrastructure and management structures. It also requires an understanding of the interactions between institutional, socio-economic, cultural and environmental ecosystem functions, dynamics and systems; and, through this strategy SADC-GMI will aim to understand and give attention to these complex relationships.

For decades, there has been growing awareness of the need to include all parts of a community in water resources management (WRM) and sectorial water use (including water, sanitation, and hygiene [WASH]) programmes and initiatives, because if segments of the population are excluded, projects are likely to fail. Without taking into account the diverse needs and practices of a community, it is unlikely that results will be sustainable.

Countless gender and inclusion strategies within the water management sector have been developed across the world by non-governmental organisations, governments, regional bodies, partnership organisations, multilateral development banks, and bilateral aid agencies (World Bank report 1998). Despite all these efforts, evidence has revealed a clear gap between these policies and practice: gender strategies are seldom funded adequately, gender mainstreaming is not well understood, and on the whole monitoring and evaluation processes are not sophisticated enough to reveal the true gender and inclusion power dynamics occurring within a water resources management context. Furthermore, there is a need to better understand and account for a broader range of factors that can lead to exclusion and marginalisation, such as age, disability, ethnicity, caste, and sexuality, if we are to ensure that no one is left behind. This can only happen if development agencies such as SADC-GMI are alive to these realities and are able to actively address them in project implementation. Only then can these imbalances be addressed and development work be more meaningful and sustainable for vulnerable groups.



Figure 2: PHOTO COURTESY OF SADC-GMI

1.3 KEY GESI CONCERNS IN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

(Agenda 21, 1992) calls for the “development of public participatory techniques and their implementation in decision-making, particularly the enhancement of women in water resource planning and management” and urges, “equality in all aspects of society... particularly as pertains to access to resources, credit, property rights and agricultural input and implements.” The main gains of adopting a gendered approach in water resources management include [efficiency, effectiveness, equity and affordability](#). However it requires detailed attention to social realities during the design, and throughout the execution, of water delivery systems. Participation of users (women, youths, PWDs and socially marginalised groups) in decision making produces more efficient and more sustainable projects. This is because when communities influence or control the decisions that affect them, they have a greater stake in the outcomes and are more committed to ensuring success. Participation helps to break down the cycle of dependence which characterizes much top-down development work. More so, power issues place women, youths, PWDs and socially marginalised groups in a very disadvantaged position, (Maharaj et al, 1999). These groups have limited access to formal power which reduces their negotiation and bargaining capacity to get water supply systems required for their practical needs. As such, generalized or blanket “community participation” is insufficient to provide solution to the various needs of water users in any given context because power hierarchies within the communities will ensure that water distribution follows its patterns and disadvantaged and socially marginalised groups will always lose out. (Maharaj et al, 1999). This is why it is important to break down the different groups in communities, delineate their different power levels and dynamics and therefore come up with sustainable, affordable and efficient water management systems that equitably benefit all groups of people in a given context. Simply put, the case for the greater inclusion of women, youths, PWDs and other socially marginalised groups in water resources is based on the principle that people who have a stake in something, work at it. This will be the case where women are household and community managers of water. They conserve water supplies, invest time in improving and monitor quality and quantity.

More importantly, greater inclusion and participation in of women, youths, PWDs and other socially marginalised groups in water resources management will have economic, social, environmental and financial benefits for development planners such as SADC-GMI.

In light of this, gender, along with other social identities, is a critical determinant and characteristic of water–society relationships. Gender shapes, inter alia, who benefits and who loses from water resource development (Carney, 1993; van Koppen 1998) or from water privatization (Harris, 2008) as well as one’s vulnerability to water-related disasters (Enarson & Fordham, 2001). Yet over a long period, gender was considered irrelevant to water management in most policy spheres.

Since the 1990s, the inclusion of gender equality in international water governance agendas marks a formidable step forward in acknowledging gender as a legitimate policy issue in the water sector. Many governments have initiated institutional reforms to meet their policy commitments on gender, including quotas to ensure equal gender representation in water user associations (WUAs) and the allocation of formal individual water rights to women.

Yet these efforts have not, as a whole, profoundly challenged existing gendered patterns of water planning, management and decision-making. Despite decades of gender mainstreaming in the water sector, a wide gap between policy commitments and outcomes remains ([Water Policy \(2019\) 21 \(5\): 1017–1033](#)). Donors have also strongly pushed gender mainstreaming as part of development initiatives, across several sectors. Notably, several gender equality initiatives are tied to donor-supported projects, e.g., from the Asian Development Bank or the World Bank, and many of them become dysfunctional as soon as the project phases out.

1.4 WOMEN'S ROLE IN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Current thinking in the water sector states that management systems must be user oriented. Amongst users, one of the largest visible groups can be identified by gender i.e. women. In most societies, the provision of water for fulfillment of fundamental human needs has always been a woman's responsibility. Women are responsible for preparing food, washing clothes, cleaning. Family hygiene is in their hands and caring for the ill when hygiene is insufficient. In developing countries, women and girls spend an estimated 40 billion hours every year hauling water from distant and frequently polluted sources. Women have been reported to spend as much as 8 hours per day carrying up to 40.8 kg of water on their heads or hips. Yet when technology is improved, women's needs tend to be overlooked. But women are not simply passive users of water. In most parts of the world, they are managers of the community water supply³. They are the ones who select water sources and determine which should be used for drinking water and which for bathing and watering animals. They monitor water quality and devise strategies to conserve supplies in times of scarcity. They protect and manage water sources and quality standards. This places women as critical actors in Transboundary Water Management and their meaningful involvement is both strategic and logical for SADC-GMI's mandate.

Many projects have revealed that, when there are opportunities to improve water supplies, women participate avidly, contribute labor, and are more diligent than men in maintaining installations and sources. It's simple self-interest but it benefits the entire community.

Thus external projects and programmes which neglect indigenous management, and treat women as beneficiaries and users, and not as water and waste managers and decision-makers, hamper their results and diminish women's position. As a result, women drop out of the modern management picture thus, when water resources management is part of the unpaid, informal economy, governed by traditional male / female norms, women are the responsible parties. But once it enters the paid, public domain, it becomes subject to hierarchical rules which state that men are managers and women carry out the decisions they make. "Since it is known that household water provision is traditionally a female responsibility in most African communities," ([Maharaj et al, 1999](#)). This also potentially increases the burden of unpaid care and domestic work which many projects have unwittingly subjected women to and which is also the reason for questioning previous development approaches.

1.5 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, YOUTHS, THE ELDERLY, AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS ROLE IN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Globally, more than a billion people, approximately 15 percent of the world's population, or one in seven persons, have disabilities. Of those, 80 percent live in developing countries. In addition, persons over the age of 60 comprise 12 percent of the world's population. There is a strong correlation between aging and the onset of disability. Persons with disabilities make up a sizable portion of the 2.4 billion people who still lack access to sanitation, and the 663 million who lack access to safe drinking

³ This sentiment was echoed by a KII in Eswatini who noted that women tend to work for free in projects that benefit the community as a whole.

water, (WHO, World Report on Disability, 2011). Many other vulnerable groups of people also experience difficulties using water and sanitation facilities, such as frail, elderly people, pregnant women, ethnic minorities, chronically ill such as people with HIV. Despite the size of the problem, almost nothing has been published on this subject to date, and this group of persons continues to be ignored by providers of water and sanitation services. Although there are inadequate data to assess the exact number of persons with disabilities who face water scarcity and lack of access, there is evidence that points to the relative marginalization and invisibility of this population in water sector development programmes. A 2011–12 survey of 16 Area Development Programmes run by World Vision in Ethiopia showed that 96.6 percent of people with disabilities and the elderly faced difficulties in accessing basic water facilities. In a nutshell, water resources management strategies and practices have not been disability-inclusive. Consequently, the critical importance of unrestricted access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation for all is highlighted in Millennium Development Goal 7, which calls for the reduction by half of the proportion of people without such access by 2015 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (UNCPRD) which promotes the needs and rights of people with a disability and specifically mentions the right to access safe water. Even then, the emphasis is not in the inclusion of these groups as decision makers in water resources management.

A (WHO, 2011) report notes that “despite the fact that the right to equal access for all international development initiatives is guaranteed in the UNCPRD, little attention has been paid to the needs of such access for the one billion people living with a disability worldwide”. In this sense ensuring that persons with a disability can access water is simply a human decency and has a huge impact on those who are most disadvantaged. It seems quite ironic that people with disabilities are ignored or overlooked as they are estimated to make up about 15% of the world population corresponding to 1 billion people. In addition, people with disabilities are often among the poorest of the poor (WHO, 2011).

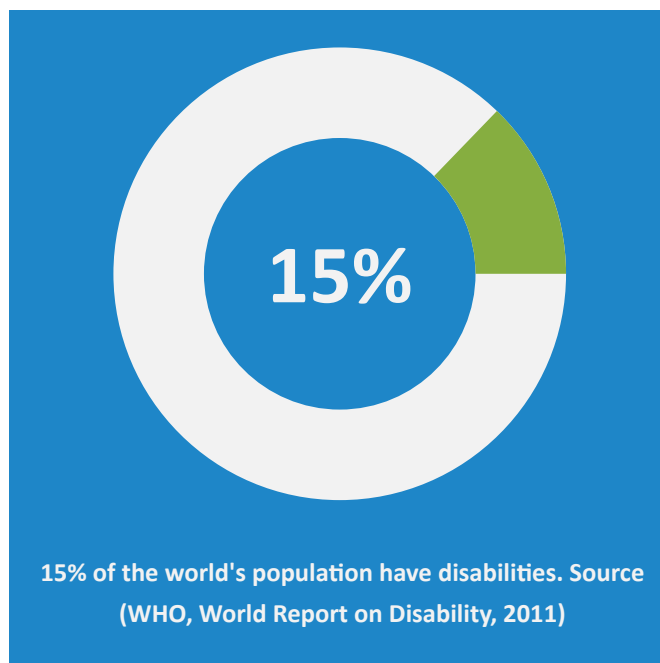


Figure 3-PHOTO COURTESY OF SADC-GMI



Figure 4: PHOTO COURTESY OF SADC-GMI

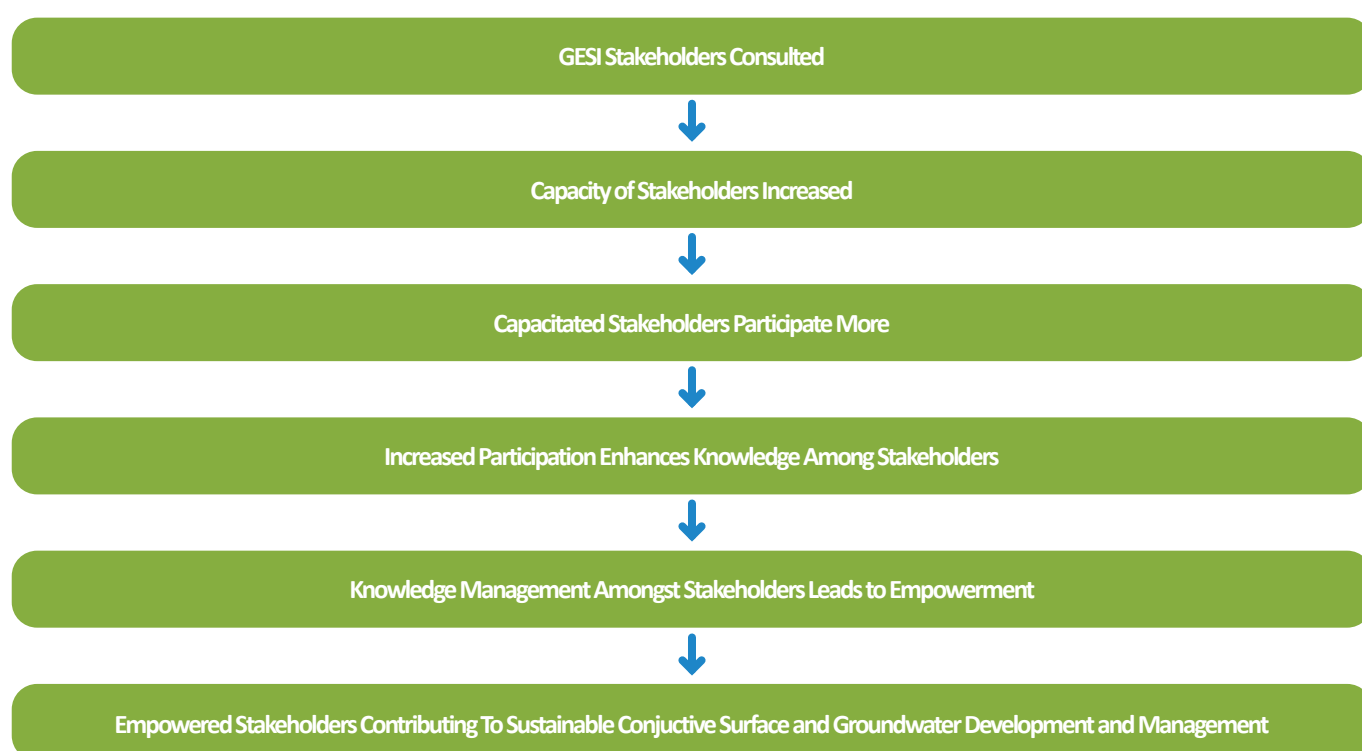
Similarly, young persons (youths) have the largest number of young people the world has ever known and the majority of them live in the Southern hemisphere. The challenge has been to recognise the contributions that youth can and already to make to facilitate the ‘inter-generational exchange that lies at the heart of sustainable development.’ Youth inclusion in different processes in the water sector should be sustainable and needs to rely on the willingness of older generations to teach, mentor and share knowledge with the younger and eager generations. Youth cut across all sectors of society as a standing multi-stakeholder platform by itself that should be utilized. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for a society of engagement and partnership, and youth will have a decisive role to play in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. Clearly, youths have a valuable contribution to offer in the decision-making process in the water sector, therefore decision makers ought to invest in an enabling environment to strengthen the participation of youth. Leading this agenda has been the Global Water Partnership (GWP) through its [Youth Engagement Strategy](#). The Strategy was [launched in 2015](#) to complement the GWP’s [Gender Strategy](#). Together they continue to support GWP’s main Strategy for 2020-2025, [Mobilising for a Water Secure World](#). Since the launch of the Youth Engagement Strategy, GWP teams around the world has purposefully reached out to and mobilised youth groups and younger individuals to confront water resources management challenges but the efforts need to be duplicated by partners in the water sector.

2.0 SADC-GMI GESI STRATEGY

This GESI Strategy is based on the understanding by SADC-GMI that particular groups such as women, youths and PWDs are inadequately represented in decision making processes for conductive use and management of water resources. The inadequate representation means that these groups participate less in projects design, implementation, operationalization and delivery. More so, the strategy acknowledges the inadequacy in capacity of SADC-GMI staff and partners and sub grantees and addresses this gap in several ways. The strategy also follows on with a MERL Framework and critical factors for successful implementation.

2.1 GESI THEORY OF CHANGE

IF we actively consult GESI stakeholders, we will increase their capacity to participate in decision making, at the same time enhancing their knowledge and skills base, the stakeholders are THEN empowered to meaningfully contribute to sustainable conjunctive surface and groundwater development and management.



2.2 GESI PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE SADC-GMI GESI STRATEGY

SADC-GMI recognizes the nexus between GESI and intersectionality and that gender as just not limited to two dichotomies per se i.e. men and women only but, also recognizes that women, girls and women with disabilities are often the most marginalized groups in many spheres of life. As such this strategy is alive to these intersectionality and social categorization as they apply to any given group. Through this strategy, SADC-GMI will endeavor to advance greater inclusion and equity for women, persons with disabilities, youth and sexual and ethnic minorities.

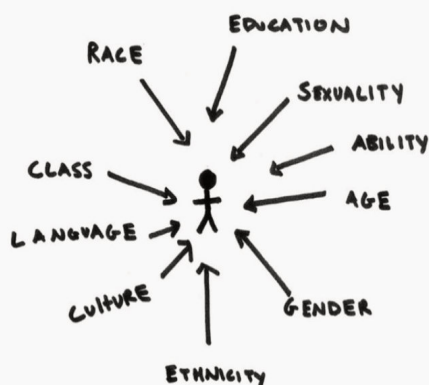


Figure 5- Photo Courtesy of International Women's Development Agency (2018)

This SADC-GMI Strategy premised on the following GESI principles (adapted from USAID's "Tips for Conducting a Gender Analysis at the Activity or Project Level.")

1. **Access:** SADC-GMI recognizes the right of all beneficiaries to be enabled access for full and active participation in all its water resources management projects. Where projects present economic opportunities, resources and benefits, SADC-GMI will ensure that all groups including women, persons with disability, youth and the elderly have equal access and benefit sharing.
2. **Practices and Participation:** SADC-GMI projects recognize the right to equal participation in all its projects by beneficiaries. As such it will seek to establish various gender roles and responsibilities of the different groups and their impact on their participation in its projects. Where certain practices are established to limit or inhibit the equal participation of certain groups in projects, SADC-GMI will interrogate possible ways to ensure equal participation.
3. **Time and Space:** SADC-GMI acknowledges the different gender roles that men and women socially carry. In this regard it will seek to determine how men and women spend their time and what implications their time commitments have for their availability for its projects implementation. This is in recognition of the gender differences in the availability and allocation of time and decisions about locations. Often, women experience time poverty for productive activities owing to their gender roles which assign them more unpaid care and domestic work in the household. SADC-GMI will make considerations on the division of both productive and reproductive labor and ensure projects implementation is sensitive to these gender dynamics.
4. **Power and Decision Making:** SADC-GMI will ensure that it creates an environment where beneficiaries are able to decide, influence, control and enforce personal power in projects including the capacity to make decisions freely, and to exercise power over one's body, within an individual's household, community, municipality and state. It will also enhance the capacity of adults to make household and individual economic decisions, including about the use of household and individual economic resources and income, as well as choosing their employment.
5. **Inclusivity and Diversity:** SADC-GMI acknowledges that beneficiaries have unique and particular needs in all stages of infrastructural/water projects implementation and therefore will uphold each individual's right to express and present themselves relative to their culture, gender-identity and physical ability. SADC-GMI will promote inclusivity by reasonably adjusting procedures, activities and physical environments, be inclusive in all forms of communication and serve all with sensitivity, respect, and fairness.



Figure 4: PHOTO COURTESY OF SADC-GMI

2.3 KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The GESI Strategy and implementation plan will be implemented under the overall stewardship of the office of SADC-GMI's Executive Director with the support of all personnel as listed below:

Board of Directors: Will be responsible for defining and guiding policy revision, political support and creating buy in of the GESI Strategy at regional level.

Executive Director: Overall stewardship, accountability and leadership direction for implementation of the GESI Strategy and implementation plan.

Communications Personnel: Will be responsible for revamping and reviewing of all communication materials and products to ensure they align to the vision of GESI responsiveness of SADC-GMI.

Monitoring and Evaluation Personnel: Will be responsible for ensuring that the targeted results are achieved as per time timelines and review the timelines.

SADC-GMI GESI Focal Persons: Will be responsible for demand creation for GESI Mainstreaming at country level. They will also be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan and review processes.

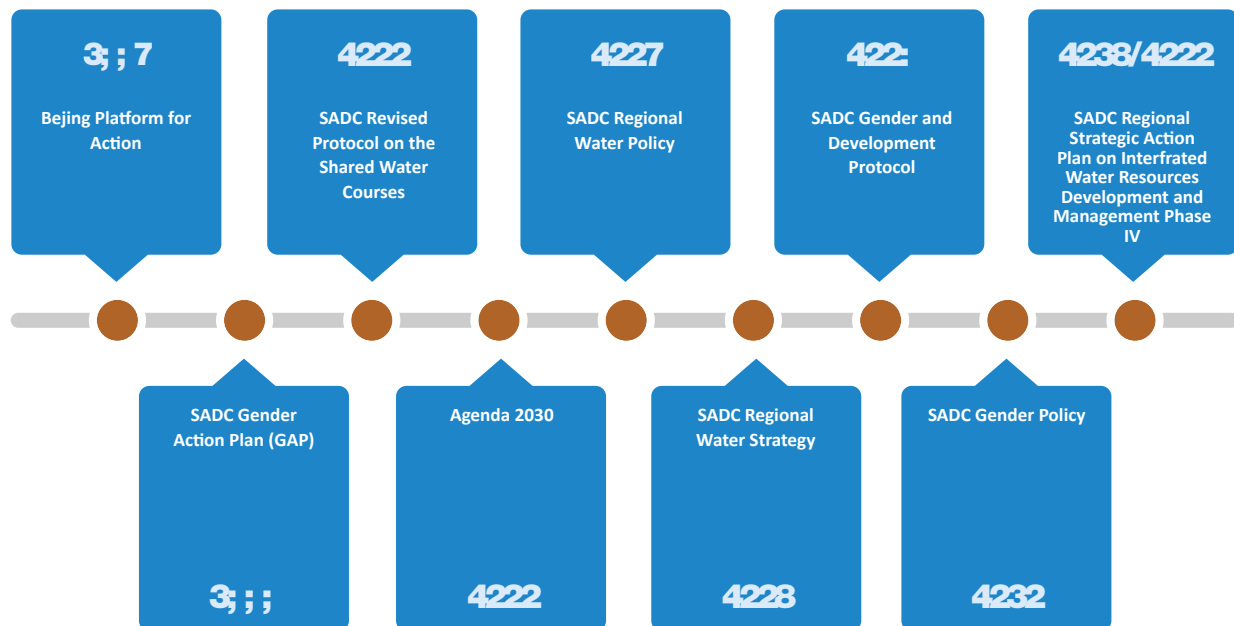
Sub Grantees: Will be responsible for the full compliance to the GESI Mainstreaming standard procedures as will be prescribed in each RFP.

Technical Committee / Adjudication Committee: Will ensure that sub grantees respond and are compliant to the specific GESI outcomes and indicators as per RFPs released by SADC-GMI time to time.

Women, youths, persons with disabilities and socially marginalized groups: these hold the primary role to cooperate and encourage the participation of other like-minded group of persons in the implementation of the strategy.

2.4 POLICY ALIGNMENT TO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GESI PROTOCOLS

The SADC-GMI GESI Mainstreaming strategy is aligned with national GESI policies of countries within its footprint, the SADC regional GESI policies and international policies and conventions related to GESI. These include respective country GESI policies, and the following:



The above protocols advocate for joint planning and development and management of Transboundary aquifers. In terms of GESI the strategy aligns itself with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and specifically seek to fulfill articles 5, 9, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 33 of the protocol. These articles speak directly to the agenda of GESI in development and more specifically on persons with disabilities (PWDs,) gender-responsive budgeting, productive resources and employment of women and other socially marginalized groups. In addition to the regional policy alignment, the strategy also aligns with the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action which flagged 12 key areas where urgent action for equality was needed and how countries can achieve them. The strategy is also aligned to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) at international level both which address the economic empowerment of women, youths and women with disabilities. Again, at international level, the Strategy is aligned to the Agenda 2030 protocol specifically goals **1) No Poverty, 2) Zero Hunger, 5) Gender Equality, 6) Clean Water and Sanitation, 8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, 10) Reducing Inequality.**

All these policy pronouncements, conventions and declarations in one way or another seek to ensure gender and social equity in access to water resources, empower women's full participation and decision making on sustainable development and management of water resources, reduce inequalities and enhance participation of all groups in socio-economic development, promote community based social development taking into account women's role and examine gender implications at all stages of water managements programmes. This is also vision and goal of SADC-GMI with the promulgation of this GESI Strategy. This GESI mainstreaming for SADC-GMI is well aligned all the mentioned the national policies, regional and international conventions. It is specifically designed to contribute to the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, SADC Gender Action Plan (GAP) for the Water Sector and The Principles of Integrated Water Management. In terms of principles, this GESI Strategy is informed and aligned with the Dublin Principles pronounced at [International Conference on Water and the Environment \(ICWE\) \(1992\)](#) specifically [Principles 2 & 3](#) which prescribe a participatory approach i.e. "water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners, and policy-makers at all levels" and Principle 3 on the role of women that "women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water", ([ICWE,1992](#)).

2.5 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES GESI STRATEGY

The goal of the SADC-GMI GESI Strategy is “To promote meaningful participation of women, men, youths, persons with disability and socially marginalized groups in the design, implementation, delivery and operationalization of projects for the inclusive and equitable conjunctive use and management of surface and groundwater resources in the SADC region”.

The strategy will create a stronger enabling environment to institutionalize GESI sensitive approaches in programme implementation at the technical and operational level among SADC-GMI, its partners and sub grantees. The objectives of the GESI mainstreaming strategy are to:

- **Strengthen the capacity** of SADC-GMI staff for GESI Mainstreaming in projects design, implementation, operationalization and delivery.
- **Enhance the capacity** of SADC-GMI’s stakeholders, partners and sub grantees to mainstream GESI effectively into their conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives.
- **Create an enabling environment** for the meaningful participation of women, men, youths, persons with disabilities and socially marginalized groups in the design, implementation, delivery and operationalization of projects for the inclusive and equitable conjunctive use and management of surface and groundwater resources in the SADC region.
- **Develop and implement** a GESI focused monitoring and evaluation system framework for GESI mainstreaming in the design, implementation and operationalization of conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives in the SADC region.

2.6 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

This GESI Strategy, focuses on 4 strategic objectives which have been developed in response to the GESI gaps identified during the Regional GESI Assessment. Outlined below is each objective and the measures and activities that will be undertaken to achieve the objective.

2.7 FOCUS OF SADC-GMI GESI MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY

An implementation plan was prepared for this GESI strategy based on the four objectives of the strategy. It outlines the approaches for each objective, along with activities and indicators/targets. The GESI strategy promotes the removal of the institutional and structural barriers to GESI mainstreaming identified in the SWOT analysis (Table 1) while promoting increased participation and benefit sharing by marginalized groups and women, including youth and PWDs in water resources management for improved livelihoods. The strategy takes into account the specific needs and interests of these target groups. It guides implementation of SADC-GMI projects throughout the project cycle. It is anticipated that this best practice will also have multiplier effects in the SADC region of SADC-GMIs projects footprints. The strategy also strongly supports the equal participation of women and the socially marginalized in the design, implementation, delivery and operationalization of infrastructure.

The strategy emphasizes capacity building of the GESI target groups, SADC-GMI Staff and its partners for their meaningful participation in decision making processes. The strategy guides SADC-GMI partners to ensure that the GESI target groups are directly consulted throughout the programme cycle, and implementation processes adopt participatory tools that are appropriate for the participants. Lastly, the strategy on a GESI MERL approach to enable effective GESI Monitoring of the outcomes.

The GESI strategy is seen not as a static document but as a living and evolving tool to guide and support SADC-GMI and its partners in a continuous learning process about improving GESI approaches. Results and best practices will be shared with partners. This will institutionalize lessons from GESI approaches in water resources management.

2.8 STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

The major limitations to GESI mainstreaming identified in the GESI assessments and subsequent SWOT analysis for SADC-GMI were summarized as below (see full SWOT Analysis *Table 1*)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen the capacity of SADC-GMI staff for GESI Mainstreaming in projects design, implementation, operationalization and delivery.

Strengthening the capacity of SADC-GMI staff is key in the successful implementation of the GESI strategy. This will entail the identification of a GESI focal person within the already existing human resources pool at SADC-GMI. The GESI Focal person will be trained on GESI Mainstreaming strategies such as gender analysis, gender responsive budgeting, monitoring and reporting and have overall responsibility of ensuring GESI Compliance of all processes and policies within SADC-GMI. External support will be enlisted to support the focal person as and when necessary for reviewing of policies and implementation of the Strategy. The focal person will also outline activities for stakeholder engagement to create the strategy buy-in and promote uptake of the cross-programme GESI strategy.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Enhance the capacity of SADC-GMI's stakeholders, partners and sub grantees to mainstream GESI effectively into their conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives.

SADC-GMI greatly leverages on its relationship with stakeholders, partners and sub grantees in its quest for excellence in conjunctive surface and groundwater management initiatives. As such this objective seeks to enhance the capacity of the stakeholder, partners and sub grantees through facilitating regional GESI mainstreaming knowledge sharing indabas or platforms with them. It will also map the stakeholder and conduct a power analysis for each project to ensure that no one is left behind, and that power dynamics are identified and addressed. In addition, gender stratification in research and planning, design, and implementation will be enforced to ensure that the differential needs of different stakeholders are taken into consideration as projects are implemented. This will also equip sub grantees with skills to mainstream GESI in their community projects.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

Develop and implement a GESI focused monitoring and evaluation system framework for GESI mainstreaming in the design, implementation and operationalization of conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives in the SADC region.

A Monitoring and evaluation framework provides the guide for SADC-GMI to gather the necessary data to guide the design and implementation of programmes and projects, and to allocate, and re-allocate resources in better ways, in particular reference to the GESI budget. As such this objective will have several activities meant to develop staff capacity for GESI progress tracking, design and implementation of GESI information management system with GESI disaggregated data, in partnership with partners / sub grantees. In addition, under this objective, SADC-GMI will conduct periodic gender audits/assessments/scans and evaluations to track progress and where necessary realign budgets.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

Create an enabling environment for the meaningful participation of women, men, youths, persons with disabilities and socially marginalized groups in the design, implementation, delivery and operationalization of projects for the inclusive and equitable conjunctive use and management of surface and groundwater resources in the SADC region.

The aim of this objective is to create an environment that encourages the participation of women, men, youths, persons with disabilities and socially marginalised groups in the design, implementation, delivery and operationalization of projects. SADC-GMI will therefore organize periodic project planning and feedback meetings with women, youths, PWDs, and other socially marginalized groups. This platform will ensure that the views and priorities of the community are considered at planning. SADC-GMI engages different personnel to implement projects on its behalf such as consultants and sub grantees and therefore it is important that they too are at the same level of understanding of GESI issues and mainstreaming them. Therefore this objective aims to ensure that the consultants and project partners engaged to provide technical support/implement projects for SADC-GMI address GESI in their scope of work. As well, this will ensure participatory projects design, implementation and delivery in order to promote the participation of women, youths, PWDs and socially marginalised groups in the inclusive and equitable conjunctive use and management of surface and groundwater resources in the SADC region. It will also aim to build capacity for interactive, participatory and inclusive stakeholder platforms and processes at the community level, and more importantly, conduct GESI training for men and women, youths, PWDs and socially marginalized groups.



Figure 6: PHOTO COURTESY OF SADC-GMI

STRUCTURAL / INSTITUTIONAL GAPS

- Absence of a functioning policy framework that enables gender mainstreaming by SADC-GMI and its partners
- Lack of a GESI supportive policy environment and guiding framework to support GESI Mainstreaming
- Lack of organisational mechanisms to ensure implementation (checklists, policies, tools)
- Lack of a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) framework for GESI outcomes
- Lack of accountability for achieving gender equality and social inclusion
- Absence of resources for gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming
- Implementation that follows procurement style and not programming style

PERSONNEL / WORKFORCE GAPS

- Absence of specialized GESI personnel at the Secretariat
- Lack of capacity for both SADC-GMI Staff and its partners to mainstream GESI
- Limited knowledge about gender equality and social inclusion and tools for mainstreaming.

OUTPUTS / PRODUCTS GAP

- Absence of gender equality objectives as well as indicators to inform programming and reporting
- Gender neutral communication products
- Gender neutral institutional budgetary allocations



STRATEGIC AREA 1: CAPACITY BUILDING (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

DESIGNATE GESI FOCAL PERSONS

SADC-GMI will designate a GESI Focal Person to:

- Ensure that all their staff are familiar with the GESI strategy and guiding principles and are held responsible for overseeing and monitoring strategy implementation.
- A terms of reference (ToR) for the GESI Focal Person will be drafted.
- Form a Country GESI Working Group, which will feed into the regional (SADC) GESI Working group to act as a key forum for monitoring progress, troubleshooting, reflection and peer support. A ToR for this working group will be drafted.
- Special training on GESI analytical tools and planning skills must be adopted as standard practice should be as an integrated session in staff induction package.

CREATE BUY-IN, CAPACITY AND UPTAKE OF THE CROSS-PROGRAMME GESI STRATEGY

SADC-GMI will:

- Ensure that their relevant staff, partners and stakeholders attend training and/or awareness raising sessions on GESI and the GESI Strategy
- Ensure systematic sharing among partners and stakeholders about GESI responsive policies, priorities of governments and donors as well as about the national and international GESI related conventions
- Train staff on the use of GESI sensitive and appropriate language for reporting, describing and interacting with different groups.
- Carry out annual GESI scans (or audits) to assess capacity/capability, buy-in, political will, knowledge and attitude to GESI of partners and staff.



STRATEGIC AREA 2: POLICY FRAMEWORK

REVISE INTERNAL POLICIES, PROCESSES AND STRUCTURES TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE GESI OBJECTIVES

SADC-GMI will:

- Ensure that its recruitment processes are inclusive, fair and transparent.
- Ensure that all other policies developed there on are aligned with this GESI strategy e.g. the Communications strategy, Sub grant manuals and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Strategy and framework.
- Be held accountable through a programme/partnership level feedback mechanism.
- Establish and ensure a minimum threshold for GESI compliance as will be guided by this strategy's GESI Checklist
- Ensure they have reviewed and updated all other policies so they comply with this GESI Strategy
- Ensure that all project activities incorporate a GESI lens. This includes using participatory methodologies and techniques to actively engage with the perspectives of women, girls and other marginalised groups and individuals, providing safe spaces for less powerful voices in decision making, delivery, and implementation of projects.
- Disaggregate all data and evidence
- Ensure systematic GESI budget planning
- Review and redefine organizational value and principles to ensure that they speak to the GESI mainstreaming agenda.



STRATEGIC AREA 3: MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

INTEGRATE GESI INTO MERL FRAMEWORKS

SADC-GMI will support all partners and key stakeholders to develop MERL Frameworks that:

- Include a robust set of both quantitative and qualitative indicators to track changes in the lives of women, girls and other marginalised groups, whether intentional or unintentional, through implementation. Indicators should go beyond issues of access, to reviewing outcomes around participation and decision-making and livelihoods.
- Support the disaggregation of data and evidence to reflect the lived experience of different groups as part of the research, action plans, MERL.
- Support the use of participatory methods and techniques to engage actively with the perspectives of women, girls and other marginalised groups and individuals.
- Peer to peer methodologies will be used to directly empower women, girls and other marginalised groups and individuals by getting them to lead the data collection process, and feed into the analysis.
- Ensure data collection methods are GESI-sensitive both in terms of how data is collected and how it is stored and analysed to cause no harm.
- Carry out periodic assessments on assumptions around gender, inclusion, power etc, in order to test them over time.
- Ensure that GESI disaggregated data monitoring is part of the overall M&E system in all projects and for its partners

DOCUMENT AND DISSEMINATE LEARNING / EVIDENCE ON GESI PRACTICES

SADC-GMI and partners will:

- Ensure that data/learning/evidence and communication is accessible and adapted to all groups to use in GESI reporting inform GESI best practices
- Ensure that any awareness or communication process/activity/product is discussed with the GESI Country working group so that there is careful GESI consideration given to the context (power dynamics, politics, access).

CREATE SPACE FOR INTERNAL REFLECTION AND LEARNING ON GESI

SADC-GMI will:

- Create internal spaces/platforms for learning and reflection on GESI throughout implementation.
- Participate in inter-state learning spaces and platforms to discuss progress on the GESI strategic objectives, and emerging learning and trends.

2.9 GESI GAPS ANALYSIS

As part of this GESI strategy development, a document review was carried out. The process involved a review of SADC-GMI's internal programme documents namely close out reports, environmental and social management plans, concept notes, final proposals, revised sub-grant manual, sub grant agreements, environmental and social safeguard support reporting protocol, monitoring and evaluation reports, monthly report and funder eligibility report templates. In addition to the internal documents review, virtual focus group discussions, key informant interviews with project beneficiaries, sub grantees were conducted and below is a table summary of the findings. The findings consequently informed the strategic areas of focus of this GESI strategy.

STRENGTHS	GAPS / WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder mapping is a strong aspect of SADC-GMI projects. The participation of women in the projects is evidently high. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA's) completed for projects were very comprehensive and had strong elements of Gender considerations which helped a bit with projects gender needs. Strong recognition and collaboration with traditional leadership in project communities. Strong community and specialized works collaboration in some projects. Where projects were implemented by non-government partnersthere is a strong, clear beneficiary selection criteria that does not discriminate against women or socially marginalized group. Some implementing partners already have Gender mainstreaming policies of their own. Knowledge sharing and dissemination by SADC-GMI to project partners and beneficiaries is constant and value adding. The technical staff training is non-discriminatory and ensures that women are also trained. Some partners were able to collect gender disaggregated data. SADC-GMI has a Generic Environmental and Social Management Plan checklist for contractors which standardizes its work and interactions with them. The concept note template has a provision that requires sub grantees to disaggregate by gender when reporting but the review of some proposals indicate that sub grantees did not make this distinction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects have no baseline. Approach to work with government departments does not work with these kind of projects. Project lacked key fundamentals (clear gender strategy, project indicators, results framework). Outcomes and indicators missing in the project design component. Project had no guiding framework for implementation. No consideration of community plans as part of project design. SADC-GMI does not have provisions for GESI responsive budgeting. SADC-GMI does not operate within a guiding GESI theoretical and or conceptual framework. SADC-GMI does not have a Stakeholder Engagement Policy for SADC-GMI and subsequently its sub grantees exposes SADC-GMI to a range of potential risks such as stakeholder apathy, sabotage and vandalism of infrastructure. The reporting protocol does not provide for collection of and reporting of gender data. A demonstration of ability to mainstreaming gender and inclusion and a commitment to adhere to the promotion of gender equality and social inclusion must be incorporated in the eligibility criteria. Revised Sub grant manual pegs the minimum threshold for gender mainstreaming at 40% and SADC-GMI in some of the its documents has a predetermined threshold of 30%. The communication plan is not GESI sensitive.

STRENGTHS	GAPS / WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are women's groups in the projects foot prints. • Co-financing of projects with other partners which a strong GESI focus. • The social cohesion of the rural communities in which SADC-GMI operates in can be a point of convergence for the GESI agenda. • Partners collect disaggregated data and are willing to mainstream GESI. • Partners open to having capacity building for GESI mainstreaming into projects • WASH principles already prescribe GESI mainstreaming principles. • Collaborations with other sectors for GESI outcomes e.g Ministry of roads to ensure pathways for wheel chairs along main roads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments and other partners standards of operation clashed • Traditional leaders can uphold traditional norms that limits the participation of women and other vulnerable groups • The non-agility of government departments may threaten project principles • Partners have no appreciation of Social Inclusion in programming

Table 1: Analysis of GESI Considerations: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

3.0 GESI STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

As a result of the gaps identified in the GESI analysis, the following objectives were tailored to address the gaps for a robust implementation plan for SADC-GMI's GESI Mainstreaming strategy. As this is a five year plan, the outcomes are for this implementation plan are divided into three terms i.e.

Short term: 0 - 1 years (September 2021-September 2022)

Medium Term: 2 - 3 Years (September 2022-September 2024)

Long term: 4 - 5 Years (September 2024-September 2025)



Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen the capacity of SADC-GMI staff for GESI Mainstreaming in projects design, implementation, operationalization and delivery

MEASURES / ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	OFFICE RESPONSIBLE
Designate/ Recruit GESI Focal Person	TOR for GESI focal person	<p>Short term Increase in projects that incorporate GESI mainstreaming</p> <p>Medium term Improved GESI inclusiveness during implementation of projects</p> <p>Long Term A GESI responsive SADC-GMI</p>	<p>Number of Focal persons</p> <p>Number of sub-grantees submitting proposals with GESI considerations</p>	Terms of reference	SADC-GMI Secretariat
Incorporate a GESI lens in sub grantee proposal development	GESI sensitive call for proposals	<p>Short Term Increase in GESI Compliant Proposals</p> <p>Medium Term Increase proportion of SADC-GMI budget targeting women, youths and the PWDs,</p> <p>Long Term Women, youths and the PWDs empowered for water resources management</p>	Number of projects mainstreaming GESI either in planning, implementation, operationalization and / or delivery	Proposals	SADC-GMI Secretariat
Institutional (staff and board member) skills development in GESI Mainstreaming (gender analysis, gender responsive budgeting, monitoring and reporting	GESI mainstreaming training for staff and partners completed	<p>Short Term Increased capacity to main- stream GESI for all staff and partners</p> <p>Medium Term Increased gender main- streaming in the SADC-GMI projects and programmes</p> <p>Long Term Gender mainstreaming is implemented and adopted as part of the culture of SADC- GMI</p>	Number of staff undergoing GESI Mainstreaming training	GESI training workshop reports	SADC-GMI Secretariat SADC-GMI Board of Management



Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen the capacity of SADC-GMI staff for GESI Mainstreaming in projects design, implementation, operationalization and delivery

MEASURES / ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	OFFICE RESPONSIBLE
Revise internal policies, processes and structures to be supportive of the new GESI Mainstreaming strategy	GESI mainstreaming promoted in all guiding documents and processes	<p>Short Term Increased visibility of gender equality and social inclusion in SADC-GMI programmes and projects.</p> <p>Medium term Improved GESI inclusiveness during implementation of projects</p> <p>Long term Gender responsive policy and institutional framework in SADC-GMI</p>	Number of policies reviewed for GESI Compliance	<p>reviewed policies</p> <p>Job descriptions</p> <p>Procurement Documentation</p>	<p>SADC-GMI Secretariat</p> <p>SADC-GMI Board of Management</p>



Strategic Objective 2: Enhance the capacity of SADC-GMI's stakeholders, partners and sub grantees to mainstream GESI effectively into their conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives.

MEASURES /ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	OFFICE RESPONSIBLE
Facilitate regional GESI mainstreaming knowledge sharing indabas/ platforms with stakeholders, partners and sub grantees	GESI learning platforms and indabas	<p>Short-term Improved GESI mainstreaming</p> <p>Medium term Regional GESI integration</p> <p>Long term GESI data in IWRM available</p>	<p>Number of regional GESI learning events</p> <p>Number of partners meeting agreed GESI targets</p> <p>GESI disaggregated reports</p>	<p>Attendance Registers</p> <p>Workshop Reports</p> <p>GESI Action Plans</p>	<p>SADC-GMI</p> <p>Sub grantees</p> <p>Partners</p>
Mainstream stakeholder analysis for all infrastructure project commissioned by SADC-GMI	<p>Stakeholder Engagement Meetings</p> <p>GESI analysis</p>	<p>Short term Stakeholder engagement plan</p> <p>Medium term Inclusive and Sustainable infrastructure</p> <p>Long term Stakeholder Engagement standardized for all projects</p>	<p>Number of projects with GESI disaggregated reports</p>	<p>Stakeholder Register</p> <p>GESI Analysis report</p>	<p>SADC-GMI</p> <p>Sub grantees</p> <p>Partners</p>
GESI analysis in research and planning, design, and implementation of projects.	<p>GESI data disaggregation</p> <p>Participatory projects appraisals and inclusive designing</p>	<p>Short term Increase in inclusive project designs</p> <p>Medium Term Increase in sustainable projects</p> <p>Long Term GESI considerations in project planning design, and implementation of projects.</p>	<p>Number of projects with GESI Analysis</p>	<p>Concept Notes</p> <p>Proposals</p> <p>Research reports</p>	<p>SADC-GMI</p> <p>Sub grantees</p> <p>Partners</p>



Strategic Objective 2: Enhance the capacity of SADC-GMI's stakeholders, partners and sub grantees to mainstream GESI effectively into their conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives.

MEASURES /ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	OFFICE RESPONSIBLE
Facilitate GESI Mainstreaming compliance for sub grantees and partners	GESI mainstreaming tools, checklists and guidelines	<p>Short Term Enhanced ownership and individual responsibility for realisation of GESI goals in programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation by sub grantees.</p> <p>Medium Term Improved accountability for gender mainstreaming in programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation by sub grantees</p> <p>Long Term Achievement of GESI mainstreaming targets in the SADC region</p>	Number of GESI Mainstreaming tools and guidelines developed	GESI Mainstreaming Checklists GESI Mainstreaming guidelines	SADC-GMI Sub grantees Partners



Strategic Objective 3: Develop and implement a GESI focused monitoring and evaluation system framework for GESI mainstreaming in the design, implementation and operationalization of conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives in the SADC region.

MEASURES /ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	OFFICE RESPONSIBLE
Develop staff and partners' capacity for GESI main-streaming pro- gress tracking	GESI monitoring tools and management system designed	<p>Short term Improved monitoring of GESI outcomes</p> <p>Medium Term Increased availability of gender disaggregated data</p> <p>Long Term Gender mainstreaming performance tracking incorporated as standard procedure</p>	GESI mainstreaming tools results	<p>Attendance Registers</p> <p>Workshop Reports</p> <p>GESI Action Plans</p>	<p>SADC-GMIM & E-personnel</p> <p>SADC-GMI Partners</p> <p>Sub grantees</p>
Incorporate GESI analysis reporting (in the SADC-GMI monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning system).	GESI sensitive reporting system operationalized	<p>Short Term Identification of gender gaps or strengths.</p> <p>Medium Term Increase awareness of the differential needs of the different social groups</p> <p>Long term Achievement of gender mainstreaming targets by SADC-GMI</p>	Number of projects with GESI disaggregated reports	<p>Stakeholder Register</p> <p>GESI Analysis report</p>	<p>SADC-GMI</p> <p>Sub grantees</p> <p>Partners</p>
Conduct annual review of implementation of GESI mainstreaming strategy	Periodic GESI assessments	<p>Short term Omproved Staff GESI main- streaming and awareness</p> <p>Medium Term Broader GESI sensitive programming</p> <p>Long term GESI responsive programming</p>	Number of activities / projects complying with GESI mainstreaming guidelines.	<p>GESI training workshop reports</p>	<p>SADC-GMI Secretariat</p> <p>SADC-GMI Board of Management</p>



Strategic Objective 3: Develop and implement a GESI focused monitoring and evaluation system framework for GESI mainstreaming in the design, implementation and operationalization of conjunctive surface and groundwater initiatives in the SADC region.

MEASURES /ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	OFFICE RESPONSIBLE
Develop staff and partners' capacity for GESI main-streaming pro- gress tracking	GESI monitoring tools and management system designed	<p>Short term Improved monitoring of GESI outcomes</p> <p>Medium Term Increased availability of gender disaggregated data</p> <p>Long Term Gender mainstreaming performance tracking incorporated as standard procedure</p>	Oncreased GESI disaggregated data in project reports, successes and targets a GESI sensitive information management system with GESI disaggregated data developed	GESI main- streaming tools results	<p>SADC-GMIM&E personnel</p> <p>SADC-GMI Partners</p> <p>Sub grantees</p>
Incorporate GESI analysis reporting (in the SADC-GMI monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning system).	GESI sensitive reporting system operationalized	<p>Short Term Identification of gender gaps or strengths.</p> <p>Medium Term Increase awareness of the differential needs of the different social groups</p> <p>Long term Achievement of gender mainstreaming targets by SADC-GMI</p>	Number of GESI sensitive reports	<p>Project Work plans</p> <p>Project Report</p> <p>MERL Reports</p>	SADC-GMI Staff
Conduct annual review of implementation of GESI mainstreaming strategy	Periodic GESI assessments	<p>Short term Improved Staff GESI mainstreaming and awareness</p> <p>Medium Term Broader GESI sensitive programming</p> <p>Long term GESI responsive programming</p>	Number of activities / projects complying with GESI mainstreaming guidelines.	GESI Scan reports	<p>SADC-GMI</p> <p>SADC GMI partners</p> <p>Sub grantees</p>



Strategic Objective 4: Create an enabling environment for the meaningful participation of women, men, youths, persons with disabilities and socially marginalized groups in the design, implementation, delivery and operationalization of projects for the inclusive and equitable conjunctive use and management of surface and groundwater resources in the SADC region.

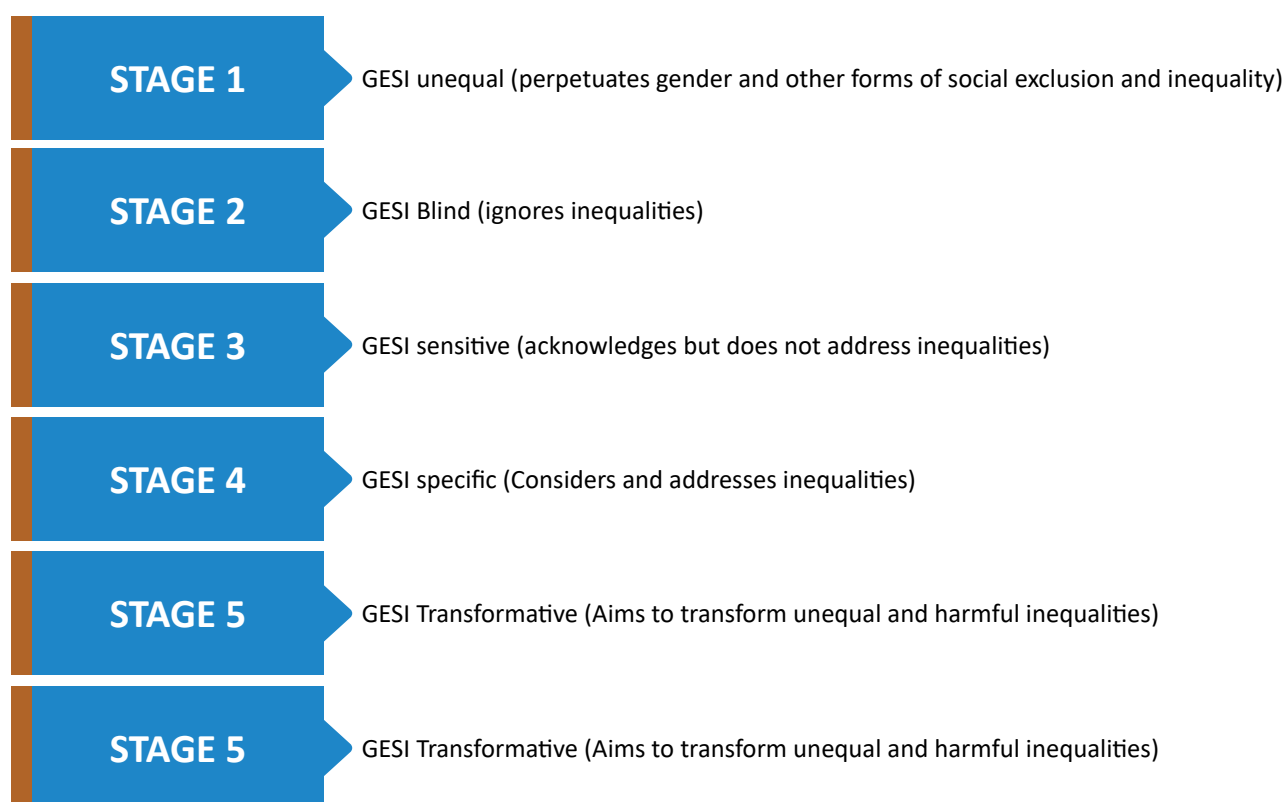
MEASURES /ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	OFFICE RESPONSIBLE
Regular project planning and feedback meetings with GESI disaggregated groups e.g. women, youths, PWDs, and other socially marginalized group etc organised.	<p>Community consultations action plans</p> <p>Community consultation recommendations</p> <p>Women led community structures established</p>	<p>Short-Term Inclusive project design, implementation, and delivery</p> <p>Medium-Term Increased participation of all groups of persons in community projects planning</p> <p>Long term Inclusive water resources management</p>	<p>Number of awareness raising events and GESI sensitive (Information, Education and Communication) IEC materials</p> <p>Regular planning GESI community planning, Stakeholder Engagement feedback meetings held</p>	<p>Meeting registers</p> <p>Meeting reports</p> <p>Meeting resolutions</p> <p>Project reports</p> <p>Annual reports</p> <p>Budget</p>	<p>Sub grantees</p> <p>SADC-GMI</p> <p>Community groups</p> <p>Consultants</p> <p>Sub contractors</p>
Ensure that Consultants and Project Partners engaged to provide technical support/ implement projects for SADC-GMI address GESI in their scope of work.	<p>GESI main-streaming incorporated in the Terms of Reference of relevant technical work and related</p> <p>Reviews / studies commissioned by SADC-GMI.</p> <p>Proposals weighting includes weighting for GESI Compliance</p>	<p>Short Term All projects commissioned by SADC-GMI increasingly reflect gender equity and social inclusion awareness</p> <p>Medium Term Increase in the proportion of projects commissioned by SADC-GMI that incorporates gender equality and social inclusion.</p> <p>Long Term Increased gender responsive projects and programmes implemented in the SADC region.</p>	<p>Number of ToRs, guidance documents, instructions etc of technical work and related reviews or studies commissioned by SADC-GMI addressing GESI.</p>	<p>Project Reports</p> <p>Requests for Proposals</p> <p>Expressions of Interests</p>	<p>Sub grantees</p> <p>SADC-GMI Consultants</p> <p>Sub contractors</p>
Participatory projects design, implementation, operationalization and delivery facilitated	<p>Community participation in projects designed implementation delivery and operationalization of infrastructure.</p>	<p>Short term Inclusive project design, implementation, and delivery</p> <p>Medium term Improved infrastructure and project sustainability</p> <p>Long Term GESI responsive projects planned and implemented.</p>	<p>Number of GESI disaggregated groups providing in kind or labour and support services to SADC-GMI initiatives projects</p> <p>Number of men, women, PWDs and socially marginalized group trained in GESI awareness.</p>	<p>Project Report</p> <p>Time Sheets</p>	<p>Sub grantees</p> <p>SADC-GMI Community groups</p> <p>Consultants</p> <p>Sub contractors</p>

4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION APPROACH

The SADC-GMI monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning (MERL) will be two-pronged approach which combines measuring changes in GESI aspects within the three strategic areas of focus i.e. capacity, participation and policy framework. Periodic gender audits to assess and check the institutionalisation of gender equality by SADC-GMI in its policies, pro- grammes, projects, structures, and budgets, assessment of effectiveness of GESI specific budgets, and adherence to GESI based progress markers as defined in the implementation plan will be the elements of this strategy. As such, GESI sensitive monitoring and evaluation will be implemented to ensure that SADC-GMI is responsive by measuring power gaps based on the principle of inclusivity and diversity.

4.1 GESI IMPLEMENTATION PLAN MONITORING, EVALUATION REPORTING AND LEARNING (MERL)

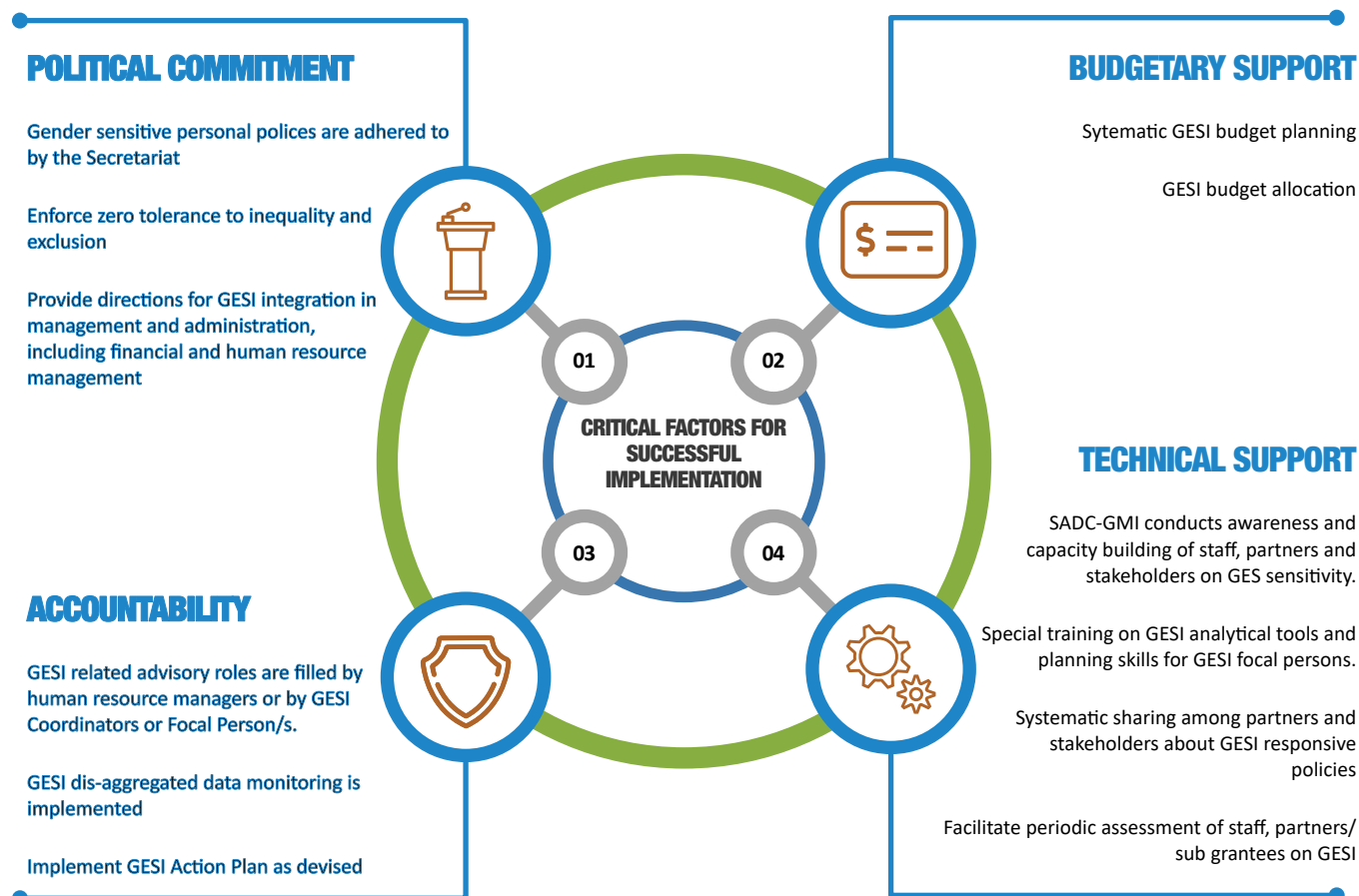
This GESI Strategy and implementation plan shall be implemented in 5 year cycles. At the end of the 5 years, a GESI strategy review will be carried out by SADC-GMI. The review will enable SADC-GMI to check on its progress towards implementa- tion, and inform new direction for adaptive and transformative GESI mainstreaming. The review will enable SADC-GMI to gauge its capacity and point areas that need strengthening as much as those that needs continued support. The review will be based on the below assessment scale ([WHO, 2016](#)).



Based on the GESI assessment carried in the development of this strategy, SADC-GMI is GESI sensitive and implementation of this strategy aims to ensure that it progresses from just acknowledging the inequalities to addressing and eventually transformation.

3.3 CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

The successful implementation of this GESI Strategy will depend on the following four pillars which will ensure that there is



04 GESI-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATIONS

SADC-GMI recognizes the critical role that language and communication products plays a critical role in how its partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders interpret the world, think and behave. In this, the specific language in which official messages, press releases, social media content, publications, and statements from senior management and communications personnel use provide a crucial model for both, staff and our partners. SADC-GMI commits to language that does not reflect unconscious harmful assumptions about values, gender roles and the abilities of women, men and persons with disabilities. By this strategy SADC-GMI acknowledges that gendered language is still commonplace in both the workplace and community and therefore commits to:

- Portray women, girls, men, boys, PWDs, sexual minorities , youth and the elderly equitably and fairly by doing this, SADC-GMI aims to transform attitudes and behaviors related to gender inequality and the exclusion of women, girls, persons with disabilities, the youth and elderly, sexual minorities
- Ensure that all categories / groups of persons are represented fairly and equally in all communication products such as press releases, social media and positive stories of change
- Deconstruct gender stereotypes by implementing a zero tolerance policy on the use of sexist language that reinforces inequalities
- Review all communications material for exclusionary language such language as He / Him in reference to either men or women
- Use equal forms of address such as Ms, Chairperson (not Mrs / Chairman)
- Promote language that is gender balanced by avoiding generic terms e. g mankind, mother language.
- Promote language that is inclusive and diverse e.g. other official languages such as French, Portuguese and KiSwahili
- Ensure the reasonable accommodation of beneficiaries who are visually impaired (braille) and the Deaf (sign language) and where possible translate into native language of target groups
- Ensure that the digital gap does not exclude women, youths and PWDs from accessing SADC-GMI services
- Choosing images that show women in non-traditional and non-stereotypical roles and professions and to ensure equal numbers of women and men in our image selection.
- Use of images in which postures, expressions, gestures and clothing convey equal status and authority of all groups of people.

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