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USAID – NARUC Enhancing Stability and Technical Expertise in European and Eurasian Markets (ESTEEM)

Advancing Women Leaders in Energy (AWLE) Project Phase 2 Launch: Internships & Mentoring Circles

Background

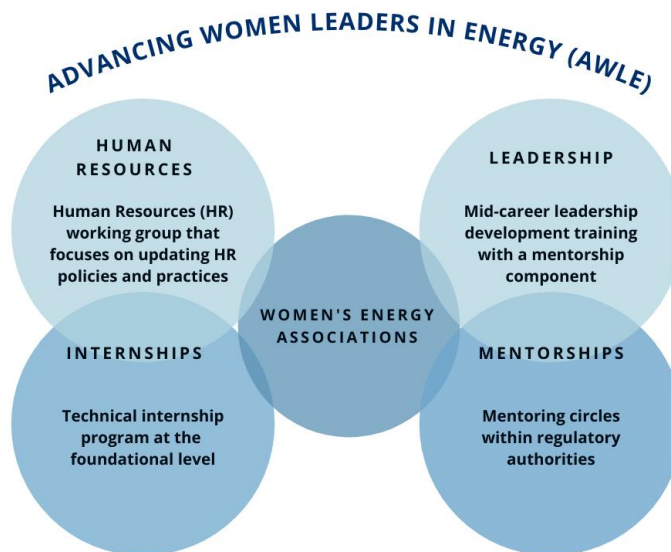
The energy sector is widely regarded as one of the least gender diverse industries as women are consistently underrepresented, particularly in technical and managerial roles. A number of studies have shown that companies employing a higher percentage of women typically have a more positive and meaningful work culture that increases employee retention. In the Europe and Eurasia (E&E) region, socio-cultural norms (i.e., a lack of science, technology, engineering, and math [STEM] educational background, a lack of training, and a lack of anti-discriminatory measures) often cause women to depart from the workplace or even the workforce and, therefore, contribute to a lack of female leadership. To expand economic growth, promoting women's economic empowerment and advancing gender equity in the energy sector and globally is crucial.¹ With support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), this activity will ensure the availability of technical internship positions and the institutionalization of mentoring programs at energy regulatory authorities in the E&E region.

Program Description

In 2022, NARUC is expanding its gender programs by building upon the ongoing Advancing Women Leaders in Energy project (AWLE), which focuses on supporting mid-career professionals in energy regulatory authorities from the E&E region.

Through a two-pronged approach, the current project 1) advances a leadership/Human Resources (HR) working group focusing on updating HR policies and practices, and 2) oversees a tailored mid-career leadership development training with a mentorship component.

NARUC is adding new program components in the form of a **technical internship program** (at the foundational level) and by institutionalizing **mentoring programs** that involve mid- and senior management levels.



¹ "Budget." USAID. <https://www.usaid.gov/cj>

These additional elements will create a cycle of support within organizations by creating assistance programs for women at each career stage. NARUC will work with energy regulators (including representatives from the HR working group and the mid-career track) to create an AWLE internship program and associated mentoring circles.

Energy Regulation Internship Program

NARUC will institutionalize the internship program with select regulators by co-developing operational parameters (e.g., internship design, supervisor guidance, hiring process, stipend allotment, reporting mechanisms, etc.). These six-month internships will be highly substantive in nature, with interns completing technical work to prepare them for technical positions in the energy sector. This program is an effective way to promote women's careers in the energy sector and advance gender equity.

Mentoring Circles

NARUC will collaborate with the participants of the mid-career and HR/leadership groups to set up a sustainable mentorship program within their respective regulatory authorities. This will allow recent graduates of the current project to pay it forward by putting into practice the leadership skills they have learned to support the career development and advancement of junior and other mid-career level women. NARUC anticipates that senior-level representatives of the regulatory commissions will also join as mentors. Finally, subject to interest, NARUC will work with energy regulators to establish platforms for promoting gender equity at the national level through the creation of mentoring circles and/or formalized nongovernmental organizations that focus on supporting and advancing women's careers in the energy field.

We are currently seeking a few energy regulatory authorities to participate in the pilot projects to launch the internship program and mentoring circles (concurrently or consecutively). Please let us know if you/your organization is interested and we will provide more information.

NARUC Points of Contact:

Erin Hammel, Director of International Programs, ehammel@naruc.org

Tetyana Makunina-Diffenbach, Program Manager, NARUC, tmakunina@naruc.org