

# USAID & NARUC Gender and Inclusion Initiatives



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**April 2024** – Gender inequity in energy and regulation has been a longstanding challenge, prohibiting growth and sustainability and affecting energy services, labor, and decision-making. In response, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) is working to address this systemic issue through 1) a USAID-funded initiative focused on improving women’s access to leadership and decision-making power in the energy sectors of Europe and Eurasia, and 2) an internship program funded by USAID and Power Africa for young women across the African continent.



National  
Association of  
Regulatory  
Utility  
Commissioners



Gender equity in the workplace has several benefits, including expediting problem-solving through a diverse range of viewpoints, improving staff retention, and contributing to a more positive work environment where employees feel valued. Integrating women into the energy sector as both employees and policymakers provides agency to women affected by energy decisions and encourages regulators to consider the gender-differentiated impacts of regulatory policy.

Further, studies show that gender equity can enhance workforce development, organizational productivity, and profitability. Allowing more women to fully participate in the workforce and earn equal pay is critical to any nation’s economic success.

## Advancing Women Leaders in Energy (AWLE) Initiative

Senior leadership roles held by  
women at energy-related firms



**14%**

With funding from **USAID**, the AWLE initiative works to improve gender equity in the energy regulatory agencies of **Europe and Eurasia**. It supports the U.S. Government’s Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) Initiative, including the Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act (WEEA Act), which advances gender equality and social inclusion through a diverse set of programming, understanding that “investment in a woman means investing in her community and her country.”

### Mid-Career Leadership Training

At an individual level, NARUC is supporting mid-career professionals through an initiative that works to hone participants’ communications and public speaking skills, support them with career planning, and develop critical leadership expertise in key competencies, such as project management, negotiation, business strategy, and team management.

### Human Resources (HR) Working Group

At an institutional level, NARUC is working with HR departments within energy regulatory agencies to change prevailing socio-cultural norms by assessing current hiring and promotion practices, implementing anti-discriminatory policies, and providing gender and inclusion awareness training.

Women in the  
energy sector



**22-25%**

#### Technical Internship Program

This is a paid technical internship program for women who have recently completed, or will imminently complete, their undergraduate program (or higher) in law, engineering, economics, or other relevant technical areas. These are intended to be highly substantive internship opportunities with a minimum duration of six months within their respective country's energy regulatory commission/s.


#### Mentorship/Mentoring Circles

NARUC is collaborating with the participants of the AWLE Mid-Career Leadership Training program, the HR Leadership Working Group, and others at national regulatory authorities to set up mentoring programs within interested 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.

#### Women in Energy Associations

NARUC will work with energy regulators to establish platforms for promoting gender equity at the national level through the creation of formalized non-governmental organizations that focus on supporting and advancing women's careers in the energy field.

## Women in Energy Regulation Internship Program



"I love engineering because of how impactful it is in bettering people's lives on a daily basis and providing life-changing solutions. Today I am capable of doing so much in my career because of the exposure I have attained from working with the Energy Regulation Board (ERB). I started my career journey as an intern at the ERB under the USAID and NARUC Women in Energy Regulation Internship program, and I can't wait to do more in my new role. My advice is to work hard, do more, and exert yourself. Your efforts will be rewarded."

**FRIDAH NKUNDE**

Engineer - Renewable Energy  
Energy Regulation Board of Zambia



With support from **USAID** and **Power Africa**, NARUC launched the Women in Energy Regulation Internship Program in 2017 and has partnered with energy regulators from **Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, and Zambia** to place young women in short-term positions within their country's energy commissions. This program provides qualified women who have recently completed undergraduate programs (or higher) in law, engineering, economics, or other relevant technical areas with paid internship opportunities within their respective country's energy regulatory commissions.

By promoting gender equity in the energy sector and encouraging women to participate as decision-makers, the internship program supports inclusive workplace development and Power Africa's goal to advance inclusive economic growth that improves lives and powers health, education, and prosperity.

## Practical Guide to Women in Energy Regulation

Developed in collaboration with **USAID's Energy Division**, the [Practical Guide to Women in Energy Regulation](#) introduces concepts on gender equality in energy regulation. The guide provides energy regulators with strategies to support gender equity and representation for women within the sector and analyzes three pathways for gender inclusion in the energy regulatory sector: (1) the workforce, (2) regulatory policy, and (3) large infrastructure projects.

Check out our infographic, "Supporting Gender Equity in the Energy Sector" [here!](#)

"At energy companies around the world, women hold just 22% of jobs and 14% of senior roles. This means that an industry seriously in need of innovation rarely benefits from the skills and benefits of a very talented and significant proportion of the population."

~ Samantha Power, USAID Administrator, January 2023