

Gender and Energy in Albania

Highlights from the workshop held in Tirana on 24 January 2023

The “*Gender and Energy in Albania*” workshop was organized in the framework of the Technical Assistance (TA) program “Energy Sector Reforms” financed by the French Development Agency (AFD) and implemented by Expertise France.

It started with opening remarks by Ilir Bejtja, **Deputy Minister for Infrastructure and Energy**, who emphasised the necessity of including women in the energy reforms process that is taking place in Albania while addressing the gender pay gap and the gender dimension of energy poverty.

Elisabeth Barsacq, **Ambassador of France to Albania**, invited Albania to include climate change in all its discussions together with gender and energy. Ambassador Barsacq underlined that on these issues “*[Albania is] not alone*” with commitments at different levels and support from France, the EU and international organisations.

On behalf of the **Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP)**, Etleva Sheshi, Director - Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Policies, welcomed the first report on Gender and Energy in Albania. Sheshi declared that the MoHSP “*will work to ensure women and girls participate in the energy sector, not only in the dedicated ministry but also in energy companies*”.

Rudina Xhelilaj, Director - Development Programmes in Energy, **Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MIE)**, presented the different reforms undertaken to build a sustainable Albanian energy market. Xhelilaj also addressed the energy crisis, the energy price increase and the measures taken to curb it, and the diversification of the electricity generation mix.

Sébastien Carreau, AFD Senior Operations Manager for Albania and Kosovo, noted that **AFD** has committed over EUR 210 million since 2019 in three key sectors: energy, gender and water supply to support Albania’s inclusive and sustainable growth trajectory.

For **Expertise France**, Alberto Dotta, Project Manager - Sustainable Development, announced that AFD and MIE validated the second phase of the TA “energy sector reforms” in Albania to start in April 2023 for a two-year period.

In her presentation of **Expertise France’s** “*Gender Diagnosis of the energy sector in Albania*”, Véronique Renard, Gender and Energy Expert, outlined the main findings and recommendations of the report. Renard indicated that the Gender Diagnosis highlights that the average share of women working in the energy sector in Albania is around 26%, which reflects the low share of girls and young women in technical and engineering studies. To reduce the gender imbalances in the energy sector, the report proposes to implement the existing Albanian legal framework on gender equality; develop a gender equality action plan; collect gender-disaggregated data, notably to address the gender pay gap, the gender dimension of energy poverty and the gender gap in sustainable energy awareness/literacy.

Mirald Hekuri, Director Human Resources **KESH**, Nora Zela, Legal Adviser of the **OSHEE Group** CEO and Rigela Gegprifti, Country Head of **Statkraft** in Albania took part in a panel discussion on “Electricity Industry and Gender Equality”. In this conversation moderated by Krenar Bujupi, **Expertise France** Team Leader, TA “energy sector reforms” in Albania, the panellists agreed that in order to reduce gender imbalances in the electricity industry, it is critical to change existing mindsets and overcome gender stereotypes, adopt flexibility in the workplace and improve gender diversity in the workforce in a continuous effort.

Expertise France’s work to support the GoA’s efforts to enhance the policy framework for gender equality in access to economic opportunities was presented by Délima Nano, Team Leader, TA “Gender Equality in Access to Economic Opportunities”.

In Albania, there is no dedicated network of women in energy and the **Global Women’s Network for the Energy Transition (GWNET)** Executive Director, Christine Lins, provided some insights on “how to set up a national network of women in sustainable energy”, drawing from [GWNET’s 2022 guide of the same name](#).

Ines Leskaj, Executive Director, **Albania Women Empowerment Network (AWEN)**, recommended integrating the gender dimension in the energy sector. In her presentation, Leskaj detailed the different steps that are required for a successful integration.

Milieukontakt Albania’s Executive Director, Valbona Mazreku, insisted on empowering women to take actions to fight energy poverty. “Energy poverty is a structural problem and not only a consequence of [raising] energy prices”, stated Mazreku.

The workshop ended with Krenar Bujupi, Expertise France, thanking the MIE and MoHSP representatives for their support in organising this event. He also thanked the different speakers and panellists for their fruitful collaboration, and the participants in this event for their interest and participation.