



# WVEC 2019: Women Empowerment - Best Practices for the Sustainable Energy Sector

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**Timing:** 25 November, 14.00 – 16.00

**Room:** Room 3

## **Narrative**

The energy sector workforce is coined by a gender gap greater than most other sectors. As stated in the recent report "[Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective](#)" by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) the energy industry is far from being gender-balanced with only 22% of women in the oil & gas sector workforce and 32% in the renewable energy workforce. According to Ernst & Young's Women in Power and Utilities Index, only 5% of board executives and 16% of board members of the top 200 utilities are women.

The energy transition and the trend towards sustainable energy (renewable energy and energy efficiency), however, present unprecedented chances for women interested in the industry. Empowering women in the clean energy sector is crucial for the sector's success. Scientific research has found that a diversified workforce delivers better results, not only in terms of increased creativity and innovation potential, but also related to better decision-making and greater profits.

Initial research findings have also led to conclude that companies with more women on their board of directors are inter alia more likely to invest in renewable power generation, mitigate climate change and proactively address environmental concerns. Still, this potential has not yet translated into a substantially narrower gender gap in the energy sector. Taking into account that the workforce in the renewable energy sector is predicted to rise from 11 million jobs today to about 42 million jobs in 2050, the attraction of female talent will be crucial to ensure a thriving sector.

GWNET is currently producing a study that looks at women empowerment in the sustainable energy sector from a workforce perspective. Taking as a point of departure that women are entitled to the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to have access to employment on equal terms as men, the study will sketch a picture of the current participation of women in the sustainable energy workforce in developed/emerging economies, including in leading positions, and contrast it with examples which have proven successful for achieving a more gender inclusive environment. These examples will be derived either from within the sustainable energy sector itself or transposed from other, more gender-diverse sectors.

Researchers in Brazil have taken a close look at the specific country situation for women in energy which has been published: "Energy and Gender; an assessment of gender equality in the energy sector in Brazil".



## Objective

The side event will focus on a sneak-preview presentation of the GWNET study – put in relief against the Brazilian study – and be followed by a panel discussion about women's empowerment in the energy sector.

## Key discussion topics

1. Women in the sustainable energy sector
2. Summary of scientific evidence on the effects of gender diversity and inclusion in the workplace
3. Obstacles, enablers and best-practices for women's access to and participation in the sustainable energy workforce
4. Recommendations for a more gender inclusive sustainable energy sector

## Session Programme

### Keynote speech & panel chair

H.E. Irene Giner-Reichl, President of GWNET

### Panel discussion

- Hirdan Costa, Professor, co-author of the study “Energy and Gender, An assessment on Gender Equality in the Energy sector in Brazil” (tbc)
- Elbia Gannoum, President, Abeeolica (confirmed)
- Ana Toni, icS, Rio de Janeiro (confirmed)
- Renata Koch Alvarenga, Political Analyst, British Consulate General, Rio de Janeiro (tbc)
- Representative of a think tank, such as KAS, Instituto Iguape, CITS Global (tbc)

**Comments** from mentors and mentees of the GWNET-GWEC cooperation on “Women in Wind”

## Setting

Format: panel discussion

The session will be structured as follows:

- 5 minutes Welcome by the chair
- 15 minutes Keynote speech
- 60 minutes Moderated discussion among panelists
- 10 minutes Comments from mentors and mentees of GWNET-GWEC cooperation on “Women in Wind”
- 30 minutes Questions from the floor and final summary/wrap-up