

Stakeholders' Validation and Capacity Assessment for Gender Integration in Nigeria's Water Sector Policies and Governance

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Front cover photo: Participants jotting down points from the stakeholder event at Ibadan (*photo:* Sapphire Media)

Back cover photo: IWMI stakeholder event (*photo:* Sapphire Media)

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Summary

The stakeholder validation and capacity assessment workshops were convened in Abuja and Ibadan to present and validate findings from a recent gender analysis of Nigeria's water governance frameworks and to assess the institutional capacity of relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to mainstream gender in the sector. Bringing together representatives from water and gender institutions, civil society, and academia, the workshops provided a platform for critical reflection, policy dialogue, and knowledge exchange. Participants confirmed gaps in policy coherence, weak institutional capacity, limited funding, and sociocultural barriers that hinder gender-responsive water governance. Most policies lack structured implementation plans, accountability mechanisms, and dedicated resources for gender integration. The workshops also revealed limited awareness of gender frameworks among practitioners, underscoring the need for improved coordination, training, and public engagement.

An urgent need to review and align water governance policies with national gender equality frameworks; institutionalize accountability mechanisms and investing in sustained capacity-building was established among stakeholders. The workshop concluded with a strong collective commitment from participants to move beyond dialogue and take concrete action toward inclusive governance that meaningfully empowers women. It marks an important step forward in advancing gender-equitable and effective water governance in Nigeria.

Background and Rationale

Gender mainstreaming is widely recognized as a key institutional intervention for promoting gender equality across sectors. In Nigeria, where climate change and population growth are putting increasing pressure on water resources, women, girls, and vulnerable communities bear a disproportionate share of the burden. Despite commitments to gender equality at both national and global levels, gender integration in water sector governance remains limited and insufficiently institutionalized. Persistent barriers including resistance to change, limited institutional capacity, inadequate funding, and deeply entrenched sociocultural norms in some parts of the country continue to hinder meaningful progress.

Co-identifying these challenges with key stakeholders, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), through the CGIAR Initiative on National Policies and Strategies and now the Policy Innovations Science program, conducted a gender analysis of water policies and governance in Nigeria with case studies in the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), Oyo, and Nasarawa States. The study assessed coherence between gender and water policies and explored the underlying factors contributing to persistent gender disparities in policy implementation. This workshop was a critical step for fostering a collaborative environment for validating the findings and identifying capacity-building priorities.

The stakeholder workshop entitled "Stakeholder Validation Workshop and Capacity Needs Assessment on Integrating Gender in Nigeria's Water Sector Governance," was convened by IWMI. It was held on April 22 and 24, 2025, in Ibadan and Abuja respectively. The Ibadan session took place at the Ibadan Business School Conference Room and was attended by 27 stakeholders, while the Abuja session was hosted at the Exclusive Serene Hotel, drawing 16 participants. Both events brought together a diverse group of key actors and stakeholders from federal and state-level water and gender ministries, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and gender experts. A full list of participants is annexed to this report.

Workshop Objectives

The stakeholder validation and capacity assessment workshops were convened to present and validate the findings from the research on gender and water policy analysis and assess the capacity needs of stakeholders within water and gender-related ministries, departments, and agencies. Specifically, the workshops aimed at:

- **Validating findings of research and policy analysis:**
Solicit feedback and achieve consensus on a draft report for gender integration into Nigeria's water sector governance structures, policies, and programs.
- **Strengthening coherence:**
Identify opportunities to strengthen policy coherence and institutional capacity for gender integration in the water sector.
- **Assessing existing capacities:**
Evaluate the current knowledge, skills, and institutional capacities of stakeholders within the water sector regarding gender analysis, planning, and implementation.
- **Identify capacity gaps and needs:**
Determine specific areas where capacity building interventions are required to effectively integrate gender perspectives.
- **Foster stakeholder ownership:**
Build a shared understanding and commitment among key actors and stakeholders for advancing gender equality in the water sector.
- **Develop a roadmap:**
Contribute to the development of a practical roadmap or next steps for training towards addressing identified capacity gaps.

Insights from the workshop were expected to guide targeted capacity-building interventions, inform policy recommendations, and catalyze cross-sectoral collaboration toward more inclusive water governance.

Participants

The workshops brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from relevant government ministries and departments (water, agriculture, gender); Academia; Civil society organizations; development agencies and policy think tanks involved in gender and water governance at the federal and state levels. Figure 1 shows participants at the Ibadan workshop.



Figure 1. Participants at the Ibadan Workshop (*photo: Sapphire media*)

Workshop Processing

The workshop employed an interactive and participatory methodology, including:

- **Welcome remarks:**

The workshops commenced with welcome remarks from the IWMI team and key stakeholder representatives in each location, setting a collaborative and purposeful tone for the sessions. At the Ibadan workshop, the opening addresses were delivered by the Director of the Oyo State Water Corporation, Mrs. Shontonwa Roagess Oluyinka Mosunmola and the Honourable Commissioner for Women Affairs, Oyo State, represented by Mr. Ogunjimi Olutoye Diya, the Director of Gender Affairs. These remarks were followed by participant introductions, which helped establish an inclusive atmosphere for engagement. The Abuja workshop commenced with a welcome address delivered online by Dr. Alan Nicol, Project Lead of the Policy Innovations Science Program at IWMI. This was followed by remarks from the Director of Special Duties at the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, represented by Mrs. Charity Peniel, Gender Specialist at the Ministry, and from the General Manager of the Nasarawa State Water Board, Dr. Ahmad A. Kana. These contributions underscored the importance of the workshop and reaffirmed the ministries' support for gender-responsive water governance.
- **Plenary presentations:**

Presenting the overview of the CGIAR Policy Innovations Science Program, and on the draft report for gender integration.

Dr. Charity Osei-Amponsah (IWMI) delivered the opening presentation, providing an overview of the Policy Innovations Science Program and the objectives of the stakeholder workshop. She also highlighted insights from IWMI's earlier study on policy coherence in food, land, and water systems, which served as a foundation for the current gender analysis. This was followed by a presentation from Ms. Sarah Appiah (IWMI), who shared findings from the gender analysis of water policy and governance in Nigeria.
- **Open forum and plenary feedback:**

Facilitated opened discussion sessions at plenary to allow for in-depth analysis and feedback on specific components of the draft report.

A lively question-and-answer plenary session followed, allowing participants to engage directly with presenters on the Policy Innovations Science Program, study findings, and the current state of gender integration in water governance at both the federal and state levels as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Q&A session at the workshop in Ibadan and Abuja (photo: Sapphire media)

- **Capacity assessment tool and exercise:**
Application of self-assessment questionnaires. Participants then took part in a capacity needs assessment exercise, with access to an online survey form shared to gather insights that would inform future capacity-building efforts. Each session concluded with closing remarks emphasizing the importance of collaboration, institutional commitment, and sustained action to advance gender mainstreaming in Nigeria's water sector.

Key Highlights of the Workshop

Presentation of the Policy Innovations SP and Study Findings

As part of the workshop opening, Dr. Charity Osei-Amponsah of IWMI presented an overview of the Policy Innovations Science Program, highlighting its implementation in Nigeria and alignment with the country's development agenda (Figure 3). She emphasized that policies aimed at strengthening food, land, and water (FLW) systems often face significant governance and political economy challenges that hinder their effectiveness. She explained that to help tackle these challenges, the CGIAR Policy Innovations Science Program formerly known as the National Policies and Strategies initiative is currently being implemented in a number of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, including Nigeria. It seeks to build more coherent and capable policy frameworks to meet both current demands and future development needs. Dr. Osei-Amponsah underscored the relevance to Nigeria's national goals, particularly the government's commitment to integrated planning in the water and sanitation sector, and its broader vision to promote social, economic, and political empowerment for women, children, and vulnerable groups at all levels of governance.



Figure 3. Dr. Charity Osei-Amponsah's presentation at the Ibadan and Abuja workshops (*photo: Sapphire media*)

Ms. Sarah Appiah of IWMI presented the study findings on gender analysis of water policies and governance in Nigeria, highlighting the methodological approach, key insights, and policy implications (Figure 4). The research utilized a gender policy analysis framework to evaluate the degree of gender integration within Nigeria's water governance structures. The framework outlines six phased structural enquiry to explore gender inclusion in policy documents. This includes contextual justification, intersectionality, evidence, operationality, budgeting and coherence. She explained that the framework was developed by Buchy et al. (2024) under the National Policies and Strategies Initiative and takes a formal, structured approach involving six themes complementing more traditional gender policy analysis. While the latter typically focuses on identifying the presence or absence of gender-related content in

policy documents, essentially assessing "what is there", this framework goes further. It seeks to understand how gender issues are conceptualized within policies, how the state intends to address them, and where critical gaps or inconsistencies may exist. This deeper analytical approach allows for a more nuanced evaluation of the policy environment and its implications for gender equity. The study affirmed a growing recognition of the importance of gender equity in the water sector but also revealed a significant gap in implementation. Water sector policies and strategies are often not aligned with national gender policies and commitments, leading to fragmented execution, limited accountability, and reduced effectiveness of gender-related initiatives.



Figure 4. Ms. Sarah Appiah responding to Q&A at the workshop (photo: Sapphire media)



Ms. Appiah Presenting the study findings at the workshop (photo: Sapphire media)

Key Issues Identified

Participants validated the study's findings and engaged in discussions that underscored several pressing challenges:

- Policy incoherence between gender frameworks and water governance strategies.
- Institutional inefficiencies and lack of technical capacity to implement gender-sensitive approaches.
- Insufficient and inconsistent funding for gender-responsive water initiatives.
- Sociocultural barriers limit women's participation and leadership in water management.
- Weak accountability mechanisms and limited political will to drive meaningful reforms.

A participant, Mrs. Shontonwa Roagess, Director of Quality Control at Oyo State Water Corporation (Figure 5), emphasized that, "Transforming water sector governance requires not just policy reform, but a shift in institutional culture, improved funding, and consistent political will to include and empower women at all levels."



Figure 5. Mrs. Roagess making her submission at the workshop in Ibadan (photo: Sapphire media)



Discussion session at the Abuja workshop (photo: Sapphire media)

The discussions emphasized the urgent need to review existing water sector policies and legal frameworks, as well as the importance of building institutional capacity to better integrate gender considerations into water governance.

Building Momentum for Change

Despite the challenges, the workshop reflected a strong momentum for change. Stakeholders agreed on the urgent need to:

- Align water policies with Nigeria's broader gender equality goals.
- Institutionalize mechanisms for accountability and regular tracking of gender integration.
- Enhance funding and resource allocation for gender-sensitive interventions.
- Strengthen coordination across water and gender institutions.
- Prioritize capacity-building efforts and awareness campaigns at all levels.

Dr. Sade Taiwo, Chief Executive Director of the Centre for Enterprise Development and Action Research closed the workshop in Ibadan with a call to action. She urged stakeholders to invest in long-term efforts that go beyond policy dialogue and translate into tangible progress for inclusive water governance. Similarly in Abuja, Dr. Ahmad A. Kana, General Manager, Nasarawa State Water Board called on participants to take deliberate, gender-sensitive actions in their operational activities for more inclusive water governance practices.

Conclusion

The workshop served as a critical platform for validation, dialogue, and action. It did not only confirm the urgent need to bridge the gap between gender commitments and water policy implementation but also fostered meaningful networking among practitioners, researchers, and institutions. Strengthening these networks is essential for advancing gender-responsive water governance and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Change begins with dialogue but achieving real transformation in Nigeria's water sector will require bold, coordinated, and sustained action.

Next Steps

Following the workshop, findings from the study were discussed with the Director of Special Duties who oversees the Gender Department, at the Federal Ministry of Water Resources. The Director expressed commitment to presenting the issues raised at the upcoming Water Council meeting and encouraged IWMI to use this momentum to revitalize its partnership with the Ministry, particularly in contributing to water policy development and implementation.

This proposed re-engagement has also been discussed with Dr. Olufunke Cofie, IWMI's Africa Director of Research Impact, for her strategic guidance and to facilitate institutional uptake.

Building on the connections established during the workshop and leveraging IWMI's newly signed partnership with the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, we plan to engage gender focal points across the federal, state, and local levels. As an initial step, the link to the capacity needs assessment tool has been shared with workshop participants, including gender focal points, who have been encouraged to disseminate it through their networks. The collected responses will be analyzed and shared with key stakeholders for further input. Where appropriate, findings will inform the design of tailored capacity-building tools to support gender integration efforts across different levels of water governance.

Annexes

Annex A. Agenda for Ibadan Workshop

Stakeholder validation workshop and capacity needs assessment on integrating gender in Nigeria's water sector governance

Venue: Ibadan Business School Date: 22nd April 2025

Time	Activity	Responsibility
9:00- 9:30	Arrival and Registration	All
Alignment		
9:30-10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening and purpose of event General introductions Opening Remarks	Moderator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oyo State Water Corporation Oyo State Women Affairs IWMI 	Mrs. Shontonwa Roagess Honourable Commissioner Dr. Alan Nicol
Presentations		
10:00-10:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Innovation SP and summary of flagship Report on Policy Coherence 	Dr. Charity Osei- Amponsah
10:20- 10:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validation of key findings from gender analysis on water policies and governance 	Ms. Sarah Appiah
10:40-11:10	Group photo + Coffee break	
11:10-11:30	Question and Answers	Moderator
Group Discussion		
11:30-11:40	Briefing on needs assessment	Dr. Charity Osei- Amponsah
11:40-12:00	Gender capacity needs assessment	All
12:00-12:35	Plenary discussion on next steps	All
12:35-12:50	Summary of key takeaways	Dr. Taiwo Sade
12:50- 1:00 pm	Closing Remarks	All
1:00 pm	Lunch	

Annex B. Agenda for Abuja Workshop.

Stakeholders' validation workshop and capacity needs assessment on integrating gender in Nigeria's water sector policies and governance Venue: Exclusive Serene Hotel Date: 24th April 2025

Time	Activity	Responsibility
9:30- 10:00	Arrival and Registration	All
Opening Session		
10:00-10:25	Purpose of event General introductions <i>Welcome Remarks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">FMWRNasarawa State Water BoardIWMI	Moderator Mr. S. M Babarinde/ Mrs Charity Peniel Dr. Bedru Balana Dr. Alan Nicol
Presentations		
10:25-10:40	Overview of Policy Innovation Initiative and Summary of Flagship Report on Policy Coherence	Dr. Charity Osei- Amponsah
10:40- 11:00	Validation of key findings from gender analysis of water policies and governance study	Ms. Sarah Appiah
10:20-10:35	Group photo + Tea break	All participants
Validation of Findings		
10:35-11:30	2 Focus Group discussions of key findings and validation	Moderators – using prompts to trigger discussions
11.30-11.55	Plenary reflections and Discussions on gaps	All
11.55-12.00	Summary of key takeaways	Dr. Taiwo Sade
Capacity Needs Assessment		
12:00-12:05	Briefing on needs assessment	Dr. Charity Osei- Amponsah
12:05-12:25	Gender capacity needs assessment	All
12:25-12.30	Next steps	Sarah
12:30 pm	Closing/Lunch	

[Link to media blog post about the workshop](#)



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