

Gender mainstreaming in energy policies: the Spanish example

Accelerating women's agenda in the energy sector is crucial, especially when our energy system is set for a profound change in the coming decades. But how to design policies that will support women in practical terms? After extensive research and an [expert discussion](#) organised in June this year by FES Just Climate, among other relevant [findings](#), Spain was often highlighted as one of the few Member States that were mentioning gender equality in the energy sector in their National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP). What are the progressive elements that the Spanish government is pursuing in its gender approach and the good practices that could serve other Member States and stakeholders as well? FES Just Climate conducted an interview with **María Jiménez Navarro, Energy Coordinator Counsellor at the Spanish Permanent Representation to the EU** to discuss the policies and the way forward for women working in the Spanish energy sector.

It starts with clarity

The clean transformation in Spain is seen as a leverage to gain. Not only in terms of competitiveness and economic aspects, but also in terms of prosperity, energy security, employment, innovation, technological development, welfare, reduction in energy poverty, etc. It is now evident that when the gender approach is incorporated into the policy measures that are aimed at ensuring a just transition, for example, it can help reduce the different current gaps (labour, economic, etc.) and benefit the society as a whole. According to María Jiménez Navarro, ***“if we add gender mainstreaming, we will gain even more”***.

A step-by-step process with concrete proposals

The overall public political guidance of the Spanish government lies in mainstreaming gender in policies related to different sectors. This is also the case for the climate and energy sectors.

- Let us take as an example the just transition strategy. Spain has incorporated the gender dimension into it from the very beginning. On the one hand, several dialogues with just transition territories and stakeholders took place in order to gather their opinions and proposals on how to achieve a more direct participation of women. On the other hand, simultaneously the Just Transition Institute demanded a 30% criterion in calls for training programmes, which was established in the end, and required **30% of the total number of inscriptions to be female**. Other examples include training courses for the installation of solar PV that are targeting only unemployed women or organising specific tenders, where the **bidding company could receive more funding in proportion to the number of women that they plan to employ**¹.
- These developments have also been complemented by the Spanish National Recovery and Resilience Plan, where different components and investments covered both - the green agenda and the gender equality factor. For example, in 2023 a call for innovative energy storage projects specifically addressed the **gender equity and was included among the different project externalities**. Other cases include calls for grants where the impact on gender equality was evaluated according to two dimensions. Firstly, the contribution to gender equality as such, meaning that the entity had to demonstrate a gender balanced distribution of direct employment created by the project whether it is related to the management, technical or expert positions. Secondly, project proposals

¹ There are some examples of calls for tenders that take into account the objective on the creation of jobs specifically addressed to women, such as the [Mudéjar 400](#), which was finalised in 2022, or [Lancha 220](#) call, that is listed among other [ongoing projects](#).

in respect to the fight against gender inequality. The results of such proposals must have been delivered in the Gender Impact Report.

- In its NECP, Spain listed concrete measures² related to training of professionals in the energy efficiency and renewable sectors, that take into account the gender perspective. It specifically highlights that **vocational and academic training of male and female workers should anticipate the expected changes in the market**, considering an estimated increase in employment of up to 560.000 jobs by 2030 compared with the baseline scenario. In this sense, the gender component is embedded in this general action point that covers the needs for employability of workers.
- Another important aspect is linked to the access of data. Specifically, [Fundación Naturgy](#), in collaboration with the Institute for the Just Transition, published the study on [“The employment of women in the Just energy transition in Spain”](#) that looked at the situation of women in the energy sector. It was published in June 2023, and it now allows the Spanish authorities to design a policy framework on which they can base further actions and direct future needs.
- There are also ongoing collaborations with the private sector, trade unions, educational institutions, other ministries and local governments, etc. that aim to find common spaces where an exchange of knowledge and good practices can take place in order to promote equality and female leadership in sectors related to the energy transition. Action points along this collaboration consists of mapping and the collection of data, promoting scholarships, mentoring and training programmes, etc.

A horizontal approach to policies

The Spanish example aims to show that a horizontal coordination between policies is feasible. Spain has put in place different kind of policies such as parental leaves, equality plans, etc. that offers a good starting point for women to consider careers in the energy sector as well. What could be done even more is raising awareness around renewable energies and new clean technology developments. If one starts from the very beginning to spread the information about the possibility of accessing training courses, professional formation, study programmes, and provide a short-term view of where these kinds of studies could end – this could definitely help at least making women aware of what is on the horizon.

Despite the progress, there is still work to be done

It is crucial to conceptually and philosophically engage the citizens in this energy transition process. Otherwise they might reject proposals. Thus, this is **a matter of mindset**. When it comes to concrete obstacles, “the challenge is to **keep growing**”, as María Jiménez Navarro explained. To make these existing initiatives **more visible**, and to extend these experiences (as, for example, the one related to gender requirements in calls for tenders mentioned above) to new business models. Essentially, it is pivotal **to give continuity to these kinds of starting points**.

Conclusion

The Spanish case shows that integration of gender mainstreaming in energy sector is possible. The recognition of its progress has also been highlighted at the European level by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) that published its report on [“Good practices on gender mainstreaming in the European Green Deal: Towards a more gender-equal](#)

² Spain’s Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan, Measure 2.19, Measure 1.27, Measure 1.25, Measure 6.3 https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/211d83b7-b6d9-4bb8-b084-4a3bfb4cad3e_en?filename=ES%20-%20FINAL%20UPDATED%20NECP%202021-2030%20%28English%29.pdf

[and greener Europe”](#). This report presents 12 good practices in different Member States on how to incorporate gender mainstreaming in sectorial policies related to the European Green Deal. Among these, the following examples are applicable to the energy sector in Spain:

- [Spain: the 2020–2024 just transition strategy: Spain’s path to a gender-equitable green transition](#) [including an interview with Laura Martín ([How a team of gender champions is powering Spain’s energy revolution](#)), the Director of the Just Transition Institute]
- [Spain: making women visible – Spanish database and report on women’s green and rural entrepreneurship](#)
- [Spain: Strategic Guide – How to integrate the gender perspective into all activities funded by the Spanish plan for recovery, transformation and resilience](#)
- [Spain: Biodiversity Foundation spearheads gender mainstreaming in Spain’s ecological transition,](#)

The coming years will show how impactful the current action plans and strategies will prove to be and how many women will ultimately choose to become part of the energy modernisation process.

Interviewer:

Reghina Dimitrisina, Policy Advisor at FES Just Climate

Interviewee:

María Jiménez Navarro, Energy Coordinator Counsellor at the Spanish Permanent Representation to the EU