PEEB
PARTNERSHIP FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN BUILDINGS

Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction







BUILDING BETTER FOR ALL:
ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT













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About GlobalABC

The GlobalABC, hosted by UNEP, is the leading platform for all buildings stakeholders committed to a common vision: a zero-emission, efficient, and resilient buildings and construction sector. It aims to be a global advocate for the buildings transformation, provide key measures for governments, and support the private sector transition towards business models focused on decarbonisation.

About PEEB Cool

PEEB Cool is a programme under the umbrella of the Partnership for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (PEEB) that provides technical assistance and financial support to 11 countries in hot climates across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

PEEB Cool is co-funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) and its International Climate Initiative (IKI), and the Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM).

For more information, please visit https://www.peeb.build/peeb-cool

PEEB is a Partnership dedicated to promoting Energy Efficiency in Buildings. PEEB is currently funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN), the French Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion (MTE), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the European Union (EU), the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the International Climate Initiative (IKI), and the Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM). The Partnership is part of the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC).

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Building energy efficiency and resilience combine cost-efficient climate action investment with large socio-economic impacts. Buildings are not only responsible for 37% of global energy- and process-related CO_2 emissions; they are also the spaces where people live, heal, study, or work. Optimising those spaces for the needs of all users, with their participation, is key to achieving the climatic and social benefits of efficiency.

Yet, one large population group is largely absent from buildings sector decisions. Women make up for 50% of building users, but only 11% of the sector's workforce. Gender has remained largely absent from the buildings sector's growing climate agenda. Despite increasing expert dialogue and political commitments across the buildings value chain, women remain underrepresented in sectoral decision-making, technical professions and leadership.

The Declaration de Chaillot, adopted by 70 countries in 2024, provides an important political anchor for this agenda, linking the transformation of the buildings sector with issues such as energy poverty, affordable housing and access to basic services. These challenges are deeply gendered, and interventions that overlook gender dimensions risk delivering uneven outcomes, particularly where vulnerable households lack access to finance, information or support. Yet practical knowledge on how to mainstream gender and inclusion in buildings-sector implementation remains limited and fragmented.

Building Better for All is intended as a practical resource for implementation and forms part of GlobalABC and PEEB's broader efforts to strengthen the sector's capacity for action. Drawing on GlobalABC's role in agenda-setting and knowledge exchange, and PEEB's experience in translating buildings and climate targets into practice, the publication aims to help stakeholders mainstream gender equality and inclusion and sustain these commitments over time. Through real-life examples, it presents how advancing women's participation and social inclusion can support climate mitigation, energy savings, professional development and reduced heat-related health risks, while offering practical approaches that stakeholders can apply.

Together with the networking efforts of PEEB and GlobalABC, we hope this publication starts a conversation on embedding gender equality and social inclusion more firmly in buildings-sector practice.

The case studies in this publication were collected by GlobalABC and PEEB with the support of gender-inclusion champions across the GlobalABC network. Their work often receives too little institutional support, funding and visibility, and we are grateful for their collaboration. We hope this publication helps amplify and scale their initiatives, encouraging others to adopt their practical, replicable approaches as well.

There can be no sustainable transformation of the buildings sector without broad participation and trust. With greater capacity to promote inclusion and raise ambition, buildings can become an engine of prosperity. This is only the first step.

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION / HOW TO USE IT

Gender is already present in the decisions that shape a building. It appears in the evidence we use, the people we listen to, the projects we finance, the requirements we write into contracts, and the way buildings are operated and monitored. Those choices influence who participates, who benefits and under what conditions.

This publication is for people who make those choices across the buildings value chain: public authorities, housing and energy agencies, financial institutions, programme managers, developers, project owners, architects, engineers, procurement and implementation teams, facility managers and development partners.

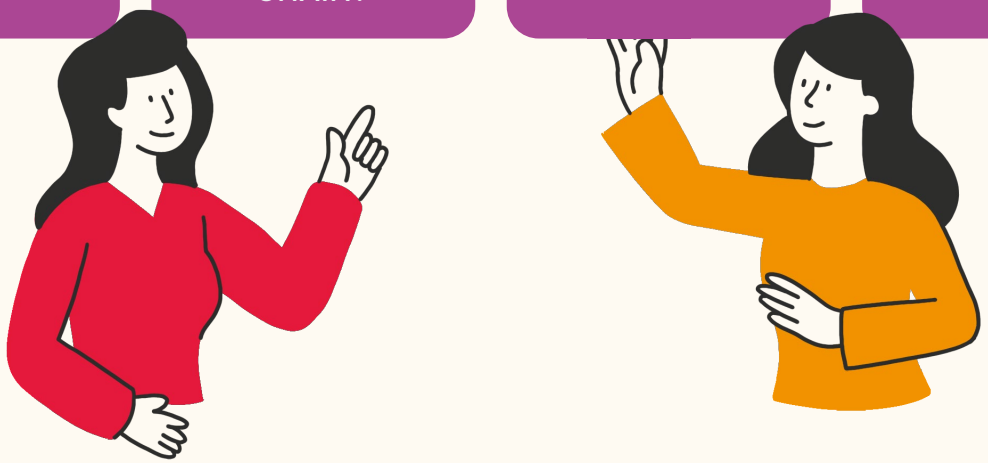
The idea is simple: start from decisions that already exist. Then ask whether a gender-related difference could change the way that decision is made, the evidence it needs or the result it produces.
You can read the publication from beginning to end, or go straight to the part closest to your work:

- **Chapter 1 looks at why gender can affect building outcomes and sector decisions.**
- **Chapter 2 follows those questions across the building value chain.**
- **Chapter 3 shows practical ways to move from a question to an action.**
- **Chapter 4 helps you identify a realistic entry point from the role you already have.**

Along the way, short cases show what this looks like in real projects, programmes and policies. The guiding questions are there to help you test assumptions, spot gaps and connect the discussion with a decision you can actually influence.

FOUR QUESTIONS

1. WHY DOES GENDER MATTER FOR BETTER BUILDGINS?
2. WHERE DOES GENDER ENTER DECISIONS ACROSS THE BUILDING VALUE CHAIN?
3. WHAT CAN BE DONE THROUGH EXISTING PROCESSES AND INSTRUMENTS?
4. WHERE CAN ACTION BEGIN FROM AN EXISTING ROLE?



1. WHY GENDER MATTERS FOR BETTER BUILDINGS

A BUILDING CAN HIT ITS TECHNICAL TARGETS AND STILL WORK POORLY FOR SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO USE IT

Energy-efficient and sustainable buildings are expected to use less energy, improve comfort and wellbeing, strengthen resilience and reduce environmental impacts. But those benefits do not reach everyone in the same way, and they are not always equally accessible.

Everyday roles and power relations shape how buildings are used and who benefits from them. They can influence how much time someone spends indoors, who controls household spending, who can access finance, who takes part in decisions, who feels safe in a space, and who gets access to jobs and skills across the sector.

If those differences stay invisible, a technically sound solution may reach fewer people than intended, perform differently once it is used, or reproduce barriers that were already there. That affects both inclusion and the wider uptake of sustainable-building measures.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GENDER?

Gender refers to socially shaped roles, responsibilities, opportunities, constraints and power relations that influence how people access, use, manage and benefit from buildings.
Women are not a single group, and gender does not operate in isolation. Intersectionality describes the way gender can interact with age, disability, income, ethnicity, caregiving responsibilities, employment status, migration status or location. These combinations can change the way the same building, programme, policy or investment is experienced.

THE NEXT STEP IS TO SEE WHAT THAT MEANS FOR PERFORMANCE IN PRACTICE

WHAT DOES A GENDER PERSPECTIVE DO?

A gender perspective gives you a way to test the assumptions behind a decision. Are the people affected visible in the evidence? Have different needs and constraints been considered? Could apparently neutral rules be shaping access to benefits or opportunities?
In buildings, this is closely tied to technical performance. It helps check whether a solution will work under the conditions in which people will actually use it.

1.1 GENDER AND BUILDING PERFORMANCE

A BUILDING ONLY PROVES ITS PERFORMANCE ONCE PEOPLE START USING IT

Energy demand and consumption, indoor comfort and compliance with technical specifications remain central measures. But once a building is occupied, outcomes are also shaped by schedules, maintenance, access to controls, appliance use, user profiles and the way people experience heat, cold and ventilation.

Those conditions are not evenly distributed. Care responsibilities may mean more time at home. Employment patterns may keep some workers in public buildings long after office hours. Income and ownership shape who can invest in retrofits. And within a household or institution, decision-making power can determine who controls equipment, reports failures or decides on energy spending.

That is why the same design can work well for one group and less well for another. A public building organised around standard office hours, for example, may suit administrative staff while overlooking cleaners, security personnel or maintenance teams who use it at different times.

A gender perspective helps you test whether expected performance is based on real patterns of use. The technical indicators do not disappear; the point is to read them alongside the conditions in which the building actually operates.

CASE STUDY: **MEXICO | SELF-PRODUCED HOUSING, WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND ENERGY PERFORMANCE**

CHALLENGE

Thirty-two self-produced homes in four Mexican climatic zones needed energy-efficiency and thermal-comfort retrofits that households could realistically afford and manage. Women represented most participating household representatives and were closely involved in housing decisions.

WHAT WAS DONE

SEDATU and GIZ Mexico, working with Hábitat para la Humanidad México, combined technical assistance with a climate-specific menu of passive bioclimatic measures. Rather than applying one standard package, households selected different combinations according to climate, needs and budget.

WHAT CHANGED / WHY IT MATTERS

DEEVi simulations estimated an average 17% reduction in final energy use and a 42% reduction in space-conditioning energy demand; 72% of the electricity bills reviewed also showed lower consumption over the comparison period. The case shows how technical assistance and women's participation can shape feasible energy-efficiency choices.

HOW CAN GENDER-RELATED DIFFERENCES AFFECT BUILDING PERFORMANCE AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFITS?



SEDATU-GIZ Mexico / Photo credit: GIZ Mexico

1.2 BUILDINGS ARE NOT GENDER-NEUTRAL

BUILDINGS DO NOT CREATE SOCIAL INEQUALITIES BY THEMSELVES. BUT THEY CAN REINFORCE BARRIERS THAT ALREADY EXIST - OR HELP REDUCE THEM

A building, programme, policy or investment can produce very different outcomes depending on people's access to resources, time, information, safe spaces and decision-making power. Those conditions affect whether someone can use a service, afford an improvement, participate in a decision or benefit from a technical solution.

Not every difference is a gender issue. The question is whether gender interacts with other conditions in a way that changes access, use, safety, affordability or opportunity.

FROM STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS TO BUILDING OUTCOMES

STRUCTURAL CONDITION	POSSIBLE BARRIER	POSSIBLE EFFECT
Income and asset ownership	Limited access to credit, collateral or upfront capital	Efficient retrofits or equipment remain out of reach
Care responsibilities and time use	Different occupancy patterns or limited time to participate	Design and operating assumptions fail to reflect actual use
Mobility and safety	Restricted access to certain routes, hours or spaces	Buildings or services are less usable for some groups
Employment conditions	Informal or irregular income	Conventional finance rules exclude intended users
Decision-making power	Limited influence over spending or household priorities	Energy and retrofit decisions may not reflect all users
Skills and occupational segregation	Limited access to training or technical roles	Women remain concentrated in lower-paid or less skilled work
Information and representation	Missing data or perspectives	Planning and design are based on incomplete assumptions

WHAT MAY BE OVERLOOKED WHEN BUILDINGS, USERS AND BENEFITS ARE ASSUMED TO BE GENDER-NEUTRAL?

These conditions often overlap. Instead of treating them as separate categories, look at what happens when they combine: does that combination change who can use, afford or benefit from the solution?

That is where a gender perspective becomes useful: it tells you which differences are significant enough to affect a decision.

1.3 GENDER AS PART OF BETTER DECISION-MAKING

A GENDER PERSPECTIVE BECOMES USEFUL WHEN IT CHANGES SOMETHING CONCRETE

The change may be small: collect individual rather than household-level data; test a design assumption with different users; adjust a financing criterion; add a requirement to a procurement contract; track an outcome by gender. Small changes can alter who is seen, who participates and who benefits.

You do not need a parallel process. Gender-related considerations can be built into decisions that are already being made.

The first task is to identify the difference. The next is to find where it can enter a decision, requirement or responsibility. Once it sits in a criterion, budget, technical brief, financing rule, procurement document, operating protocol or indicator, it is much more likely to survive beyond a single meeting or project team.

That is how an observation becomes part of institutional practice.
And that is where gender starts to influence how a project is governed and delivered.



SEDATU-GIZ Mexico / Photo credit: GIZ Mexico

WHERE COULD A GENDER-RELATED DIFFERENCE CHANGE A DECISION THAT IS ALREADY BEING MADE?

2. WHERE GENDER ENTERS THE BUILDING VALUE CHAIN

A DECISION MADE EARLY IN THE VALUE CHAIN CAN SHAPE WHAT IS STILL POSSIBLE MUCH LATER

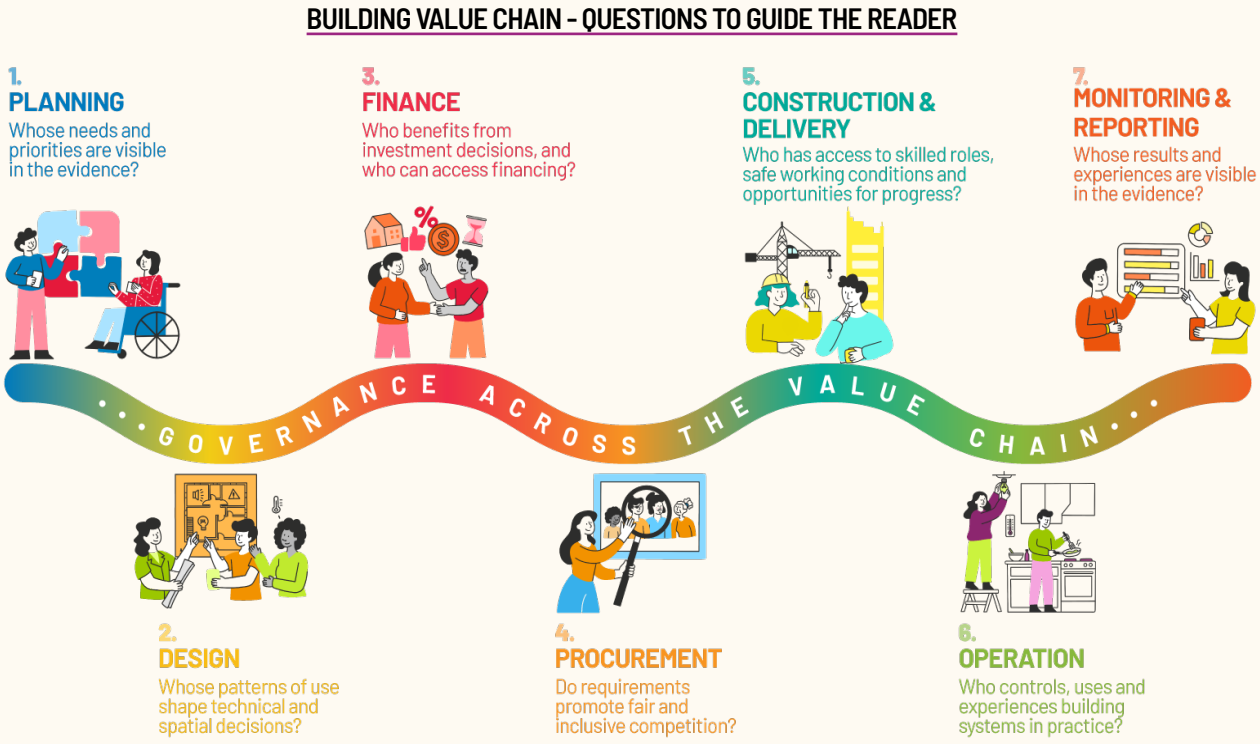
Gender-related differences can enter at several points because every stage allocates something: information, influence, resources, opportunities or access to benefits.

Planning decides which needs become visible. Design turns assumptions into spatial and technical choices. Finance determines where capital goes and who can access it. Procurement sets conditions for suppliers and contractors. Construction shapes who gets work, training and safe conditions. Operation reveals how systems function in everyday life. Monitoring decides which results are visible and carried into the next decision.

Governance cuts across all of them. Policies, responsibilities, standards, budgets, financial instruments, procurement systems, data requirements and accountability mechanisms determine whether gender depends on individual initiative or becomes part of normal institutional practice.

These stages are connected. Missing evidence in planning can become a design gap. A design choice can affect comfort and maintenance for years. Finance determines which projects or users receive investment. Procurement shapes participation and labour conditions. Monitoring can influence the next programme, policy, standard or investment.

Think of the value chain as a map: it helps you locate where a barrier or opportunity appears, and where there is actually room to act.



2.1 GOVERNANCE ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN

GENDER BECOMES PART OF INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE WHEN SOMEONE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IT, RULES ARE CLEAR AND RESULTS ARE REVIEWED

Governance answers some basic questions: who has authority, what gets prioritised, what evidence is required and how implementation is checked. It includes policies, standards, budgets, institutional mandates, financial instruments, procurement systems, data requirements and monitoring arrangements.

An objective is unlikely to last if it depends on one committed person. It becomes more durable when responsibility is assigned, criteria are written into procedures, resources are available and results are reviewed.

Governance also shapes participation: who is consulted, when they are involved, how their input is recorded and who follows up.

CASE SNAPSHOT: **ENERGY-INFORMATION CENTER (SIEC) IN TATA, MOROCCO - GERES | TURNING ENERGY INFORMATION INTO A LOCAL SERVICE**

In Tata, Morocco, the Energy-Information Center (SIEC) is managed by the Anajaa Taqia Cooperative (CAT) in collaboration with Geres and in coordination with the Municipality. It provides local advice, awareness-raising, measurement tools and practical support to help households and local actors make decisions on energy renovation and everyday energy use. Its value lies in linking public policy with an operational service close to users while strengthening local capacity to implement energy-efficiency measures.

CASE SNAPSHOT: **KAP SURVEY, TATA | HOUSEHOLD DATA CAN HIDE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES**

Geres' Energy-Climate KAP Survey aimed to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the population regarding energy and climate issues. In Tata, the survey covered 400 residents aged 16 and over and sought balance across gender, age and location; women accounted for 42.25% of respondents. The clearest gender-related finding was the difference in knowledge of the actual cost of gas: 49.78% of men gave the correct answer, compared with 23.67% of women surveyed. Respondents were selected empirically in the field rather than through a statistically representative sample, but the result illustrates why individual-level evidence can reveal differences that household-level data may conceal.

WHOSE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES ARE VISIBLE IN THE EVIDENCE - AND WHOSE ARE NOT?

2.2 PLANNING

WHAT YOU MISS AT THE START IS OFTEN HARD TO RECOVER LATER

Planning defines the problem, the groups a project intends to reach and the evidence that will shape priorities, budgets and technical briefs. If differences in energy use are hidden in household data, if safety concerns are never mapped, or if affordability is absent from the diagnosis, later stages may have little room to respond.



Energy-Information Center (SIEC) in Tata, Morocco - Geres: Photo Credit: GERES

2.3 DESIGN

DESIGN TURNS ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT USERS INTO PHYSICAL AND TECHNICAL CHOICES

Architecture and bioclimatic design translate needs into circulation, accessibility, shading, ventilation, thermal mass, controls, lighting, safety and maintenance requirements. The challenge is that briefs often rely on a 'typical user' who may not resemble the people who will actually use the building.

User evidence matters when it changes a technical requirement - for example, circulation, shading, controls, accessibility or maintenance.

CASE SNAPSHOT: **JITZAMURI, MEXICO | WHEN USER KNOWLEDGE CHANGES THE TECHNICAL SOLUTION**

CHALLENGE

Indigenous Yoreme fisherwomen in coastal Sinaloa helped define a bioclimatic community hub responding to extreme heat, flooding, water insecurity and the need to preserve the catch, while mechanical cooling is costly to operate.

WHAT WAS DONE

Through co-design, the team committed to a passive-first design: a ventilated double roof with radiant barrier, screened cross-ventilation and compressed-earth-block thermal mass with night purge. Their accounts also shaped a raised floor, rainwater harvesting and a shaded landing with solar-powered cold storage.

WHAT CHANGED / WHY IT MATTERS

The women's accounts directly changed the technical solution, moving it away from dependence on air-conditioning and toward measures compatible with local use, affordability and productive needs. The project remains at design stage, so its performance figures are targets rather than measured outcomes.

CASE SNAPSHOT: **INDONESIA / PENEDUH | FINANCING HOME ADAPTATION FOR LOW-INCOME WOMEN**

CHALLENGE

Low-income women needed a way to finance incremental improvements that could reduce heat exposure and energy use without requiring a large upfront investment.

WHAT WAS DONE

Build Change and KOMIDA developed PENEDUH, combining small climate-adaptation loans with technical support for measures such as reflective roofs, insulation and improved ventilation. Of 289 participating members, 246 completed upgrades, benefiting 960 people. Among 138 monitored homes, 86% recorded lower monthly electricity costs, with an average reduction of 12%; meter records compared up to six months before the programme with at least two months after completion.

WHAT CHANGED / WHY IT MATTERS

At the hour of peak effect, indoor conditions averaged 2.18°C cooler relative to outdoors. The case links access to finance with measurable changes in housing performance and thermal comfort.

2.4 FINANCE

WHAT GETS FINANCED DETERMINES WHO CAN BENEFIT

Finance works at several levels. It affects whether a person can obtain a loan, which projects or organisations receive capital, which criteria define a sustainable investment, and what kinds of technical or financial support come with it.

At household or project level, collateral, formal-income requirements, credit history, repayment terms, subsidies and technical assistance can open or close access. At system level, financial policies and sustainable taxonomies can bring gender-related objectives into investment decisions.

WHO BENEFITS FROM INVESTMENT DECISIONS, AND WHAT RULES SHAPE ACCESS TO THAT INVESTMENT?

2.5 PROCUREMENT

PROCUREMENT IS WHERE AN INTENTION CAN BECOME A REQUIREMENT

Tender specifications, evaluation criteria, contract clauses and reporting obligations shape who can compete, how work is carried out and what evidence contractors must provide.

The relevant gender issue depends on the objective. Criteria may address supplier access, employment conditions, training, health and safety, community engagement or accountability. A well-placed requirement can remove an unnecessary barrier, improve working conditions or make an expected result traceable.

That may mean asking for workforce data, equal-pay provisions, safety measures, grievance mechanisms, training commitments or reporting by gender. If there is no documented procurement mechanism, it is better to keep the issue in the framework than to present general participation as procurement evidence.



Cheerville, India | Photo credit: Masons Ink

2.6 CONSTRUCTION AND DELIVERY

WHO BUILDS A PROJECT MATTERS AS MUCH AS WHAT GETS BUILT

Construction determines who enters skilled roles, who receives training and whether working conditions allow people to stay in the sector. Women may face barriers linked to recruitment, occupational segregation, inadequate facilities, safety, caregiving, harassment or the assumption that technical work is mainly for men.



WHAT WORKING CONDITIONS DETERMINE WHO CAN ENTER, LEARN AND REMAIN IN SKILLED ROLES?

CASE SNAPSHOT: CHEERVILLE, INDIA | SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ON THE BUILDING SITE

CHALLENGE

Women in Indian construction are often concentrated in unskilled helper roles. At Cheerville, most participants also entered with no construction experience and faced practical barriers linked to literacy, safety and caregiving responsibilities.

WHAT WAS DONE

A 220 m^2 residence near Bengaluru became a live training site for an all-women mason team working with earth, bamboo, lime and other local low-carbon materials. Training also included functional and financial literacy, participatory safety assessment and working hours adapted around care responsibilities.

WHAT CHANGED / WHY IT MATTERS

The team grew from five to 17 women, with 24 engaged overall. Daily wages rose from a previous INR 270-500 to INR 500-650 as participants moved into skilled work; some later trained interns and contributed to technical decisions on site. The case shows that skills development and working conditions need to be addressed together if women are to enter and progress in technical roles.

2.7 OPERATION

OPERATION IS WHERE DESIGN MEETS EVERYDAY LIFE

Once a building is occupied, energy use, maintenance, controls, operating schedules and user behaviour start interacting with the design.

Different groups can experience the same system very differently. Facility managers may control settings while cleaners, security staff or occupants live with the result. In housing, decisions about appliances, energy spending or maintenance may not be shared equally.

Those differences matter when they help explain a performance gap or point to a practical change in operation.

CASE REFERENCE: INDONESIA / PENEDUH

PENEDUH combined home improvements with technical support for women borrowers. The case links financing and building performance through measured changes in indoor thermal conditions and electricity costs.

2.8 MONITORING AND REPORTING

MONITORING CAN REVEAL WHO BENEFITED - OR LEAVE THAT QUESTION UNANSWERED

Energy use, indoor temperature, emissions, operating costs and maintenance performance are central indicators. But on their own they may not tell you who benefited, who did not, or why an expected result was missed.

Gender-sensitive monitoring does not mean adding a separate gender indicator to every technical result. It means checking where outcomes could differ across groups and whether the available evidence can show that difference.

CASE REFERENCE: SEDATU-GIZ MEXICO

The Mexico pilot used different types of evidence for different questions. Energy and comfort estimates came from DEEVi simulations, while electricity bills and post-occupancy surveys were used as separate checks on consumption and user experience. The reported 17% final-energy reduction and 42% reduction in space-conditioning energy demand are modelled results. Separately, 72% of the electricity bills reviewed showed lower consumption over the comparison period.



Indonesia PENEDUH / Photo credit: Build Change

WHAT CHANGED, FOR WHOM, AND WHAT EVIDENCE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO SUPPORT THAT CONCLUSION?

INTERLINKAGES: DECISIONS TRAVEL ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN

A DECISION RARELY STOPS AT THE STAGE WHERE IT WAS MADE

PLANNING → DESIGN
Planning determines which users, needs and constraints enter the brief. If they are absent here, design may never see them.

DESIGN → OPERATION
Envelope choices, controls, circulation and maintenance requirements shape everyday use. A design assumption can become an operational problem years later.

FINANCE → ACCESS AND BENEFITS
Investment priorities, eligibility rules and financing conditions determine which projects and users can access financial resources. A technically sound solution has little effect if the people or projects that need it cannot reach the investment.

PROCUREMENT → DELIVERY
Contract requirements shape supplier participation, labour conditions, reporting and accountability. What is not written into the contract can be difficult to enforce later.

CONSTRUCTION → SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Training, recruitment and working conditions influence who enters skilled work and who stays long enough to progress. Getting a job is not the same as getting a pathway.

MONITORING → FUTURE DECISIONS
Monitoring creates evidence that can reshape later programmes, policies, standards, financial products and design assumptions. What one project learns can change the next.



WHERE TO GO NEXT
Chapter 3 moves from these decision points to practical routes for action: evidence, participation, policy and finance, skills and opportunities, and monitoring.

3. FROM QUESTIONS TO ACTION

A GENDER-RELATED ISSUE BECOMES ACTIONABLE WHEN YOU CAN CONNECT IT TO A DECISION THAT CAN CHANGE

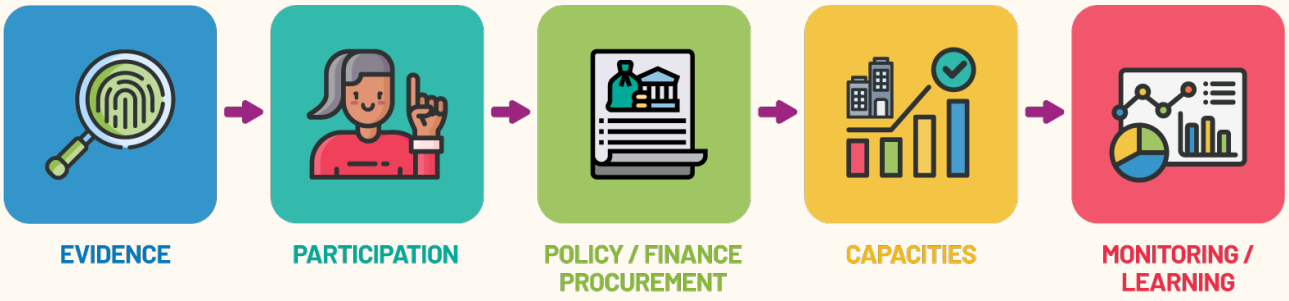
In the buildings sector, the best entry points are often processes that already exist: a dataset, design brief, financing rule, tender, training programme, operating protocol or monitoring framework.

This chapter groups those entry points into five practical routes:

- Use evidence to identify relevant differences.
- Include users and affected groups in decisions.
- Use policy, finance and procurement as levers.
- Strengthen capacities and opportunities in the sector.
- Monitor change and learn from results.

You do not have to follow them in order. Start where the problem is visible and where a decision can realistically influence it.

A planning problem may need better evidence. A design problem may need user participation. A financing barrier may need a different rule or product. A workforce problem may call for training and better working conditions. A monitoring gap may simply need a different indicator or reporting requirement.





FIND THE ISSUE → LOCATE THE DECISION → CHOOSE THE LEVER → DEFINE WHAT PROGRESS WOULD LOOK LIKE

3.1 USE EVIDENCE TO IDENTIFY RELEVANT DIFFERENCES

MORE DATA IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER DATA. USEFUL EVIDENCE IS EVIDENCE THAT CAN CHANGE A DECISION

Start by asking whether the information you have reflects the people affected by the decision.

Energy records, temperature measurements, financing data, interviews, surveys, time-use information, workforce records and participatory evidence answer different questions. No single source can do everything.

Averages can hide important differences. Household data may not show who controls energy spending or who spends more time at home. Building-level consumption cannot tell you who is uncomfortable or why controls are overridden. Attendance records tell you who was present, not whether their views influenced the result.

So instead of asking only 'Do we have gender data?', ask: what decision are we trying to make, and what evidence could change it?

CASE REFERENCE: **KAP SURVEY, TATA**

The Tata KAP survey illustrates why individual-level evidence can matter. By collecting responses from individuals rather than treating the household as a single unit, it revealed differences in knowledge and energy-related practices that household-level data could have obscured.

WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN, WHAT SUPPORTS IT, AND WHOSE PERSPECTIVE MAY STILL BE MISSING?



KAP survey / Photo credit: GERES

3.2 INCLUDE USERS AND AFFECTED GROUPS IN DECISIONS

PARTICIPATION MATTERS WHEN PEOPLE CAN INFLUENCE THE DECISION, NOT SIMPLY WHEN THEY ARE IN THE ROOM

Different forms of participation do different jobs. Consultation may help test an option. Co-design can be more useful when users hold knowledge that conventional data does not capture. Workers or facility staff may need to be involved when maintenance, safety or operating routines are at stake.

Timing is crucial. Participation has the most influence while important choices are still open.

Communication matters too. People need enough information to understand what is being decided and what the implications are. Depending on the context, that may mean accessible language, local languages, visual formats or methods that work for people with limited literacy.

A useful test is simple: did participation reveal a constraint, challenge an assumption or improve the proposed solution?

CASE REFERENCE: JITZAMURI, MEXICO

In Jitzamuri, fisherwomen's accounts of extreme heat, unaffordable air-conditioning, flooding and the need to process fish at dawn directly shaped technical choices. Their knowledge helped move the design toward passive cooling, a raised floor, rainwater harvesting and solar-powered cold storage.

WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED EARLY ENOUGH TO CHANGE THE DECISION?



Jitzamuri, Mexico / Photo credit: Miriam Akinlolu (London Metropolitan University)

3.3 USE POLICY, FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT AS LEVERS

A BARRIER BECOMES EASIER TO TACKLE ONCE YOU CAN CONNECT IT TO A RULE, CRITERION OR OBLIGATION THAT CAN BE CHANGED

Policy, finance and procurement work at different levels, but all three can turn a general intention into something concrete.

- Policy can set objectives, responsibilities, standards and minimum requirements.
- Finance can shape both investment priorities and access to capital.
- Procurement can translate objectives into supplier, labour, reporting and accountability requirements.

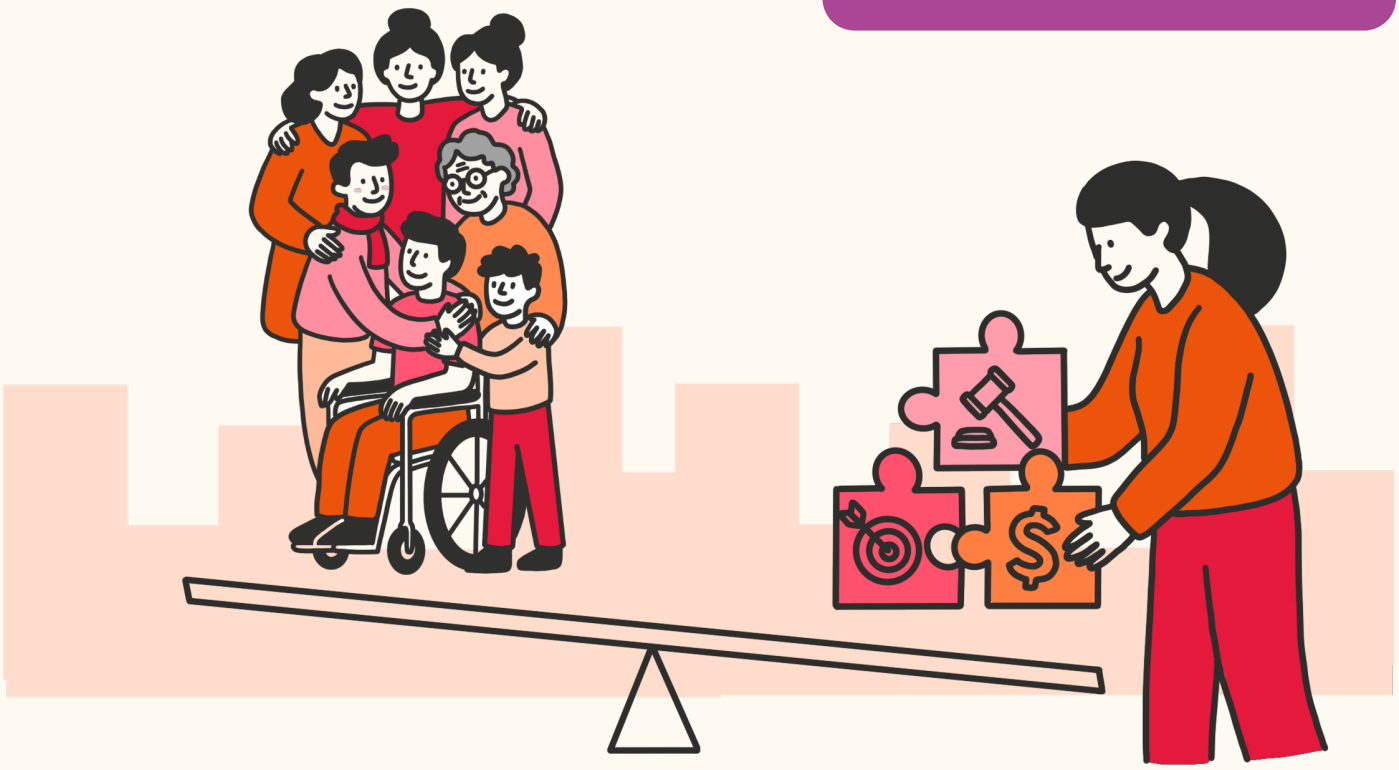
Choose the lever that matches the mechanism creating the barrier. Unnecessary supplier requirements point to procurement. Exclusion of informal-income households may point to financing criteria. Missing gender considerations in sector standards or reporting may require a policy response.

CASE SNAPSHOT: **MEXICO | USING A SUSTAINABLE FINANCE TAXONOMY TO EMBED GENDER CRITERIA**

Mexico's Sustainable Taxonomy treats gender equality as a formal social objective and applies it across all 20 sectors of the economy, including activities relevant to the buildings sector. Its Gender Equality Index converts gender-related criteria into a measurable framework covering decent work, wellbeing and social inclusion.

The Taxonomy can guide national governments, private companies, investors and financial institutions in identifying gender-aligned investments and linking them to instruments such as bonds, loans and other sustainable finance products. In this sense, it works as a financial-policy and soft-regulatory framework: it does not prescribe a single building intervention, but it can influence how gender criteria are integrated into investment decisions across the sector.

WHICH RULE, CRITERION OR IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM IS CREATING THE BARRIER - AND WHICH LEVER COULD CHANGE IT?



3.4 STRENGTHEN CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SECTOR

TRAINING MATTERS WHEN IT LEADS SOMEWHERE: INTO REAL WORK, GREATER RESPONSIBILITY OR A STRONGER ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING

The buildings transition is changing the demand for skills across design, construction, finance, operation and maintenance. Access to those opportunities is not evenly distributed.

Women may enter through lower-paid or less skilled roles and then face barriers to training, progression, professional networks, equipment, safe working conditions or schedules compatible with care responsibilities. That is why capacity development has to look beyond technical content alone.

Depending on the barrier, the response may include multi-skilling, mentoring, recruitment changes, safer worksites, supplier development, functional or financial literacy, or stronger links between training and employment.

Institutions need capacity too. Programme managers, engineers, procurement teams, financial institutions and facility managers need to know how to use gender-related evidence, apply criteria and follow up on results.

CASE REFERENCE: **CHEERVILLE, INDIA**

Cheerville shows why training design matters. Masons Ink combined technical multi-skilling with functional literacy, financial literacy, participatory safety assessment and working arrangements adapted to caregiving responsibilities. Women who entered with little or no construction experience moved into skilled masonry roles; some later trained interns and helped shape technical practices on site. The project also found that workers with a broader set of skills tended to earn more income.

DOES TRAINING LEAD TO A REAL OPPORTUNITY - AND WHAT CONDITIONS ARE NEEDED FOR PEOPLE TO REMAIN AND PROGRESS?



Cheerville, India / Photo credit: Masons Ink

3.5 MONITOR CHANGE AND LEARN FROM RESULTS

START MONITORING WITH THE CHANGE YOU EXPECT TO SEE, NOT WITH THE INDICATOR THAT HAPPENS TO BE AVAILABLE

That change may concern the building, its users, an institution - or several of these at once.

Building outcomes may include energy use, indoor temperature, maintenance, emissions or operating costs. User outcomes may concern comfort, affordability, access, safety or the ability to use a service. Institutional outcomes may include better data, revised criteria, clearer responsibilities or new forms of participation.

The indicator has to fit the claim. You do not need a separate gender indicator for every technical result, but you do need to know where outcomes could differ across groups and what evidence would make that difference visible.

Qualitative evidence is especially useful when the expected change concerns decision-making, user experience or institutional practice.

CASE REFERENCE: **SEDATU-GIZ MEXICO**

The Mexico pilot illustrates why different forms of evidence should not be collapsed into one result. DEEVi simulations were used for energy and comfort estimates, while electricity bills and post-occupancy surveys were used separately to examine real energy consumption and users' experience.

Monitoring becomes learning when the result changes what happens next: a design brief, financing product, procurement requirement, operating practice or programme standard.

WHAT CHANGE WAS EXPECTED, FOR WHOM, AND WHAT EVIDENCE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO SHOW WHETHER IT HAPPENED?



SEDATU-GIZ Mexico / Photo credit: GIZ Mexico

FROM ACTION TO RESULTS

THIS TABLE SHOWS HOW A PROBLEM CAN BE TRANSLATED INTO AN ACTION AND AN EXPECTED RESULT

ISSUE IDENTIFIED	POSSIBLE ACTION	POSSIBLE RESULT
Household evidence hides differences in knowledge, time use or control over energy decisions	Collect individual-level or disaggregated evidence before programme design	Planning assumptions better reflect actual users and constraints
Users experience heat, safety or access differently	Involve affected users while design options are still open	Technical choices respond better to real patterns of use
Financing rules exclude intended beneficiaries	Adjust eligibility, credit assessment, technical support or financing conditions	More intended users can access building improvements and their benefits
Investment criteria do not capture gender-related objectives	Introduce measurable gender criteria into financial-policy or investment frameworks	Gender considerations become part of investment selection and reporting
Women have limited access to skilled construction roles	Combine technical training with safer work conditions, literacy support and progression pathways	Greater participation in skilled work and better prospects for retention and advancement
Procurement objectives are not reflected in delivery	Translate them into contract requirements, reporting obligations or supplier criteria	Expectations become traceable during implementation
Technical monitoring shows performance but not distribution	Combine building data with user and distributional evidence where relevant	Results can inform future design, finance and programme decisions

Use it as a way of thinking, not as a checklist. The same logic can work at different points in the value chain.

IDENTIFY THE ISSUE → FIND THE DECISION → CHOOSE THE LEVER → DEFINE THE EXPECTED RESULT

4. START FROM THE CURRENT ROLE

YOU DO NOT NEED CONTROL OVER THE WHOLE VALUE CHAIN TO ACT. START WITH THE DECISION ALREADY WITHIN YOUR REACH

A design brief, financing product, procurement process, training programme, operating protocol or monitoring framework can each offer a different entry point.

The questions below are a short orientation, not a scorecard. Their purpose is to turn a broad concern into a decision you can actually influence.



4.1 THE DECISION

What decision, programme, investment, process or stage of the building value chain is within your current role? Naming the decision helps you see what evidence, authority and action are relevant.

4.2 PEOPLE

Once the decision is clear, ask:

- Who is affected by it, and how?
- Who participates in making it?
- Whose experience may not be represented?
- Could gender-related differences change the result?

Keep the analysis proportionate. Focus on the people whose circumstances could materially affect the decision or its outcomes.

START WITH ONE DECISION. THEN ASK WHO IT WORKS FOR

4.3 EVIDENCE

WHAT DO YOU ALREADY KNOW - AND WHAT ARE YOU STILL ASSUMING?

Sometimes the evidence you already have is enough. Sometimes one missing perspective changes the direction of the decision.

- What information is already available?
- What evidence supports it?
- Is the information aggregated in a way that hides relevant differences?
- What perspective or data may still be missing?

Evidence may be technical, financial, administrative, social or qualitative. What matters is whether it helps you understand the decision and the outcome you are trying to achieve.

4.4 ACTION

WHERE CAN THIS ISSUE ENTER A PROCESS THAT ALREADY HAS AUTHORITY OR RESOURCES?

- Where could a gender-related barrier or opportunity be addressed?
- Who has responsibility or authority to act?
- Which existing instrument could carry the change?
- What is realistic at this stage?

The answer may be a change to a dataset, design brief, eligibility criterion, investment framework, contract clause, training offer, operating protocol or indicator.

EXAMPLES OF ENTRY POINTS
EVIDENCE
Disaggregate a dataset or add a user perspective before a programme is designed.
DESIGN
Test a technical assumption with users before options are closed.
FINANCE
Review who benefits from investment criteria and who can access financing.
PROCUREMENT
Translate an inclusion objective into a contract requirement or reporting obligation.
CONSTRUCTION
Link skills training with safety, working conditions and progression.
MONITORING
Pair technical performance data with evidence on user outcomes where relevant.



Cheerville, India / Photo credit: Masons Ink

THE STRONGEST ENTRY POINT IS USUALLY THE ONE CONNECTED TO A DECISION THAT IS ALREADY BEING MADE

4.5 LEARNING

LEARNING MEANS DECIDING WHAT YOU WILL ADJUST WHEN RESULTS DIFFER FROM WHAT YOU EXPECTED

Before implementation, define the change you expect and how you will recognise it.

- What building, user or institutional change is expected?
- For whom?
- What evidence would show whether it happened?
- What should change next if the result is different from what was expected?

What you learn can change a future design brief, financing product, procurement criterion, operating practice, training programme or institutional standard.

4.6 FURTHER LEARNING

No single publication can cover every context or decision in the buildings sector. When you need to go further, specialised guidance, communities of practice, workshops, peer exchange, gender specialists, case-study resources and structured feedback from users and practitioners can help.

A useful way to organise that next step is by the decision area involved:

- Evidence and planning
- Participation and design
- Finance and investment
- Procurement and construction
- Operation and monitoring
- Governance and institutional practice

DIFFERENT DECISIONS CALL FOR DIFFERENT RESPONSES. THE PRACTICAL TASK IS TO IDENTIFY WHERE A GENDER-RELATED DIFFERENCE MATTERS ENOUGH TO CHANGE A DECISION - AND ACT THERE



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