

GWNET ANNUAL REPORT 2023



GWNET

Global Women's Network
for the Energy Transition



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About GWNET

The Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition (GWNET) is a non-profit international association based in Austria. Since 2017, it specializes in:

- connecting women working in energy around the world through its networking events and its Women in Energy Expert Platform;
- organising mentoring programmes to boost the careers of women working towards the energy transition;
- conducting research to overcome barriers to gender equality in the energy sector, as well as measures to overcome these;
- and advocating for gender equality in the energy transition at regional and global fora.

This report summarises GWNET's activities and achievements in 2023.

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Foreword

It is commonly agreed that meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement requires nothing less than a total decarbonisation of the energy sector by at latest 2050, and that renewables play a major role in that process. National governments are increasingly recognising the economic and social benefits of renewables. Deployment of renewables contributes to growth in gross domestic product and creates employment opportunities.

In 2022, global renewable energy employment increased to a record high of 13.7 million jobs. Considering the fact that the workforce in the renewable energy sector is predicted to grow from 13.7 million today to about 42 million in 2050, the attraction of female talent will be crucial to ensure a thriving sector.

The [Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition](#) (GWNET), a non-profit membership association registered in Austria in 2017, works to empower women in energy through advocacy, networking, and mentoring. GWNET currently has over 4,000 members (both individual and corporate) from 150 countries and aims to “connect the dots” of various organisations and initiatives supporting women in the energy sector.

In 2023, GWNET continued to support women in energy across the globe and has worked towards attracting new talent to the sector. This Annual Report summarises our work throughout the year 2023 and provides some insights into how we have advanced the careers of women in energy – even in rather challenging times. Russia's continued invasion of Ukraine as well as the current conflict in the Middle East create humanitarian hardship and have furthermore exposed the vulnerability of fossil fuel-based energy systems.

At the same time, we have witnessed a series of climate disasters. The summer of 2023 was the Northern Hemisphere's hottest in recorded history. Scientists say the extreme heat, combined with other weather phenomena, contributed to this summer's catastrophic ocean storms, wildfires, floods, and droughts. Experts warn that continued burning of fossil fuels will result in further temperature rises, and more widespread health and economic costs.





Despite the clear need for decarbonisation, the COP28 Global Stocktake showed that the world is not reducing the use of fossil fuels quickly enough. At the COP, stakeholders called on all countries to contribute to global efforts to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems while at the same time tripling renewable energy capacity and doubling the annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. This new resolve marks the beginning of the end of fossil fuels, and heralds the creation of large quantities of new, high-quality, sustainable jobs.

According to converging projections of international organisations such as the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the International Energy Agency (IEA), and the European Commission, more jobs in new energy fields will be created in the wake of energy transitions than will be disappearing in the old sectors – coal, oil, gas. This will not happen automatically, however: new jobs will not spontaneously spring up where old jobs disappear.

Planning energy transitions in an inclusive and participatory way is therefore of the essence; the people who are affected by the energy system transformation need to be included in all stages of this very transformative process. GWNET will continue to work with partners from all around the world to make sure that energy transitions recognise and harness all innovative talent available, from both men and women.



Christine Lins
Executive Director



Introduction

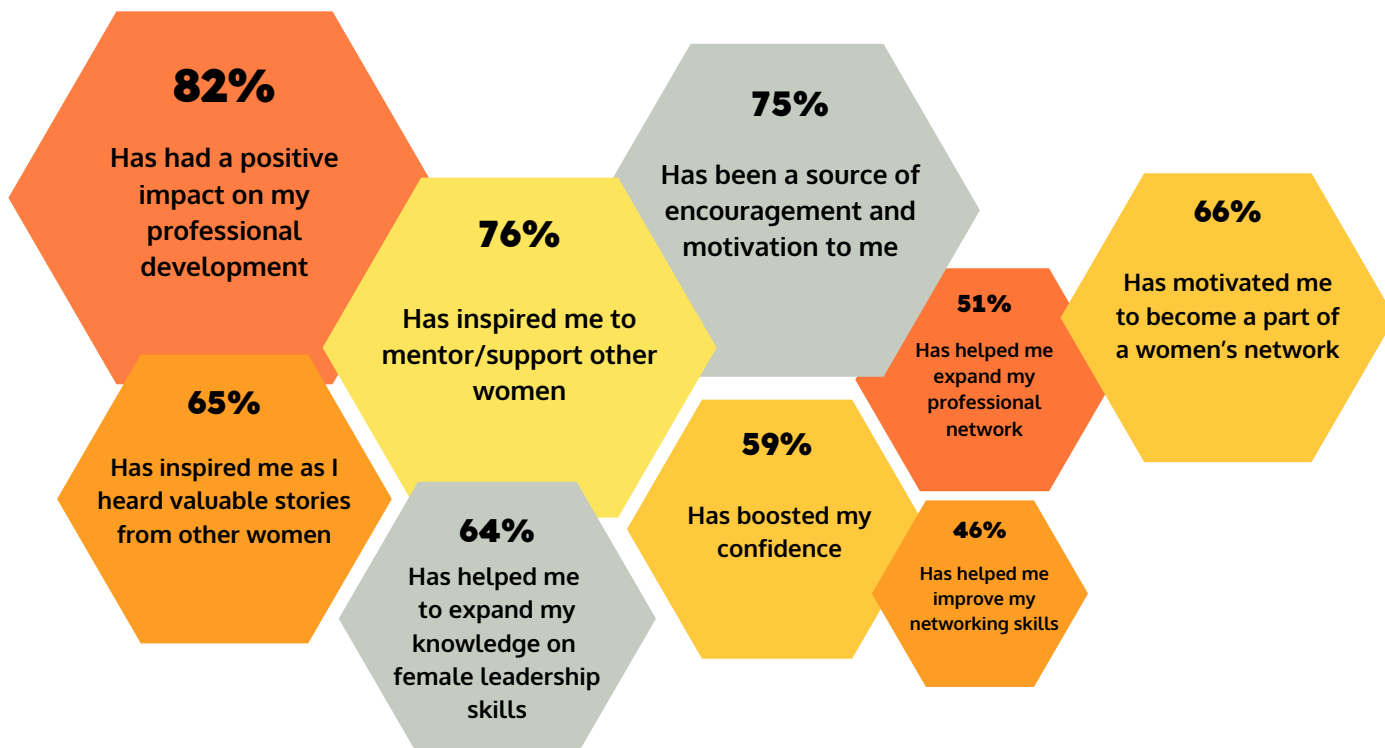
In 2023, GWNET's network has grown to over 4,000 individual and corporate members from 150+ countries. GWNET reaches over 14,000 followers on social media, and GWNET has signed five new MoUs with regional/national women in energy network partners.

Throughout the year, with the support of funding organisations and the network at large, GWNET has supported more than 300 women in various mentoring programmes and organised a study tour for mentees from 17 countries. GWNET has also authored and contributed to several publications and advocated for inclusive and gender-just energy transitions at events around the world. The Gender and Energy Compact, initiated by UNIDO, ENERGIA and GWNET, has attracted 11 new partners and enjoys the support of a new coordinating member, SEforALL.

By supporting women active in the energy sector through mentoring and networking, GWNET has contributed to mobilising women's potential for transformational change. We have improved availability of gender-disaggregated data and in-depth studies of specific regions. The diversification of our funding base ensures that our work can be carried forward seamlessly.

The following pages present some of GWNET's major achievements in 2023.

The GWNET mentoring programme:



The GWNET Mentoring Programme Participant survey results 2023

Mentoring women in the energy sector

The hallmark of GWNET's mentoring programmes is the careful matching of mentors with mentees. Mentors are drawn from our mentor pool of more than 750 highly qualified energy professionals who volunteer their time and expertise. Mentees are selected based on their motivations and goals, as expressed in their applications. The mentorship tandems work for a year, after which mentees receive a certificate of graduation. During the programme, the GWNET team offers support through knowledge transfer and networking activities.

As of 2023, a total of over 700 women from 90 countries have benefited from GWNET's mentoring programmes, which were implemented on behalf of a wide variety of funders.

In 2023, GWNET launched and continued the following mentoring programmes:

[Number of participants shown]

- [Women in Wind with the Global Wind Energy Council \(GWEC\)](#) [23]
- [Women in Energy Storage with ESMAP](#) [18]
- [Women in Clean Cooking with the Clean Cooking Alliance and SEforALL](#) [84]
- [Energising Women to Advance the Energy Transition](#) with the German government & GIZ [118]
- [Women in Renewable Energy Africa with IFC](#) [25]
- [Women in Energy Empowerment with the German Energy Agency \(dena\)](#) [44]

As part of the "Energising Women to Advance the Energy Transition" mentoring programme, a study tour for selected mentees from 17 countries was organised around the "[Women Energise Women](#)" conference in Munich, Germany from 12-16 June 2023. GWNET has further supported the organisers of the conference by participating in an Advisory Board and nominating speakers for the conference.



Participants in the Energising Women to Advance the Energy Transition Study Tour, supported by GIZ and BMWK. Munich, June 2023.

Testimonials



The Women in Clean Cooking (WiCC) mentorship programme has helped me become a better clean energy leader. I connected with valuable sector professionals that helped shape my career prospects. Working with a world-class communications expert trained my ability to think more strategically and connect better with my community. I'm grateful for this opportunity.



Lilian Aremu
Mentee, Women in Clean Cooking, 2022

If you feel the change and power within you, GWNET makes your dreams come true. A group of women trying to make the world a better place. The improvement in the energy sector needs hard and dedicated work; undoubtedly, women's solidarity will be key to the success.

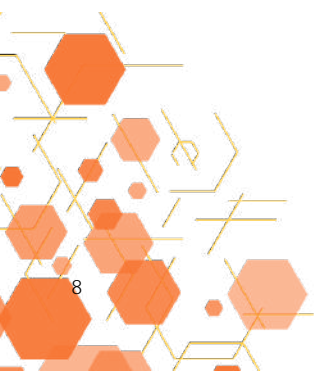


Gülmisal Akkale Çelebi
Mentee, Women in Energy Empowerment, 2023

This mentoring experience has been a very enriching one. I realised that as a mentor, my attitude, life experiences and external views on the challenges shared by the mentee could really make a difference. I enjoyed being able to give back all of the advice and experience I myself received in my life over the years. And I am ready to start again!



Sarah Ouziaux
Mentor, Women in Energy Storage, 2023



What our partners say

Through the cooperation with GWNET and the Women Energize Women campaign of our Energy and Climate Partnerships, we are pleased to have successfully supported and mobilised women worldwide. The visibility and solutions for greater participation of women in the energy sector were increased through a dedicated mentoring programme and joint network events. Strong participation of women is essential to implement the results of COP 28 and achieve the 1.5C target. That's why we want to continue to promote and connect existing approaches.



Ellen von Zitzewitz
Deputy Director, Climate and Energy Cooperation with Industrial Countries,
Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, Germany

IRENA is pleased to collaborate with GWNET for many years and in various areas such as the collection of data on women in renewable energy and as a member of the IRENA Coalition for Action and the Sustainable Energy Jobs Platform. I have personally served as mentor in a series of GWNET mentoring programmes and have witnessed the boost a woman's career can get through mentoring.



Rabia Ferroukhi
Director Knowledge, Policy & Finance, IRENA (until October 2023)
Director, International Network of Energy Transition Think Tanks (INETTT)

Student Energy is thrilled to work collaboratively with GWNET on the intersections of gender, youth, and the energy transition. A just and equitable energy transition needs to be intersectional, locally led, and people-centred. In 2023, Student Energy and GWNET partnered to deliver a training workshop 'Bridging Gaps: Strategies for including youth and gender minorities in the energy transition', and we look forward to more impactful work together in 2024.



Helen Watts
Executive Director, Student Energy

Access to the knowledge and experience offered by the GWNET is enabling women in energy to build a strong network, develop skills and advance their careers. Achieving gender equality in the energy sector requires multiplying the advocacy and support to reach many more women in many more regions.



Rana Ghoneim
Chief, Energy Systems and Infrastructure Division,
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Stories of impact

“In my professional life, the mentoring programme helped me by giving me the experience of preparing a financial model for the project according to international standards. In my personal life, it inspired me to think out of the box and make bigger plans.”

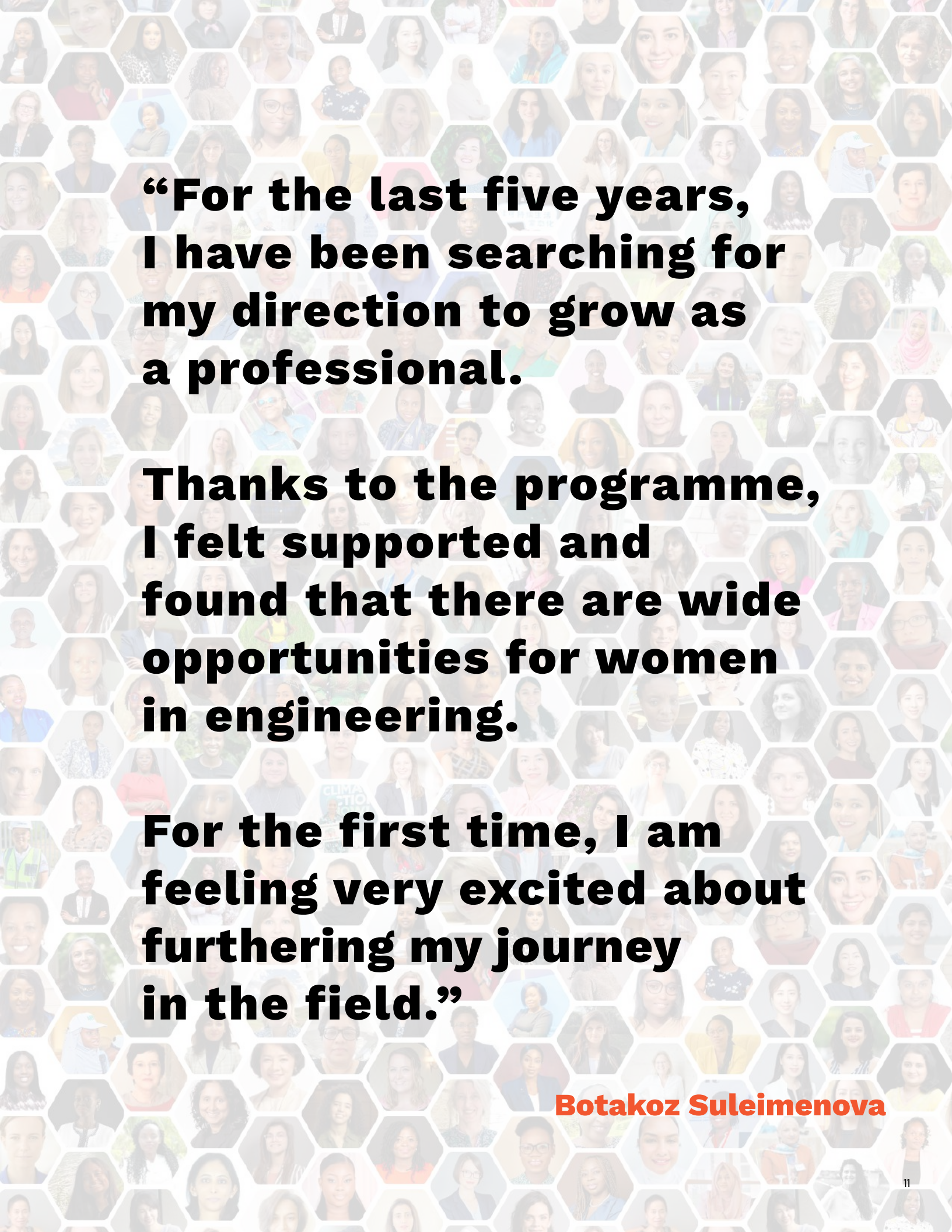


Kyzzhibek Ryszhanova is the founder and CEO of Smart ReEnergy LLP, a company that constructs small hydropower plants in Kazakhstan. She participated in the OSCE-GWNET Empowering Central Asian Women in Renewable Energy Mentoring Programme, and with the help of her mentor, she developed a business plan and found an investor for the first hybrid solar PV and hydropower plant in Central Asia.



“The programme played a crucial role in helping me navigate the world of renewable energies. It enabled me to expand my network, enhance my knowledge of new technologies, recognise industry challenges, and develop problem-solving skills for addressing everyday professional crises. The discussions with my mentor encouraged me to make decisions that have had a positive impact on my career.”

Eleonora Uliana was working as a project manager in the wind industry when she was accepted to the Women in Wind Global Leadership Program. After completing the mentoring trajectory, she secured a position as a senior wind specialist at a wind consultancy firm.



**“For the last five years,
I have been searching for
my direction to grow as
a professional.**

**Thanks to the programme,
I felt supported and
found that there are wide
opportunities for women
in engineering.**

**For the first time, I am
feeling very excited about
furthering my journey
in the field.”**

Botakoz Suleimenova

Fostering peer-to-peer learning

Despite vast differences in cultural and regional contexts, women in sustainable energy around the world tend to encounter similar obstacles to their full and equal participation in the sector. This appears mainly due to gender-stereotyping and unconscious bias. Peer-to-peer exchanges quickly reveal the communality of the challenges and frequently are powerful conduits of courage and hope.

GWNET facilitates networking among its registered members as well as by organising dedicated events on the margins of international conferences. Given the particularities of energy markets as well as differences in legal, cultural, educational, and linguistic contexts, GWNET encourages the establishment of national and regional networks of women dedicated to sustainable energy. Our Guide '[How to set up a national/regional network of women in sustainable energy](#)' offers concrete advice to regional/national actors interested in setting up a women in energy network. The Guide addresses some recurring issues – such as how to define the mission of a network, what legal form and governance structure to select in order to best achieve the envisioned results, how to access funding – GWNET accompanies budding networks upon request as needed.

GWNET uses opportunities of international gatherings to bring together representatives of national and local networks and facilitate the exchange of experiences, knowledge transfer and peer-to-peer learning.

Following successful iterations in 2019, 2021 and 2022, in March 2023 GWNET once again organised an in-person workshop for women in energy networks from 16 countries in Berlin, Germany to discuss experiences, successes and challenges. At the same time, GWNET held a brainstorming session about potential actions to empower women as agents of change in the global energy transition.

The most recent list of regional and national women's networks in sustainable energy cooperating with GWNET can be accessed [here](#).





“We want to see women, at the heart of the Ethiopian energy sector, as change agents and beneficiaries in the effort of providing energy access to all.”

- Ethiopian Women in Energy (EWIEN)



“We represent gender-diverse members across disciplines and career stages from a wide range of backgrounds. We seek to increase the strength, visibility, and impact of gender-diverse energy scholars.”

- Women & Inclusivity in Sustainable Energy Research (WISER)



“Our vision is that women working in energy-related sectors in Ukraine can achieve everything that is possible in their profession.”

- Women's Energy Club of Ukraine



“We connect and empower women in the biogas sector in pursuit of gender equality.”

- Mulheres do Biogas Women in Biogas

In 2022, the GWNET Secretariat team collected all its lessons learned from five years of connecting and empowering women in the energy sector, and presented them in a 'how-to guide' on establishing networks of women in sustainable energy.

The guide is intended to support GWNET's current regional and national partner networks, and serve as inspiration for women who wish to establish a new one. It provides advice on defining the goals of a network, different organisational structures and funding strategies, as well as the activities and services a network could offer.



Boosting data availability for better decision-making

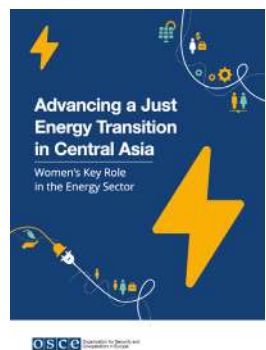
There are no good decisions without good data. GWNET continues to strive towards improving the availability of data regarding the involvement of women in the energy transition. One way GWNET does this is by supporting IRENA's work in the area. We have authored as well as contributed to several studies that highlight the need for more and better gender-disaggregated data about the energy transition. We aim to fulfill this goal by undertaking surveys and other methods. In 2023, GWNET contributed to a number of studies including:



Europe's Energy Transition: Women's Power in Solving the Labour Bottleneck

GWNET authored a study on the role of women in resolving labour market bottlenecks for the energy transition in the European Union and some countries of the Eastern neighbourhood. It was commissioned by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

[Find it here.](#)



Advancing a Just Energy Transition in Central Asia: Women's Key Role in the Energy Sector

GWNET authored this study on the job creation potential of just energy transitions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The study also investigated the roles women currently play in Central Asian energy transitions and ways to advance gender equality in the energy sector.

The study was commissioned and published by the Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE) and benefited from valuable inputs by experts of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

[Find it here.](#)





Power with Full Force: Getting to Gender Equality in the Hydropower Sector

Alongside the International Hydropower Association (IHA), for the World Bank's Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), GWNED contributed research and analysis to a baseline study and gave recommendations to advance gender equality in the hydropower sector.

[Read the report here.](#)

The study found that the share of women in the hydropower workforce is 25 percent. Women are particularly underrepresented in technical and managerial positions and are less likely than men to be promoted at every stage of their careers. In this regard, the hydropower sector is similar to other renewable energy subsectors, though it has some characteristics (the predominance of old, established, male-dominated companies; the need for technical employees to spend significant time on remote sites) that make it more difficult for women to thrive in than, for example, solar energy. The hydropower sector has already taken significant steps to attract and retain more women. To further close gender gaps, the report strongly recommends:

- removing barriers in education that constrain the number of women who pursue STEM degrees;
- identifying gender gaps in the workplace and enacting policies to close them;
- raising awareness to promote hydropower as an appealing career for women;
- providing mentoring, role models, networking, and leadership opportunities for women;
- including more men in gender inequality discussions; encouraging them to be proactive.

“One plant manager did not allow a girl to join the team even though she scored the highest on the entry exam; he said she was not selected in case she settled down or decided to have a family.”

- Interviewee

“It is very difficult for a young woman to walk into a room full of middle-aged men who know each other, and then speak up. That scares women off, when what they should really do is jump in.”

- Interviewee

“The general view in society about remote hydropower sites is that a woman cannot survive in such an environment.”

- Focus group participant

Spreading the word about women as agents of change

Women are agents of change and their full participation in the energy sector is essential to achieve successful and inclusive energy transitions that leave no-one behind. GWNET tirelessly reiterates this message through old and new communication channels.

GWNET is actively engaged in networks that seek to improve gender-disaggregated data availability for just energy transitions, including the multi-stakeholder network REN21; IRENA's Coalition for Action; and the working group on gender of the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP).

GWNET's communications and outreach efforts in 2023 encompassed:



The GWNET Team at the International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum, November 2023

UN Gender and Energy Compact

An important avenue for GWNET's advocacy is the UN Gender and Energy Compact, launched by UNIDO, ENERGIA and GWNET at the conclusion of the High-Level-Dialogue on Energy in September 2021. It brings together parties from different sectors who commit to advancing two major objectives:

- that women have equal opportunity to lead, participate in, and benefit from a just and inclusive energy transition; and
- that women have equal access to and control over energy products and services.

At the International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum (November 2023), GWNET joined the other Gender and Energy Compact initiators in organising a Gender Track consisting of several panel discussions and networking events, highlighting barriers to and benefits of gender equality in the renewable energy sector.

“Every year we see an increase in jobs in renewable energy, but we do not see this increase reflected in the percentage of women holding these jobs.”

– Ute Collier, IRENA

“Gender inclusion is not a women’s thing; it’s a societal thing. It concerns us all!”

– Jean François Gagné, Clean Energy Ministerial



Contributions to global processes

Decarbonising energy systems is one of the most effective ways of stabilising the global climate. GWNET therefore also targets its advocacy at audiences committed to working on climate change issues, from the Commission on the Status of Women in spring 2022, to participation in side events at the UNFCCC Conferences of Parties (COPs).

After successfully completing the application process to become a UNFCCC Observer, GWNET was present on the ground at COP28 in Dubai in November/December 2023. GWNET took part in a range of events, highlighting the need for gender-just energy transitions that benefit from women's expertise and result in renewables-based energy systems that leave no one behind.

Also at COP28, GWNET, together with 250+ other organisations, endorsed the call by the Global Renewables Alliance to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030.

Equality between women and men and the empowerment of women featured high on the agenda of the 28th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. On 'Gender Day' at the COP, 5 December 2023, UN Women presented the latest evidence that women are often more severely impacted by climate change than men, in the Report "Feminist Climate Justice: A Framework for Action".

The report warns that climate change threatens progress towards gender equality and proposes a framework to achieve feminist climate justice through four interlinked dimensions (recognition, redistribution, representation, and reparation) as well as the principles of interdependence and intersectionality.

The COP in-session dialogue focused on financing gender-responsive, just transitions and climate action. Through the new COP28 Gender-Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Action Partnership, almost 80 States parties committed to women's and girls' full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership; acknowledged the nexus of gender equality and just transitions; and pledged to reinforce efforts towards advancing a gender-responsive, just transition.

Much food for thought and inspiration for GWNET's day-to-day work to support women active in sustainable energy!



Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between GWNET, the Women in Renewables Alliance (WiRA) and Diversity Champions, in which the three organisations pledged to work together to advance diversity and inclusion in the energy industry.



GWNET Project Manager Natália Weber with Rachel Porto, a mentor in the Women in Power System Transformation Mentorship Program, supported by USAID.

Renewable energy, jobs and gender equality

In recent years, there has been a notable shift towards recognizing the social dimension of the energy transition, marking a departure from the previous sole focus on technological innovation. The commitment to making energy transitions inclusive, participatory and just is widely shared – at least in principle. When it comes to defining the “how”, many stakeholders (including labour unions and employers’ organisations) need to cooperate.

GWNET was therefore very pleased to contribute to a brief, developed in the context of IRENA’s Sustainable Energy Jobs Working Group, titled “Finding common ground for a just energy transition. Labour and employer perspectives”. The brief calls for prioritising decent jobs, anticipating skills requirements, ensuring greater workforce diversity and inclusion, and providing adequate financing. The full participation of women, ethnic minorities, and youth is not only a human rights imperative, but also necessary for broadening the talent pool.

The full brief can be found [here](#).



GWNET project manager Natália Weber (centre) at the event ‘Empowering the Future: How Diversity and Equality Lay the Foundation for a Just and Sustainable Energy Transition’.



GWNET and Women Energize Women co-organised a networking event themed ‘Government & Business United for a Gender-Equal Energy Transition’.

GWNET Membership

GWNET is a membership association which is open for individual members from all around the world. Individual members can create a profile to present themselves on GWNET's Women in Energy Expert Platform.

Renewable energy companies and other businesses and organisations engaged in the energy transition have the opportunity to join as corporate members. The fee for a corporate membership is €1,000 per year, and corporate members receive services customised to their needs.

In 2023, we have witnessed increased interest of companies in diversity, equity, and inclusion, heightened by the current labour shortages and the need to attract new (female) talent.

GWNET demonstrates the potential and talent of women in the renewable energy sector through its online Women in Energy Expert Platform, which showcases the profiles of over 4,000 women from all over the world who are members of GWNET.

The platform will be redesigned and relaunched in 2024 to make it even more useful for our members – stay tuned for news about this!



Financials

In 2023, GWNET managed to increase and diversify its funding base. GWNET's work is funded through contributions from members plus funding from a series of organisations such as:



Governance

GWNET is governed by statutes, which can be [read here](#).

As noted in the statutes, the organs of GWNET include:

1. The General Assembly of its members;
2. The Governing Board;
3. The International Secretariat.



International Secretariat



Christine Lins

GWNET Executive Director



Davina Ngei

GWNET Communications Manger



Irene Giner-Reichl

GWNET Senior Advisor



Maria van Veldhuizen

GWNET Project Manager



Natalia Weber

GWNET Project Manager

Partner Institutions

Partner institutions of GWNET include:



Get involved

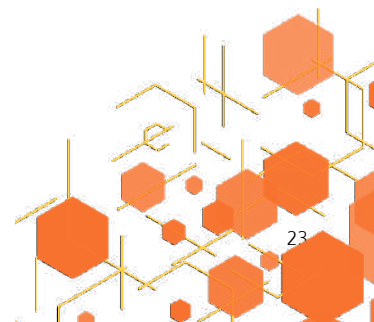
There are various ways in which you can get involved with GWNET's work:

- Become an individual member by signing up for the Women in Energy Expert Platform. Members receive regular Members' Digest newsletters and are invited to exclusive networking sessions and webinars.
- Become a corporate member to support our work and get access to our network of women professionals in the energy sector. Corporate members are also highlighted in our newsletter and on social media, and have the opportunity to speak at member networking events.

“ANDRITZ decided to join GWNET as a corporate member because we see diversity as one of our key success factors. Therefore, we are focusing on attracting highly qualified women to our workforce and to offer them attractive growth and development opportunities within the company.”

– Peter Stettner, Head of Market Strategy, ANDRITZ Hydro

- Become a mentor to share your expertise and support the career progression of young women in the energy sector in low- and middle-income countries and [sign up](#) to GWNET's mentor pool.
- Apply to one of our mentoring programmes as a mentee to boost your career – keep an eye on our website and social media for information about open calls for applications.
- Join GWNET's 'network of networks': Do you represent a regional or national women in energy network? Then join us to benefit from peer-to-peer learning, networking, and other support.
- Other partnership opportunities with GWNET: We are always happy to hear from potential partners interested in funding a new mentoring programme, initiating a research project on women in the energy sector, or forming a consortium for larger programmes.





GWNET

Global Women's Network
for the Energy Transition

www.globalwomennet.org