

Her4Water

**A TOOL TO ASSESS WOMEN'S VULNERABILITY
TO WATER SCARCITY AND ENGAGEMENT
IN WATER GOVERNANCE**



Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

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 **UNOPS**



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Please let us know if you use the tool and if you have any feedback on its application. You can contact us at gender@citiesalliance.org

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1. THE ISSUE OF WATER SCARCITY AND THE IMPACT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS



Cities play a crucial role in confronting the impacts of global challenges such as climate change, while also being highly vulnerable to its cascading effects due to their dense networks of people and infrastructure. Not only do cities accommodate the majority of the world's population, but they also generate 80 per cent of global GDP¹. However, cities and their residents also face numerous stresses, including rural-urban migration, social exclusion, the compounding threats of rising sea levels, and the urban heat island effect. These challenges intersect with climate hazards, leading to increased frequency and magnitude of climate events worldwide.

Heatwaves, extreme weather, and unpredictable climate cycles are gaining prominence as significant climatic events in cities. These events have the potential to disrupt food and water supplies and cause critical infrastructure failure, population displacement, and livelihood vulnerabilities. The economic toll of these climate-related impacts is projected to be substantial, with estimates suggesting that, by 2050, the cost of droughts, flooding, and coastal erosion in cities could reach nearly US\$200 billion per year². Furthermore, the rising seas pose a significant risk to approximately 800 million people living in 570 cities³.

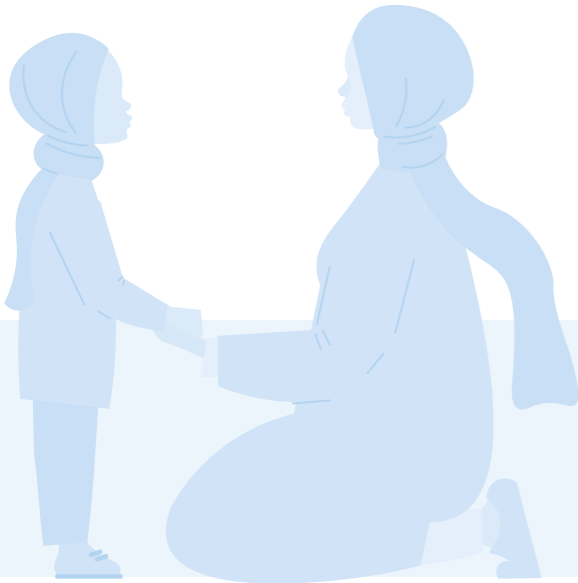
Women and girls are among the worst affected by the climate crisis due to their social roles and responsibilities. This is especially evident when it comes to issues related to water, where women and girls may face profound challenges. Although they play a key role in providing livelihoods and food security, their ability to act on the management of water resources often remains limited. In the Middle East and Northern Africa region, for instance, data reveal stark gender imbalances in occupations related to water. In Palestine, only 4.5 per cent of water, sanitation, and hygiene workers in Palestine are women, while in Jordan, just 12 per cent of the staff at the Water Authority of Jordan are female. Similarly, in Morocco, the public service infrastructure is heavily male-dominated, resulting in a scarcity of women in decision-making roles (11.8 per cent from 2011 to 2020) and a low presence of women in the workplace (34.5 per cent)⁴.

¹ The World Bank, Urban Development. Available: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview>. Last accessed: 6th June 2023

² George, S. (2022) 'Water risks to cost cities \$194bn each year by 2050 - but which places will be worst affected?'. Edie, 22nd June 2022.

³ The Future We Don't Want: How Climate Change Could Impact the World's Greatest Cities. UCCRN Technical Report, February 2018.

⁴ Constantianos, V., 2021. Empowering Women in Water Diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa: A Comparative Study of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine, Global Water Partnership. Ghana. Retrieved from <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/2100852/empowering-women-in-water-diplomacy-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/2856149> on 10 Jun 2023. CID: 20.500.12592/nm117b.



Amidst these circumstances, it is essential to develop a comprehensive tool that integrates a gender perspective to address water-related challenges and empower women in urban and peri-urban areas. Such a tool will serve as a vital resource for creating gender baseline knowledge, raising awareness, and strengthening the capacity of local actors to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated water data. The tool will contribute to the development of more inclusive and sustainable water management policies and projects that benefit not only women and girls, but also the entire community.

Women represent **17%**
of the workforce for water and hygiene
in developing economies.

Source: International Water Association

The tool was designed to be easily applicable in field environments, including marginalised local communities. It can be used in urban and peri-urban areas, spanning across different contexts from cities to neighbourhoods and communities. The tool is operative, user-friendly, and easily printable, enabling effective data collection through engagement with women and girls, community leaders, city officials, and civil society stakeholders.

This tool aims to empower women and girls to actively contribute to water management and to promote their participation and leadership in climate adaptation initiatives by harnessing their knowledge and capacities. Ultimately, this tool can help strengthen resilience, promote sustainability, and improve the overall well-being of communities affected by water scarcity in urban and peri-urban areas.



2. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOL *HER4WATER*

By employing a series of specific questions, this tool enables the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, providing valuable insights into two key aspects: the vulnerability of women and girls to water scarcity and their level of engagement, participation, and leadership in the management and governance of water resources.

2.1 VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

This tool assesses the vulnerability of women and girls to water scarcity and related issues. It delves into the specific challenges they face in accessing sufficient and clean water and understanding the impacts on their livelihoods, socio-economic conditions, and overall well-being. Assessing individual vulnerabilities of and with women allows developing targeted interventions to meet women's particular needs and assure their resilience in the face of water-related challenges by comprehensively understanding their unique vulnerabilities. **Section 3.3** outlines the suggested steps to assess the vulnerabilities, risks and impacts of water scarcity on women and girls.

2.2 ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

Another critical aspect that the tool will evaluate is the level of engagement, participation, and leadership of women and girls in the management and governance of water resources. It examines their involvement in decision-making processes, their representation in water-related initiatives, and their roles in shaping policies and strategies. This allows identifying gaps and opportunities to improve women's empowerment and encourage their active participation in water management and governance by evaluating their present level of engagement and leadership. **Section 3.2** describes the proposed steps for assessing women's engagement in water governance.

The outputs of the assessment and related analysis can support city officials, development practitioners, and community organisations to influence and shape plans, strategies, and projects aimed at improving water resources access and quality. By leveraging the tool's output, stakeholders can make evidence-based decisions, foster inclusive policies, and implement water management interventions that empower women and girls, improve their quality of life, and create more sustainable and equitable communities.



3. HOW TO USE THE TOOL HER4WATER

The following checklist outlines the suggested steps and considerations for conducting a comprehensive assessment using this tool.

3.1 PREPARATION AND DESK RESEARCH



BEGIN by gathering relevant information and conducting desk research on water scarcity, quality, and access, as well as climate change and climate patterns in the area of focus, gender-related cultural and social dynamics.



REVIEW relevant documents, policies, and plans related to water governance and gender inclusion.



CONDUCT field observations to assess water points and household conditions, as well as activities that necessitate intensive use of water such as urban agricultural spots and gardens. Note factors such as accessibility, availability, and quality.

3.2 ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN WATER GOVERNANCE



IDENTIFY key national and local stakeholders and frameworks for gender-responsive water management and governance.



CONDUCT key informant interviews with stakeholders such as community leaders, city officials, local researchers and university members, and representatives from local organisations involved in water resource management and policy.



REFER to the indicators and questions in **section 4.1** to conduct the interviews with the relevant stakeholders.

The answers of the interviewees should be documented in the form of comments and quotes to generate qualitative data and results.

3.3

ASSESSMENT OF RISKS AND IMPACTS OF WATER SCARCITY ON WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES



IMPLEMENT the tool in a participatory setting involving women and girls, and other community members and relevant stakeholders. Use a gender-sensitive approach to set up the focus group / workshop environment, making sure that women and girls will feel comfortable speaking in the chosen space and that the schedule will enable them to join, given their daily responsibilities.



USE a combination of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to gather qualitative data on women's experiences, challenges, and perceptions of water scarcity and management. If it seems appropriate for the data collection, other participatory methods, such as city walks, community mappings, or photovoice, etc., should be employed.



REFER to the indicators and questions in **section 4.2** to conduct the focus groups, workshops, and other participatory methods.

Answers and interventions of the participants should be documented as comments and quotations to generate qualitative data and results.

3.4

REPORTING ON THE INDICATORS AND DIAGRAM



ASSESS, organise and select the answers from the focus groups and interviews.

On the basis of the collected answers and evidence, decide on a score/rating for the indicator. See **section 4** to understand the rating system and **section 5** to understand the visualisation of indicators. In addition to the collected qualitative data, the rating system serves as a framework for assigning scores or ratings to indicators based on the collected data and participants' assessments, ensuring an easier interpretation of the results and facilitating the comparison across cities.



ANALYSE the collected data and translate it into an appropriate format (report, policy brief, action plan) to highlight the findings and key indicators related to water scarcity and gender dynamics.



PRESENT data in an accessible format, such as diagrams or visualisations, to enhance understanding and facilitate data-driven decision making.

3.5

SETTING UP A FOLLOW-UP PLAN



COMMUNICATE the results of the assessment to the participants and relevant stakeholders and, together with them, set up a follow up plan to identify next steps and actions based on assessment findings and recommendations.



COLLABORATE with relevant stakeholders to design interventions that address the identified gaps and empower women and girls in water resources management. See **section 6** for specific post-assessment recommendations.



ENSURE that the plan includes strategies for monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions as well as mechanisms for ongoing community engagement.

By following this checklist, an assessment can be conducted systematically to ensure that all relevant aspects of water scarcity, gender dynamics, and participation are captured. **The participatory nature of the tool will enable a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities, laying the foundation for informed decision making and the implementation of effective strategies and projects.**

4. INDICATORS AND QUESTIONS FOR THE ASSESSMENT

The following questions and related indicators should be used during the focus group discussions and interviews to assess the level of participation and engagement of women and girls in the governance of water resources in the city/community, and the level of vulnerability of women and girls to water scarcity. If needed, indicators and questions can be modified to fit the local context of the selected assessment area and conditions.

4.1 INDICATORS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN WATER-RELATED POLICY AND GOVERNANCE	
Indicator	Sample Questions
1. Number of female/male staff in different job positions within the water management sector and water governance institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many women and men are employed in various job positions within municipal units, organizations, or public/private utilities dealing with water resources? Are there any noticeable gender disparities in terms of staff representation and job levels (e.g., representation at managerial director level positions, manual or intellectual jobs, or secretarial positions) in these entities?
2. Presence of job positions for gender policy and concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there designated job positions, such as Gender Focal Point or vulnerability inclusion specialists, responsible for addressing gender policy and gender concerns within the municipal team or public/private utilities dealing with water resources? What is the role and level of engagement of these positions in promoting gender equality and addressing gender-related issues in water accessibility?
3. Presence and role of local women's groups/ organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any local women's groups, organizations, or self-help support initiatives to manage local drinking water or irrigation schemes? What is the extent of involvement and influence of these groups in decision-making processes and activities related to water management?
4. Presence of gender-sensitive water policy frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there existing water policy frameworks at the sectoral level that incorporate gender-sensitive, responsive, or transformative approaches? What is the current status of implementation of these frameworks strategies (e.g., planning phase, early implementation, full implementation)? Is there a specific Gender Action Plan at the city level for the sector?
5. Sectoral budget with gender considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the sectoral budget allocated for water resources management include specific considerations or key performance indicators (KPIs) related to gender equality and empowerment? How are these gender considerations reflected in the allocation of financial resources and implementation of water-related projects?
6. Female participation in water commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent do women participate in water commissions or decision-making bodies related to water governance? What are the reasons behind the participation or non-participation of women in these commissions?
7. Water projects including gender considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are gender considerations and women's needs incorporated into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of water-related projects? How do these projects address gender disparities, promote women's empowerment, and ensure equitable access to water resources?
8. Availability of gender-disaggregated data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a system in place to collect and maintain gender-disaggregated data related to water resources accessibility and management? (e.g., community forums, surveys, information campaigns, and other data collection mechanisms). How accessible is this data, and is it utilized to inform decision-making processes and assess the gender impact of water initiatives?

For this first part of the assessment focusing on policy and governance and conducted through interviews with key informants at the city level, the evaluator will decide the rating between 1 and 5 based on the answers and outputs of the interviews. Here's a suggested guide for assessing the ratings:

OUTPUT	
SCORE	1 Non existent policy, framework, strategy or debate
	2 Poor policy, framework, participation, but debate in place
	3 Existence of scattered initiatives but no policy in place
	4 Policies, frameworks, strategies, adopted but not yet implemented
	5 Policies, frameworks, strategies adopted and implemented at city level

4.2 INDICATORS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF RISKS AND IMPACTS FOR WOMEN AND THE COMMUNITY TO WATER SCARCITY

Indicator	Sample Questions
1. Perception of the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you assess the issue of water access and quality in your community? Do you consider it a high, medium, or low-risk challenge?
2. Access to water resources	How does your household obtain water? Is the household connected to the piped water system (connection to the main system for both drinking and non-drinking water, presence of water sources in the building)? Or do you purchase water from vendors or rely on unprotected sources (private vendors, collection of water from street fountain, etc.)? <i>Please describe.</i>
3. Direct risks (lack/cost of water for various uses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you facing challenges related to the lack of access to water for drinking, hygiene, and household uses? <i>If so, could you share the specific difficulties?</i>
4. Indirect risks (food supply, energy, violence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you noticed any impact due to water scarcity, such as impacts on food supply, food prices, or energy costs? Have you ever felt unsafe when having to go buy/collect water?
5. Decision making and responsibilities on household level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In your household, which roles and responsibilities are you assigned to? What roles and responsibilities are assigned to different individuals based on their sex, age, and position regarding water-related tasks? Who decides how to use the available water resources?
6. Access to water and sanitation in public spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you describe the accessibility of water and sanitation facilities in public spaces or communal areas within your community? Are there public fountains available in your neighborhood? Is the water drinkable or only usable for cleaning and irrigation purposes?
7. Impact on education and livelihoods	Have water scarcity and related issues had a negative impact on your life, the possibility of studying or going to school, or your job and livelihood? <i>If so, please provide examples.</i>
8. Impact on agricultural use of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has water scarcity had an impact on the possibility of using water for irrigation or for livestock care? <i>If so, please provide examples.</i>
9. Coping mechanisms for water scarcity	How do you and your community cope with water scarcity and its impacts? Are there any specific strategies or practices you employ (collection and storage, purification of water through chlorine products, etc.)? <i>Please elaborate.</i>
10. Traditional knowledge on water systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you aware of any traditional practice for collecting canalising, or improving access to water for household and irrigation purposes? How did you learn this practice? Have you shared this knowledge with your family, community, or friends?
11. Municipal climate change adaptation measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any specific measures or actions being taken in your community or municipality to adapt to the impacts of water scarcity? <i>If yes, please describe them</i> (retention or accumulation of rainwater in tanks, desalination, dwell extraction, etc.).
12. Gender-based barriers and discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever felt discriminated against when trying to access water resources or participating in decision-making processes for water management? <i>If yes, please elaborate.</i>
13. Community participation and empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there opportunities for women and girls to actively participate and engage in water-related decision-making processes or community initiatives? Are you aware of existing organizations community groups campaigns or initiatives? Do you participate in any committees initiatives, etc.? <i>If yes, please provide examples.</i>

In this second part of the assessment, focusing on women's and community risks and vulnerability to water scarcity, the rating between 1 and 5 will be determined through a consensus-based approach. The participants, along with the evaluator, will collaboratively decide on the scores for each indicator during the focus group or workshop. Here's a suggested format for providing the ratings:

OUTPUT	
SCORE	1 Highly unsatisfactory
	2 Unsatisfactory
	3 Satisfactory
	4 More than satisfactory
	5 Highly satisfactory



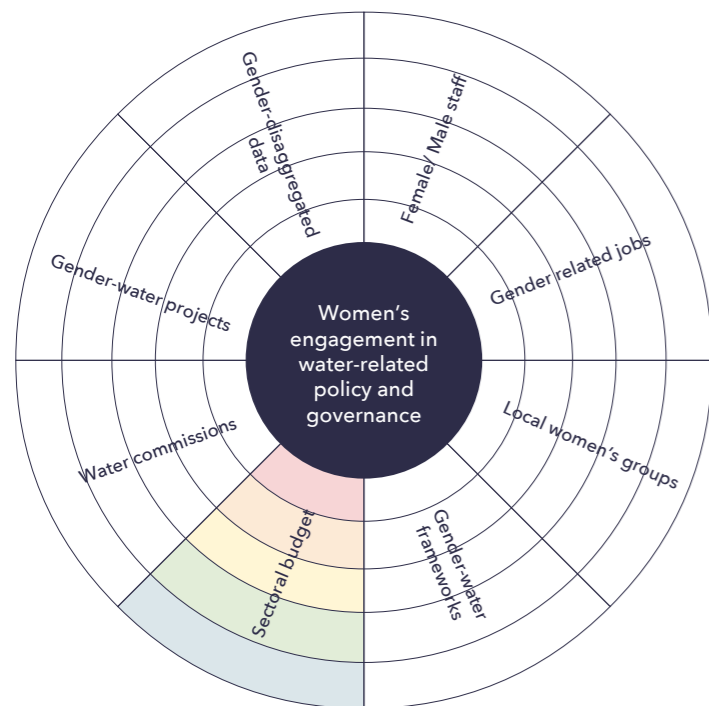
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5. VISUALISATION OF RESULTS

The results of the assessment can be showcased in circular diagrams, as shown below, one for each part of the assessment. The charts display the different indicators and their respective values. Each indicator can be represented by a different coloured segment within each bar, showcasing the relative proportions. These charts can be used to compare and analyse the importance and severity of each indicator, enabling stakeholders to gain a comprehensive understanding of the overall water scarcity situation.

5.1 WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT

in water-related policy and governance



5.2 RISKS AND IMPACTS

for women and the community to water scarcity



OUTPUT

SCORE	1	2	3	4	5
	Nonexistent policy, framework, strategy or debate	Poor policy, framework, participation, but debate in place	Existence of scattered initiatives but no policy in place	Policies, frameworks, strategies, adopted but not yet implemented	Policies, frameworks, strategies adopted and implemented at city level
	Highly unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	More than satisfactory	Highly satisfactory

6. POST ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

After the assessment, the users of the tools should communicate results to the city/community stakeholders and prepare a follow up plan in order to ensure the results of the assessment influence policies, projects and other initiatives for the inclusive management of water resources. The following recommendations can help the users of the tool in implementing post-assessment initiatives:

6.1

IMPLEMENTING GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS



INTEGRATE a gender perspective into water management policies, programmes, and projects by incorporating gender analysis and considerations at all stages, from planning and design to implementation and evaluation, to ensure that the unique needs, roles, and contributions of women and men are taken into account and addressed effectively.



INCREASE women's participation and representation in water governance decision-making processes by using measures such as gender quotas on job positions and elections, ensuring that women have an equal voice and influence in shaping water management policies and practises.



ENHANCE women's access to and control over water resources by implementing strategies such as providing secure land tenure, promoting women's entrepreneurship in water-related sectors, and establishing mechanisms to ensure equitable distribution of water resources, addressing existing gender disparities.



STRENGTHEN the capacity of local actors for gender-responsive water management by organising activities such as training sessions / learning exchanges / awareness campaigns.

6.2

COMMUNICATING THE DATA



DEVELOP clear and concise communication materials to convey assessment findings, such as infographics, summary reports, and fact sheets, that present key findings and recommendations in an easily understandable format.



TAILOR communication strategies to reach different stakeholders: make use of digital channels and tools such as storytelling through videos or podcasts to engage a broader audience, while organising targeted workshops or meetings to directly engage with local communities and relevant organisations.



EMPHASISE the use of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis in decision making by presenting data in a way that highlights gender-specific patterns and disparities, and incorporating gender analysis into policy discussions and decision-making processes.

6.3

FOLLOW-UP ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION



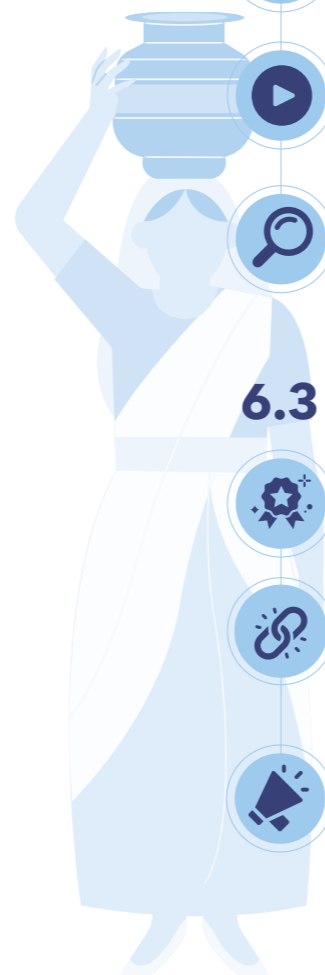
CONDUCT regular assessments to track progress and address emerging challenges, such as conducting annual reviews or mid-term evaluations to monitor the implementation of gender-integrated water management initiatives and identify areas for improvement.



ENGAGE local communities and women's groups in project design and monitoring, ensuring their active participation in decision-making processes, such as involving them in planning meetings, conducting focus groups, and seeking their feedback throughout the implementation phase.



PROMOTE knowledge sharing and learning between cities and regions by establishing platforms for exchanging experiences and best practises, organising workshops, webinars, and conferences where stakeholders can share their lessons learnt and innovative approaches to gender-inclusive water management.



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