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# **Empowering Women to be Actors of Change in Transboundary Basins**

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**THEMATIC SESSION ON PUBLIC  
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MANAGEMENT IN TRANSBOUNDARY  
BASINS**

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# Introduction to River Basin Management in Transboundary Basins: Nigeria as a Case Study

- Transboundary river basins are shared by two or more countries, and management of these basins requires cooperation and coordination among the countries involved.
- Nigeria shares its borders with several countries, including Niger to the North, Chad to the North-East, Cameroon to the East, and Benin to the West. As a result, Nigeria is home to several transboundary rivers, including the Niger River, the Chad Basin, and the Cross River Basin (ECOWAS-SWAC).



# Introduction (continued)

- Effective management of transboundary river basins requires a coordinated approach that takes into account the needs and interests of all stakeholders involved.
- In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Water Resources is responsible for the management of the country's water resources, including transboundary rivers.
- The ministry works closely with other government agencies, as well as with international organizations and neighboring countries, to ensure that the country's water resources are managed in a sustainable and equitable manner.



Source/Photo: Ministry of water resources website

# Women Leadership and Roles in water basins: Nigeria

- In Nigeria, women's leadership in water basin management has historically been limited.
- Women often face socio-cultural and structural barriers that hinder their active participation and leadership roles in the water sector.
- This is a common challenge in many countries, including Nigeria, where gender disparities persist in various sectors.
- In 2021, [Businessday.ng](https://www.businessday.ng) reported that Nigeria scored 40 % in gender mainstreaming in its water resources.



# Gender Equality and Water Management

## Importance of Gender Equality in Water Management

- Gender equality is vital for inclusive and sustainable water management. Women play key roles as water users, managers, and decision-makers, and their active involvement ensures that water management

## The role of women in water resource management

- Women have traditional knowledge, skills, and experiences related to water management. They often engage in activities such as water collection, agriculture, and household water management. However, their contributions are often undervalued and overlooked.

## Existing gender disparities and challenges

- Women face unequal access to water resources, limited participation in decision-making processes, and societal barriers that restrict their opportunities in the water sector.

# Benefits of Empowering Women in Transboundary Basins

## Increased effectiveness and efficiency in water management

- Empowering women leads to more comprehensive and effective water management strategies, as they bring diverse perspectives, knowledge, and skills to the table.

## Diverse perspectives and knowledge sharing

- Women's involvement ensures a broader range of perspectives and experiences, which leads to better problem-solving and innovative approaches in managing transboundary basins.

## Improved decision-making and sustainable development

- Gender-inclusive decision-making processes result in more equitable and sustainable outcomes, benefiting the entire basin community and fostering social and economic development.

# Barriers and Challenges

## **Socio-cultural barriers and stereotypes:**

Deep-rooted gender norms, stereotypes, and cultural biases can limit women's participation and leadership in water management, perpetuating gender disparities.

## **Lack of access to resources, education, and opportunities:**

Women often face barriers in accessing education, training, financial resources, and technologies, which hampers their capacity to actively engage in transboundary water management.

## **Institutional and policy constraints:**

Inadequate representation of women in decision-making bodies, limited gender-responsive policies, and weak implementation mechanisms hinder women's empowerment in transboundary basins.

# Tools and Strategies for Promoting Gender: Equality in Water Governance

Tools/Strategy	Description
Gender-sensitive policy making	Policies that reflect and respond to the needs and priorities of women and men.
Gender analysis of water resources management	A systematic assessment of the differential impacts of water management on women and men.
Women-only water user groups	Groups composed solely of women that manage and use water resources.
Gender-responsive budgeting	Budgeting that ensures women's needs and priorities are reflected in spending decisions.



# Examples of Successful Women-led initiatives in Nigeria

## Small-Scale Farming in the Lake Chad Basin

Women-led small-scale farming initiatives in the Lake Chad Basin region are improving food security and reducing poverty.

## Fish Farming in River Benue

Women in the River Benue region are leading sustainable fish farming initiatives, providing food and income for their communities.

## Women Environmental Programme (WEP)

WEP is a nongovernmental organization based in Nigeria that is dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability and the participation of women in environmental decision-making.

# References

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[Women still under-represented in water resources](#)

<https://businessday.ng/news/article/women-still-under-represented-in-water-resources-management-despite-progress/>

# Thank you!

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