

Gender Policy



**Department of Environment
Ministry of Environment and Forests**

July, 2016

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Director General
Department of Environment
Ministry of Environment and Forests

Message

I am pleased to share the Gender Policy of the Department of Environment (DoE), which is designed on the basis of fundamental human rights, women empowerment and gender equality. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh recognizes gender equality as one of the fundamental human rights for promoting the welfare and development for the people of Bangladesh in general and women in particular. Beside a fundamental right, gender equality has been taken as a development issue, which, through attaining gender equality, would put Bangladesh on a balanced, sustainable, socio-economic foundation for present and future generation. Bangladesh has signed relevant instruments, which recognizes and promotes gender equality and fundamental human rights, and has been working to achieve a gender equal society.

The policy has considered mainstreaming gender issues in the development process to enhance participation of women along with men for sustainable and equitable way in the accomplishment of the charters of duties of DoE. To implement the gender policy, DoE addresses any inequalities that exist in the institution, services and training activities. This policy is designed to improve the performance of DoE in an effective way with skills, talents and opportunities for both women and men. The policy provides guidance and also promotes awareness on gender issues in workplaces of the Department.

I look forward to an enduring and substantial commitment to gender equality and women empowerment by all at the Department of Environment.

Md. Raisul Alam Mondal
Director General

1. Background

The mandate of the Department of Environment (DoE) is to ensure conservation of the environment, improvement of the environmental standards and control as well as mitigation of environmental pollution as provided in Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act 1995.

The Department of Environment is headed by a Director General (DG) supported by an Additional Director General (ADG), several Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, Research Officers, Senior Chemists, Inspectors and other officials and staffs through a Head office, 6 (six) regional/divisional offices located in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Bogra, Barisal and Sylhet, 64 district offices, 2 (two) Divisional Environmental Labs and 2 (two) metropolitan offices situated at the metropolises of Dhaka and Chittagong.

Bangladesh Government has reserved 10% quota increased participation of women in the civil service. Consequently, women participation is increasing day by day in the private and public service. Thus, percentage of women employee is also increasing in DoE.

Department of Environment has given extra prioritization to the women through its various projects and programmes. Relation with Gender, women, children and person with disability /excluded group's needs are inserted in section 23.4 (part-1) of Development Project Proposal (DPP). The aim is to systematically analyze gender relations within a community and identify issues and barriers facing women in the community and focus on women's access to and control over income and resources, children and disable/excluded group's needs in terms of security, health care, food security and nutrition.

DoE has implemented Community Based Adaptation in the Ecologically Critical Area through Biodiversity and Social Protection (CBA-ECA) Project since 2011. The project activities have given extra concern to strengthen Alternative Income Generation (AIG) and Micro Capital Grant (MCG) activities especially targeted to poor women. On the other hand, DoE is implementing another project 'Market Development Initiative for Bondhu Chula' which is targeted to reduce the health hazards of rural women through enhancement of environment friendly improved cook stoves.

DoE's Vision

DOE's vision is to ensure sustainable environmental governance for achieving high quality of life for the benefit of present and future generation.

DoE's Mission

DOE's mission is to help secure a clean and healthy environment for the benefit of present and future generations:

- a) Through the fair and consistent application of environmental rules and regulations;

- b) Through guiding, training, and promoting awareness of environmental issues and
- c) Through sustainable action on critical environmental problems that demonstrate practical solutions, and that galvanize public support and involvement.

DoE is trying to achieve its vision and mission through its various activities with the active participation of both male and female employees. Many government ministries, departments/agencies, international and multilateral agencies, national and international NGOs have recognized the need to systematically address gender issues and promote gender mainstreaming, formulating their own gender policies. Department of Environment has been following this trend while at the same time remaining conscious of its uniqueness as a government organization, focusing on a range of activities including delivery of environment-related services and training.

2. Rationale

The UN Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) in 1984. Government of Bangladesh has made a commitment to take the necessary measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all forms.

The Articles 10, 19, 28 of constitution of Bangladesh have granted the rights of women to work in all professions. The Article read as follows:

Article 10: *Steps shall be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life*

Article 19 (2): *The State shall adopt effective measures to remove social and economic inequality between man and woman and to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens, and of opportunities in order to attain a uniform level of economic development throughout the Republic.*

Article 28(2): *Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and of public life*

Article 28(4): *Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making special provision in favour of women or children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens.*

To comply and follow these Articles of the Constitution, the supreme law of the country, DoE has developed this comprehensive Gender Policy to elucidate the concept of gender within its workplace located all over the country; at the stakeholder's level as well as within

the entire sector. This policy stands on the principles to ensure a consistent and equitable approach towards mainstreaming the concept of gender and preventing gender disparities among employees and stakeholders.

Gender Policy in Five Year Plan

The Government's approach towards gender equality has evolved since the independence of the country. Since the Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-1995) welfare approach to a women's rights and efficiency base approach mainstreaming gender and women's empowerment in the overall development process has been initiated.

Chapter 10 of the GoB's Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) focuses on environment and sustainable development. One of the objectives is "ensuring active participation of the poor, especially women, in environmental protection activities."

Significant policies and strategies have been incorporated in the Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-2015) to increase women's participation in economic, political and social life and to remove the existing barriers to women's advancement. This plan recognized the different priorities of women and needs to address women's interests while planning development interventions. It followed a two-pronged approach in addressing gender based discrimination, firstly, integration of gender into sectoral interventions and secondly giving specific attention to remove all policy and social biases against women.

Most of Chapters of the GoB's Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020) focuses on Gender Issues. Chapter 1 (Section 1.4) of this plan has stated on Gender empowerment, social inclusion and social protection on the basis of Gender Equality.

The Gender Policy of the Department of Environment is in line with National Women Development Policy, 2011 which envisions to "create a society where men and women will have equal opportunities and will enjoy all fundamental rights on an equal basis". The policy (National Women Development Policy, 2011) set 20 goals to empower women in all aspect of life: socially, legally, economically and politically.

The Government of Bangladesh has highlighted gender sensitivity as an important issue in climate change adaptation and supported the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) to take initiative under the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) to integrate gender sensitivity in their respective project designs.

Women's empowerment and equal access to opportunities is, therefore, an integral component to the development process. Nonetheless, more than just a strategy for economic development, women's equality is also a necessity in the positive evolution of human development, and is a fundamental human right. On the other hand, women

empowerment and gender equality is a prerequisite in ensuring sustainable development for the society.

3. Gender Policy Principles

The policy principles will serve as an outline for implementation and application of the policy. The policy will be executed in line with Government's existing relevant policies, plans, programmes and legislation. Institutional arrangements and key target areas are required to ensure gender concerns in all activities as well as implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects/programmes activities. The policy will emphasize on gender and cross cutting issues and seek to integrate and mainstream the gender concerns in all programme efforts through institutional arrangements, as well as operating environment of the department.

The policy assists for integrating gender equity goals and objectives into its entire organizational processes and structures. The principles are-

- a. Equity and Equality
- b. Empowerment
- c. Management and Governance
- d. Working Environment

3.1 Equity and Equality

Department of Environment will emphasize equity and equality in its entire structure and processes. DoE will provide same facility to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of whether they are women or men employees.

3.2 Empowerment

DoE will ensure equal opportunities and access for both women and men employees in entire processes of the department. DoE will provide women and men employees with equal access to decent work, and representation in policy and decision-making processes, which will be sustainable and benefit societies and humanity at large.

3.3 Governance and Management

DoE will undertake proactive efforts to assure participation by women in decision-making and governance at all levels and in all areas of the business, including budgetary decision-making. DoE works with civil societies, governments, development agencies and other institutions to foster environmentally sound and socially equitable decision-making processes and legal frameworks.

3.4 Working Environment

DoE will prevent all forms of violence in workplace, including verbal, physical, or sexual harassment. DoE will also ensure the safety of its female employees in the workplace, including separate prayer rooms, restrooms and travel to and from the workplace.

4. Goals and Implementation Strategies

The Gender Policy will establish an overall goal for the DoE to conduct capacity enhancing programmes and in all organizational matters. In addition, time-bound targets will be developed on an annual basis by the Gender Advisory Committee to guide the implementation process.

4.1 Goals

DoE is to make a gender sensitive organization with gender responsive programmes and activities. DoE tries to be responsive and to promote gender equity and equality in the organization and ensure that its capacity building activities will serve the needs and interests of both women and men, thus contributing to the elimination of discrimination against women. In particular, it seeks to ensure equal position of women in all aspects, and provide a safe and dignified working environment for all Officials/staffs.

4.2 Implementation Strategies

The following strategies will be adopted by the DoE to ensure implementation of the Gender Policy:

- a) Development of special initiatives to raise awareness on gender issues and to mainstream the Gender Policy at all levels of the organization. This will require developing indicators for organizational awareness and monitoring progress.
- b) Increased women's representation in key decision-making bodies guiding organizational and programmatic & cross-cutting issues.
- c) Implement gender analysis framework to provide guidance and capacity building programmes.
- d) Make a gender analysis when developing a new projects and including a gender perspective into the whole project cycle management.
- e) Commitment of sufficient technical and financial resources for implementation of the policy. This will require identification of financial support both externally and internally, the sourcing of technical expertise in gender analysis and the integration of gender through capacity building activities.

5. Objectives

The objective of this policy document is categorized into two sections.

5.1 Organizational Objectives and Measurable Outputs

5.1.1 Organizational Objectives:

- a) To mainstream the policy, ensure organizational commitment and internal allocation of resources.
- b) To raise awareness and understanding of gender issues at all levels of the department to achieve gender equity and equality.

- c) To develop and maintain a favorable working environment for both women and men.

5.1.2 Actions Required

- a) Assigned a Gender Focal Point, an Associate Gender Focal Point and Constitute a Gender Advisory Committee.
- b) Facilitated better working environment, childcare, job posting, transportation etc for the betterment of the female employees.

5.1.3 Measurable Outputs:

Raised awareness on gender issues and DoE's goals and expectations in addressing these issues:

(a) Women's Participation and Representation

Efforts will be made to increase the number of women in decision-making positions/policy-making position. The Officer's Association of DoE will also be encouraged to take measures to ensure active participation of the women members.

(b) Career Development Opportunities

Career development opportunities will ensure equal opportunities for both women and men employees of the department. Special measures will be taken to enhance the capacity of women employees in achieving their owing position.

(c) Better Working Environment

Efforts will be made to establish an enabling environment where women feel comfortable to work and are free to express themselves. A process will be carried out to clarify and identify issues on sexual harassment. Employees will be oriented to the Gender Policy and gender issues and the activities of DoE. DoE will establish a Gender Focal Point and an Associate Gender Focal Points, who will be responsible for gender-related issues in the department.

(d) Suitable Job Location

DoE shall take into consideration of women employees' family life while taking decisions on transfer and posting.

(e) Childcare Opportunities

According to Government Rule, DoE performs the present entitlement of 06 months maternity leave for employees. DoE will facilitate Day Care service for its employees having children below the age of 5 (five) Years.

(f) Available and Safe Transportation Facility

DoE will support available transportation facilities along with ensuring proper security measures for employees especially for females in head office and field offices.

(g) Celebration of International Woman Day

DoE will celebrate International Woman Day (08 March) to sensitize the employees about gender issues.

5.2 Capacity Development Objectives and Measurable Outputs

5.2.1 Capacity Development Objectives

DoE will arrange capacity building through trainings, workshops and consultation for its employees. The following objectives and measurable outputs will ensure gender equity in the DoE's programmatic areas

- a) To improve the understanding of gender differences in workplace and ways to address gender disparities.
- b) To develop a **Gender Analysis Framework** for implementing and monitoring of this policy.
- c) To Develop and implement capacity enhancing programme on gender and cross-cutting issues to respond the specific needs and interests of women.
- d) To ensure adequate female participation in all capacity enhancing programmes.

5.2.2 Actions Required

- a) Arranged training programme (general and gender related issues) for capacity building.
- b) Ensured participation of women employees in the project activities.

5.2.3 Measurable Outputs:

- a) DoE will take into account the unique and different needs and roles of women and men in the design and implementation of capacity enhancing programmes and activities.
- b) Programme Co-ordination section of DoE will ensure gender equity principles in the selection of trainees and trainers. All trainings, practicum and study tours will incorporate gender concepts and sensitivities, where relevant. Gender related training will be conducted for mainstreaming gender equity and equality.
- c) A review of the DoE's capacity enhancement will be carried out from a gender perspective to identify successes and constraints in addressing gender issues.
- d) DoE will revise modalities and criteria for ensuring incorporation of gender concerns in project design. DoE will also ensure participation of female employees in project steering committee.

6. Implementation and Monitoring Mechanism

6.1 Gender Advisory Committee

Department of Environment will form a Gender Advisory Committee consisting of 5 (five) members. The Director General shall form the Gender Advisory Committee with the participation of both female and male members. The committee shall implement and monitor various gender development activities of the department. Please refer to Annex-II for proposed structure and TOR of the committee.

6.2 Gender Analysis Framework

A gender analysis framework will be developed with support from relevant stakeholders, NGOs and academia. It will support to execute and implement the gender policy of DoE. Gender Analysis Framework shall be prepared. The review of the Gender Analysis Framework shall be done on a regular interval.

6.3 Gender Focal Point

A Gender Focal Point is an individual bearing responsibility for being the contact person for gender-related issues in the department. An Associate Gender Focal Point will assist Gender Focal Point to carry out gender related responsibilities. Please refer to Annex-III for proposed TOR of Gender Focal Point/Associate Gender Focal Point.

ANNEX I: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Equity and Equality

Equality is a matter of equal rights, opportunities and obligations for both women and men. Equity is the quality of being fair and right, a stage in the process of achieving gender equality.

Empowerment

Empowerment refers to measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority.

Management and Governance

Governance refers to the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions.

Working Environment

The conditions in which an individual works, including but not limited to such things as amenities, physical environment, stress and noise levels, degree of safety or danger, and the like.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.

ANNEX II: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE GENDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Composition

The five member committee will be headed by a Director. Out of the 5 (five) members 2 (two) members will be from other institutions/academia. At least one-third, and maximum half of its members will be women and the rest will be men. In addition, Gender Focal Point will participate in Gender Advisory Committee to make recommendation (not decision) meeting as an ex officio.

Roles and Responsibilities

The committee will be responsible for gender relevant issues of the department. The Gender Advisory Committee will carry out the following tasks:

- Develop annual work plans to define steps for implementation of the Gender Policy.
- Prioritize the issues to be addressed based on the Policy.
- Recommend measures to be taken and mechanisms to be established.
- Members will be responsible for the dissemination of the Gender Policy and will sensitize employees on gender issues.
- During the course of implementation of the Policy, the Gender Advisory Committee members may bring up new issues for attention.
- The committee will submit an annual report to the Director General.
- The committee may co-opt additional expert members as and when required.

Meeting

The Committee will meet half-yearly or as and when necessary.

ANNEX III: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF GENDER FOCAL POINTS/ASSOCIATE GENDER FOCAL POINTS

Responsibilities

Gender Focal Point will be responsible for overall gender-related issues at the department. Associate Gender Focal Point will assist Focal point to carry out assigned responsibilities. They are accountable for the following responsibilities:

- a) Promote gender sensitization at the department
- b) Collect and disseminate all gender-related information from colleagues to discuss issues related to gender in the workplace
- c) Assist Gender Advisory Committee in its function.
- d) Attend and contribute to gender-related training, workshops, seminar and meetings as and when required.

Selection Criteria

The officer/member chosen to be a Gender Focal Point/Associate Gender Focal Point must meet the following criteria:

- a) Regular employee of DoE;
- b) Female (in case of non-availability of competent employee, male employee may be considered);
- c) Preferably works at Head Quarter of the Department of Environment.