

Draft

Gender Policy



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

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Message

The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh recognizes and promotes gender equality as one of the ways of promoting the welfare and development for the people of Bangladesh. Gender equality is a fundamental right (as stated in Constitution) and development issue as stated in a number of international human rights instruments in which Bangladesh signed.

Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to mainstream gender issues in the development process of the Department to enhance participation of women and men for sustainable and equitable way. To implement the gender policy, Department of Environment (DoE) supposes to delight all employees in the right way and to address any inequalities that exist in intervention, 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. This document provides guidance and also promotes awareness of environmental issues in workplace. DoE will update this policy for the time being if discover new applications adopt globally or locally in future.

Signed

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 has been provided for in the Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act 1995.

The Department of Environment is headed by the Director General (DG) supported by one 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 and two Divisional Environmental Labs and 2 (two) metropolitan offices situated at the metropolises of Dhaka and Chittagong.

Of late, the Government has set up 21 (Twenty-One) new offices at district level with the creation of 468 new positions. As a result, the DoE staff strength has been increased to 735. Given the magnitude of the environmental problems in the country and the ramifications of the organization's functions, the staffing level is considered inadequate. Therefore, a proposal was sent and recently, Ministry of Public Administration has approved an organogram consisting of 1436 manpower and awaiting final approval from Ministry of Finance.

Vision

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

Mission

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

- Through the fair and consistent application of environmental rules and regulations;
- Through guiding, training, and promoting awareness of environmental issues and
- Through sustainable action on critical environmental problems that demonstrate practical solutions, and that galvanize public support and involvement.

Many government ministries, 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. DoE will follow 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. It has made a commitment to take the necessary measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all forms.

The constitution of Bangladesh in Articles 10, 19, 28 has granted the right of women to work in all professions;

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

To comply and follow these articles DoE felt an immense need to develop a comprehensive Gender Policy to elucidate the concept of gender within its workplace (Head Office, Divisional Offices and District Offices); 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.

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

Significant policies and strategies have been incorporated in the Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP) to increase women's participation in economic, political and social life and to remove the existing barriers to women's advancement. The SFYP 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.

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

Most of Chapters of the GoB's Seventh Five Year Plan (FY2016-FY2020) focuses on Gender Issues. In Chapter 1 (1.4) of this plan has stated on Gender empowerment, social inclusion and social protection on the basis of Gender Equality.

DoE's draft Gender Policy is line with National Women Development Policy, 2011. Its vision is to "create a society where men and women will have equal opportunities and will enjoy all fundamental rights on an equal basis". A list of 20 goals was formulated in order to empower women in all aspect of life: socially, legally, economically and politically.

The GoB 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 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 execute in line with Government's existing relevant rules and regulations. 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 program efforts through institutional arrangements, as well as operating environment of the department.

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

- Equity and Equality
- Empowerment
- Management and Governance
- Working Environment

3.1 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. DoE will emphasize equity and equality in its entire structure and processes.

3.2 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. DoE will ensure equal opportunities and access for both women and men employee's in entire processes of the department.

3.3 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. 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.

3.4 Working Environment

DoE will prevent all forms of violence in it's workplace, including verbal, physical, or sexual harassment. DoE will also ensure the safety of its female employees in the workplace, including separate prayers room, 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

Contribute towards making DoE 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 alter the subordinate 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:

- Endorsement of the Gender Policy by the Director General and senior management, followed by advocacy for DoE commitment to the policy.
- 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 into capacity building activities.
- Development of special initiatives to raise awareness of 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.
- Increased women's representation in key decision-making bodies guiding organizational and programmatic & cross-cutting issues.
- Implement gender analysis framework to provide guidance and capacity building programmes.

5. Objectives

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

5.1 Organizational Objectives and Measurable Outputs

5.1.1 Organizational Objectives:

- To mainstream the policy, ensure organizational commitment and internal allocation of resources.
- To raise awareness and understanding of gender issues at all levels of the department to achieve gender equity and equality.
- To develop and maintain a favorable working environment for both women and men.

5.1.2 Measurable Outputs:

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

5.1.2.1 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.

5.1.2.2 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 to achieve their owing position.

5.1.2.3 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 two **Associate Gender Focal Points**, who will be responsible for gender-related issues in the department.

5.1.2.4 Suitable Job Location

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

5.1.2.5 Childcare opportunities

According to Government rule, DoE will explore the present entitlement of 06 months maternity leave for employees. DoE will facilitate **Day Care** system for its lactating employees.

5.1.2.6 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.

5.1.2.7 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

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

5.2.2 Measurable Outputs:

- DoE will take into account the unique and different needs and roles of women and men in the design and implementation of capacity enhancing programme and activities.
- The Program Co-ordination section of DoE will ensure gender equity principles in the selection of trainees and trainers. All training, practicum and study tour will be reviewed and revised in order to incorporate gender concepts and sensitivities, where relevant. Gender related training will be conducted for mainstreaming gender equity and equality.
- 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.
- 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 7 (seven) members. Director (Administration and HRD) will chair the committee. Please refer to Annex-1 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 by 2020. The review of the Gender Analysis Framework shall be done on 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. Two Associate Gender Focal Points (one female and one male) will assist Gender Focal Point to carry out gender related responsibilities. Please refer to Annex-2 for proposed TOR of Gender Focal Point.

ANNEX I: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE GENDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Composition

The seven member committee will be headed by the Director (Administration and HRD). Out of the 7 (seven) 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.

Objectives/Duties

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 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.

Meeting

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

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

Responsibilities

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

- Promote gender sensitization in the department
- Collect and disseminate all gender-related information from colleagues to discuss issues related to gender in the workplace
- Assist Gender Advisory Committee
- 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:

- Regular employee of DoE
- Female; (in case of non-availability of competent employee, male employee may consider)
- Preferably works at Head Quarter of the Department of Environment