



GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI) POLICY



National Trust for Nature Conservation

Lalitpur

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Rationale

The National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), established in 1982 by a Legislative Act is an autonomous and not-for-profit organization, mandated to work in the field of nature conservation in Nepal. NTNC's mission is to conserve, manage and promote nature in all its diversity balancing human needs with the environment on a sustainable basis for posterity-ensuring maximum community participation with due cognizance of the linkages between economics, environment, and ethnics through a process in which people are both the principal actors and beneficiaries. Based on the past learning for more than three decades on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), NTNC now formulates an organizational GESI policy acknowledging the need for systematic institutionalization of GESI responses in NTNC's organizational systems and conservation communities.

NTNC's commitment towards GESI

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 has provided a mandate for GESI to bring women, persons with disability, marginalized, minorities and backward communities into the mainstream of national development. NTNC GESI policy corresponds also to the major international commitments, such as, Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169 (Rights of the Indigenous and Tribal People 1989) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including gender mandate given by the Conference of Parties (COP) 18 in the process of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

NTNC believes that gender equality and social inclusion are critical elements of the organizational commitment to ensure that human rights of all women and men from diverse communities are appropriately respected for achieving organizational productivity influencing sustainable conservation development.

NTNC is dedicated and commits to advancing gender equality and social inclusion in our organization and in all programs. NTNC will strengthen organizational accountability towards GESI transformative performance and enhancing program effectiveness to promote sustainable impacts on reducing GESI based unequal relations in socio-economic and political aspects in regard to participation and benefit sharing in conservation for development processes.

Goals

A. Programming

NTNC will promote programmatic structures and procedures to ensure that:

1. All programs/projects development processes integrate GESI perspectives by incorporating GESI awareness and GESI analysis at every stage of program cycle management.
2. All programs/projects will maintain GESI disaggregated data and indicators of the target groups based on social, economic and geographical diversity.
3. All programs/projects planning process are participated by the potential target people including women and marginalized communities, including affirmative actions

to provide space for women and excluded groups to actively participate in decision making processes.

4. All programs/projects allocate adequate financial and human resources to implement GESI specific interventions.
5. All programs/projects are guided by GESI impact assessment so that appropriate majors are adopted to reduce gender and exclusion based inequalities.
6. GESI sensitive approaches are adopted while working with local communities promoting respects to socio-cultural dynamics involving indigenous knowledge and skills for local solution.
7. All programs/projects monitor and document GESI lessons as well as disseminate to promote GESI learning for knowledge management.

B. Organizational culture

NTNC commits full accountability to maintain an organizational culture and work environment as pre-condition for implementing GESI responsive conservation programs by:

1. Explicitly sharing NTNC's GESI policy commitments and providing mandatory orientation to all staff, short term employees, stakeholders, partners, communities, donors and vendors on GESI policy and related strategy.
2. Developing knowledge on GESI of all level of staff and building capacity of the stakeholders and partners to understand and implement GESI interventions.
3. Incorporating GESI criteria and requirements in monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems.
4. Allocating adequate and appropriate financial and human resources for GESI actions.
5. Developing gender-focused human resource management to recruit and retain gender balanced organizational structure.
6. Ensuring GESI balanced staffing in NTNC as well as incorporating GESI criteria and requirements in job descriptions and performance systems.
7. Maintaining a GESI friendly working environment by implementing mandatory GESI-sensitive code of conduct, including explicitly executing anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy with provision for handling grievances.
8. Demonstrating leadership role in organizational capacities by each and every employee of NTNC to behave in a mutually respectful and cooperative way to advance GESI as an agenda of human rights and dignity.

APPENDIX I-DETAILED ACTIVITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A. Implementation of Program Goals

1. Apply GESI analysis to ensure GESI disaggregated data at all stages of policy and program work, including planning, implementation, impact assessment and development of measurable gender indicators;
2. Develop capacity of program staff to carry out GESI based analysis;
3. Develop GESI-sensitive approaches, methods and guidelines of work which are empowering, building on existing lessons about indigenous knowledge, skills and resources in the communities and strategies about how they could better participate and benefit from nature conservation;
4. All program staff of NTNC take responsibility for promoting GESI agenda as embedded task in their job description;
5. Establish systems for GESI budget allocation as an integral part of all program budgeting; define GESI budgeting as per program nature and set indicators to monitor and measure GESI impacts;
6. Establish (or strengthen the existing one) a GESI sensitive M&E system with defining quantitative and qualitative indicators to monitor GESI impacts;
7. Encourage regular learning and knowledge management on GESI through GESI sharing activities, holding forums, periodically monitor and evaluate programs for GESI results against the goals;
8. Develop and employ good practice guidelines and indicators to access, analyze and document GESI outcomes;
9. Promote the creation of structures and opportunities for women's and the excluded groups' participation in decision-making at all levels;
10. Establish in consultation with the impact groups "criteria" for participants in conservation group formation where quotas for women and excluded caste groups are ensured. (The Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation mentions in GESI strategy for at least a 33% of women quota including at least 2 key executive positions filled by women); criteria also reflects inclusion principles of GoN for proportionate representation by locally decided quotas;
11. Ensure that women's, including single women's and young girls' voices are heard in mainstream development processes;
12. Undertake capacity building (e.g. resource allocation, training, information, networking) to strengthen the users' right holders' organizations and groups, particularly those of the women users;

13. Support development of the local level organizations and strengthens stakeholders' facilitating capacity (private and public) working towards GESI promotional goals;
14. Promote local level "women conservation leaders "as agents of change to own and take lead responsibility to sustain community conservation activities. (Increasing male out-migration provide this as an opportunity to recognize women users' political gender role to strengthen);
15. Allocate cost to support representation of the most active role model conservation leaders at conservation management forums so that their voice and ideas get recognized for policy reform;
16. Support participation of women conservation leaders (preferably from indigenous groups) in movement to advocate for implementation of the Agenda 21 (of the Rio Convention) and Beijing Platform for Action –all 12 rights provisions (e.g. access to employment, resources, services etc) and other national and international instruments for promoting rights of women and the indigenous population residing in forest conservation areas or buffer zone areas;
17. Promote celebrations of certain specific Human Right days, such as, Rural Women's Day (October16), Environment & Conservation celebration(June 5), International Women's Day(March 8) etc. in order to accelerate ownership and leadership by the right holders and users groups on conservation for sustainable livelihoods and household wellbeing;
18. Develop, promote and use creative ways of engaging youth, men and women as agents of change in the pursuit of gender equality and social inclusion;
19. Recognize and reward innovations done by community members in conservation practices integrating gender and inclusion issues.

B. Implementation of Organizational Goals

1. NTNC maintains a GESI policy which is aligned to international and national commitments on GESI promotion by the GoN, particularly CEDAW, BPFA, ILO 169 and Agenda 21 of the Rio Convention, emphasizing on rights of the indigenous people and the women to access and manage natural resources;
2. NTNC maintains a GESI operational strategy and GESI Action Plan including outcome and impact indicators on both quantitative and qualitative indicators;
3. NTNC will share the GESI Policy widely ensuring that all staff and stakeholders are well aware about the contents and responsibilities;
4. All NTNC Board members, employees and externally recruited consultants are made aware on the importance of the NTNC GESI Policy;
5. NTNC will ensure that specialized GESI related functions are in place in the organizational structure and adequately resourced;

6. Recognize knowledge related to GESI concerns and GESI-related analysis as one of the core areas of capacity for staff and build capabilities throughout the agency and developing agency;
7. NTNC will promote a GESI working group within the organization for sharing GESI related work, experiences and ideas collected from field and colleagues that contributes to GESI knowledge building for feeding back into NTNC's planning;
8. Build a common understanding and increased appreciation of GESI through induction, training and encouraging innovative practices (through reward and punishment);
9. All training courses on conservation and resource management training are GESI sensitive and include an introductory session on GESI analysis in context of nature conservation;
10. Ensure that all the NTNC-Human Resource (HR) systems and policies are GESI-sensitive and responsive, and integrate GESI performance indicators into job descriptions of staff in objectives and accountabilities;
11. Ensure that the staff annual performance review systems and formats integrate GESI performance indicators for specific tasks as well as a common indicator for GESI responsive behavioral change;
12. Establish GESI sensitivity in all terms of reference, including TORs for external consultants and technical experts;
13. Carry out regular periodic GESI audit in order to assess and determine the nature, structure and causes of GESI related imbalances in staff throughout the organization and set targets for recruitment, retention and promotion of staff accordingly, particularly women in senior positions;
14. Develop operational strategies for reaching those targets, through adoption of affirmative action in managing the HR recruitment process from exit to entry processes;
15. All interview panels should be gender balanced consisting of at least 33% women in the formation of the panel (whenever applicable);
16. An increasing attention will be paid for promoting women, dalits and ethnic group members at all level including senior level positions;
17. Team building events will be held annually for maintaining a good practice of mutual respect and cooperation among all staff members, irrespective of their levels and gender;
18. Equal career development opportunities including development of posts, training and internal promotion;
19. Maintaining a work-life balanced, family friendly and flexible working policies to allow staff to fulfill caring responsibilities (including maternity, paternity and parental leave, and policies on childcare provision);

20. Ensure a safe and secured working environment for all staff through adoption of -Anti-harassment policies, and action against sexual harassment as zero tolerance policy;

- Safe and secure transport and accommodation when travelling, particularly for women staff;
- Child care facilities for mother (father if applicable) up to the lactating period;
- Non-discriminatory wage policy following “equal wage for equal value of work”;
- A policy for providing at least 90 days paid maternity leave, and then extension of leave as an unpaid leave for another 60 days as a ‘caring leave’ in special cases, where the child needs direct caring of the mother;

21. Make accessible, where feasible, information technology to facilitate home working, flexible working hours and virtual working to strike a balance between home responsibilities and work;

22. Ensure that staff access to and use of facility and information technology available in office is unbiased in terms of gender and inclusion;

23. All employees and working partners sign and respect behavioral values of an organizational GESI behavioral document, titled as “GESI responsive Code of Conduct, NTNC”, which is not static but can be updated based on GESI audit recommendations. (This is mainly inclusive of gender friendly language, behavior and friendly to all castes, ethnic –diversity groups respectful cultural standards);

24. Provision of an organizational Ombudsperson (confidential dealing)

- A focal point for handling grievances will be nominated by the management team, who will be responsible for hearing, counseling and handling different actions and recommendations on cases of sexual harassment (men or women). Again, grievance handling procedures will be worked out in detail by a special committee formed internally and will be applicable for both women and men staff;
- Harassment cases may not only be sexual but also related to caste and ethnicity, underestimation, etc. NTNC is sensitive to all kinds of discriminatory behavior against one’s human dignity, which will be addressed with appropriate action by the senior management team, case by case basis, on the recommendation of the Ombudsperson.