

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy and Operational Guidelines 2020

Nepal Electricity Authority

January 2020

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List of acronyms

CBO	Community based organization
CoC	Conditions of Contract
DoED	Department of Electricity Development, Ministry of Energy
DCSD	Distribution and Consumer Service Directorate
DMD	Deputy Managing Director
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessments
ESMU	Environmental and Social Monitoring Unit
ESMSP	Environmental and Social Management Service Provider
ESSD	Environment and Social Studies Department
GoN	Government of Nepal
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HR	Human resources
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IPP	Indigenous Peoples Plan
LCF	Local Consultative Forum
NEA	Nepal Electricity Authority
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PMO	Project Management Office
PSC	Project Supervision Consultant
PwD	Person with disabilities
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
RP	Resettlement Plan
SC	Supervision Consultant
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
ToR	Terms of Reference

1. Preamble

1.1 Introduction: background and rationale

In 2015, Nepal adopted its new constitution which emphasizes the need to develop energy for economic development. A central focus of Nepal's constitution is a strong commitment to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), with the aim to achieve "gender equality, proportional inclusion, participation and social justice" for its people. At the same time, Nepal is a signatory to various international conventions, and is legally committed to gender equality and social inclusion. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG 5 in particular, underscores that gender equality and the empowerment of women are integral to the achievement of sustainable development. In line with these mandates, the government has made it a priority to implement policies and programs that involve women, Dalits, Adivasi Janajatis, Madhesis, Muslims, persons with disabilities and other excluded communities in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sectoral policies, plans and programs.

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), established in 1985, has a mandate to generate, transmit and distribute power by planning, constructing, operating and maintaining all generation, transmission and distribution facilities in Nepal's power system. Moving forward, some of the NEA's priority areas are to reduce operational costs, increase self-generation and expand the distribution system. In all of these areas, it will be critical for the NEA to address gender and social inclusion issues in its engagement with beneficiaries and the public as well as in the institutional set up.

In line with its commitment to gender equality and social inclusion, the NEA has developed this "Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy and Operational Guidelines" for mainstreaming and institutionalizing GESI considerations in its overall portfolio and operations. The development and adoption of the GESI Strategy and Operational Guidelines is in accordance with Article 35 of the Nepal Electricity Authority Act, 2041 (1984), which allows the NEA to frame necessary bye-laws without prejudice to this Act, for the purpose of managing its business. The Guideline is accompanied with a GESI Manual, which provides necessary support documents including questionnaires, reporting formats as well as good practice examples from around the world.

1.2 Name of the Guideline and Commencement

The name of this Guideline is "Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy and Operational Guideline 2020" (GESI Guidelines henceforth). The purpose of it is to mainstream Gender Equality and Social Inclusion within the operations and the governance of the NEA. The guideline shall be effective from the date of approval or endorsement by the NEA.

1.3 Definitions

1. *Access and control over resources*: Access refers to the ability to use and benefit from specific resources (material, financial, human, social, political, etc.) whereas control over resources also entails being able to make decisions over the use of that resource. For example, women's control over land means that they can access land (use it), own land (can be the legal title-holders), and make decisions about whether to sell or rent the land¹.

2. *Adivasi Janajatis* refers to distinct communities having their own mother tongues and traditional customs, distinct cultural identity, social structure and written and unwritten histories. The government has identified 59 groups as indigenous nationalities and these are categorized into 5 groups based on their economic and socio-cultural statusⁱⁱ.
3. "Compensation" is payment in cash or in kind of the replacement value of the property acquired under Land Acquisition Act, 1977ⁱⁱⁱ.
4. "Customer" means a person who consumes electricity.
5. "*Dalit*" is commonly known as untouchable in traditional Nepalese society. The *Dalit* Commission has defined *dalit* as, "a community discriminated on the basis of caste and marginalized in terms of social, economic, educational, political and religious sectors."
6. "Excluded Groups" refer to women, Adivasis, Janajati, Dalit, Madhesi, Muslim, persons with disabilities, elderly people and people living in remote areas, who have been excluded over a long time due to economic, caste, ethnic, gender, disability, and geographic reasons and include sexual and gender minorities (i.e. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI)).^{iv}
7. "Empowerment" refers to the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to function and to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions that affect them. It is about the people - both women and men - taking control over their lives, setting their own priorities, gaining skills, building self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance.^v
8. "GESI Guidelines" refers to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy and Operational Guidelines 2020.
9. "Gender" refers to the socially constructed roles and identities of men and women as well as the relationship between them. The definition of gender has now been expanded to include transgender or third gender categories, i.e. those individuals who do not identify with some (or all) of the aspects of gender that are assigned to their biological sex of being a woman or a man. These roles change over time and vary by culture. In Nepal, women face unequal power relations and gender-based barriers due to a patriarchal society.^{vi}
10. "Gender Equality" means that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles. The different behaviors, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally.^{vii}
11. "Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)" refers to a concept that addresses unequal power relations between women and men and between different social groups. It focuses on the need for action to re-balance these power relations and ensures equal rights, opportunities and respect for all individuals regardless of their social identity.^{viii}
12. "GESI Mainstreaming" refers to the process whereby barriers and issues of women and poor and excluded people are identified and addressed in all functional areas of infrastructure development system: policies, institutional systems, work environment

and culture, program and budget formulation, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation and research.^{ix}

13. "Land acquisition" is the process whereby private land and properties are acquired for the purpose of public interest by the state and compensation is provided to the affected landowners. The Government of Nepal may acquire necessary lands and hand them over to the Authority according to the prevailing law in case the Authority requires such lands for the purposes of:(a) Construction of dams or embankments; (b)Construction of canals and channels;(c) Construction of power generation, transmission and distribution centers and sub-sections; (d) Installation of electric cables or transmission lines either over or underground; (e) Erection of electricity poles; (f) Construction of other electricity-related facilities; and (g) Performance of any other function to fulfill the objective of the Authority.^x
14. "Livelihood" refers to the full range of means that individuals, families and communities utilize to make a living, such as wage-based income, agriculture, fishing, foraging, other natural resource-based livelihoods, petty trade and bartering.^{xi}
15. "Livelihood restoration" refers to measures for ensuring that displaced persons are assisted in their efforts to improve their livelihoods and standards of living or at least to restore them, in real terms, to pre-displacement levels or to levels prevailing prior to the beginning of project implementation, whichever is higher.^{xii}
16. "Madhesi" in broad terms refers to the people who have languages such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Urdu, and Hindi as their mother tongue and are considered of Madhesi origin. They include Madhesi Brahman Chhetris, Madhesi other caste groups, and Madhesi Dalits. Their exclusion is based primarily on regional identity and language.^{xiii}
17. "Poor" refers to households or persons who consume an average of less than 2,220 calories of food per person per day. The poverty line for Nepal, based on average 2010-11 prices, has been estimated at NPR19,261 per person per year; the food poverty line is NPR11,929 and the non-food poverty line NPR 7,332 per person per year.^{xiv}
18. "Productive use of energy" is used to mean "utilization of energy, both electric and non-electric energy in the forms of heat or mechanical energy, for activities that enhance income and welfare."^{xv}
19. "Social Exclusion" describes the experience of groups that are historically disadvantaged because of discrimination based on income, gender, caste, ethnicity or religion or location.^{xvi}
20. "Social Inclusion" refers to a process that ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources they need to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they participate more in decision making on matters that affect them and on access to resources, opportunities and services to enjoy their fundamental rights. It involves development of inclusive institutions, policies, social norms, and behaviors that provide an opportunity for previously marginalized groups to increase their voice and access to assets.^{xvii}

21. “Vulnerable Groups” refer to groups of people whose disadvantage or risk of disadvantage is situational rather than structural. Typically, these include those below the poverty line, the landless, the elderly, women and children, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, or other displaced persons who may not be protected through national land compensation legislation.^{xviii}

1.4 Objectives of the GESI Strategy and Guidelines

The primary objective of the GESI Strategy and Guidelines is to provide guidance in an integrated manner on the implementation of gender equality and social inclusion in all aspects of the NEA’s policies, project design and implementation processes and institutional structure. It identifies concrete actions for GESI mainstreaming, suggests a framework for measuring progress and an institutional mechanism for the implementation of the GESI Guidelines.

The implementation of the Guidelines will ensure that the NEA adopts a gender-responsive and socially inclusive approach to improve the access of women, poor and the presently excluded people, to the services and benefits provided by NEA and resulting from its projects. At the same time, this will contribute towards giving women and the excluded communities the opportunities to play meaningful roles in the NEA’s governance structures and operations. It will also encourage men and women from all social groups to accept each other as colleagues, fellow workers, and leaders without any subconscious bias towards each other. The Guidelines also make recommendations around improving communications with key stakeholders and the public, as well as improving customer services.

The Guidelines will be operationalized through yearly action plans that are developed and agreed at the beginning of each financial year. At the end of the financial year, the action plan will be evaluated and lessons learned will be taken into account to form a new action plan for the next financial year. The NEA will conduct an independent evaluation of the implementation of the GESI Operational Guidelines every five years.

2. Strategy for mainstreaming GESI in the NEA

2.1 Vision and Mission for mainstreaming GESI in the NEA

The GESI Strategic Plan is guided by the NEA’s GESI Vision and Mission.

The NEA’s GESI strategic vision is:

Nepalese women, men and individuals at risk of exclusion, are socially and economically empowered through equal and equitable access to services and benefits provided by NEA.

The NEA’s GESI mission is:

To ensure that the NEA is an inclusive and equal opportunity organization that provides electricity services to the Nepalese population in a manner that contributes to the economic and social empowerment of men, women and all individuals at risk of exclusion and to the sustainable development of Nepal.

2.2 Strategic areas for GESI mainstreaming

To realize the GESI vision and mission, the NEA will institutionalize GESI in its structure and systems, and has set the following strategic focus areas:

2.2.1 Outreach and service provision

To ensure that the NEA's service outreach and operations are responsive to the needs of men, women, poor, the vulnerable and other socially excluded – as users of electricity and as communities that the NEA engages with –the NEA will take measures so that:

- The women, poor, the vulnerable and other socially excluded are able to access the NEA's electricity services as customers.
- Women, poor, the vulnerable and other socially excluded who are affected by the NEA's projects are systematically identified and their perspectives integrated into the project planning and implementation processes, enabling them to take on leadership roles.
- An enabling environment is created so that all members of the project-affected communities receive fair compensation and livelihood restoration support.
- Women, poor, the vulnerable and other socially excluded in project-affected areas are able to benefit from economic opportunities created by the project, such as access to employment, training, and entrepreneurship development resources.

2.2.2 Project planning and programming

The NEA will take GESI into consideration at all stages of its project cycle and in the functioning of each of the directorates. Accordingly, the NEA will:

- Integrate GESI considerations into terms of references (TORs), procurement processes and work contracts, where applicable.
- Support partners, including contractors, consultants and other service providers to adopt GESI aspects in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their activities.
- Be inclusive (including female staff and facilitators, for example) and apply participatory approaches at all stages of the project cycle.
- Disaggregate data by sex, caste, ethnicity, religion, economic status and any other variables, where relevant, in project planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.



- Use GESI-sensitive language and terminology in all its internal as well as external communication.

2.2.3 Inclusive, diverse and safe work environment within the NEA

The NEA will create an inclusive, diverse and harmonious working environment that respects the dignity of all persons and provides equal opportunities for them to grow and progress in their careers. To achieve this, the NEA will:

- Continue providing opportunities in the recruitment and promotion of individuals representing various backgrounds (representing gender, ethnic diversity, race, religion, age, persons with disability).
- Provide equal opportunities to staff for capacity development, training and exposure that help in their career progression.
- Create an inclusive and secure working environment for all its employees by:(i) ensuring safety and security at the work place; (ii) implementing work-life balance policies; (iii) maintaining wage parity between men and women at all levels, and (iv) ensuring that persons with disabilities have dignified, equitable and achievable access to buildings, and facilities and services.
- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and other forms of discriminatory behavior based on social identities, caste or ethnicity.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure that the interests of employees of all social groups and staff of all levels are considered in the organizations' consultative processes related to staff welfare.
- Establish channels for regular, open communication and grievance redressal with all staff at all levels.

2.2.4 Leadership and governance

The NEA leadership and senior management will champion gender equality and social inclusion as integral to its work. Hence, senior management will:

- Support the roll-out of the GESI strategy and its mainstreaming across the NEA.
- Discuss and resolve issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and excluded groups in NEA's work with higher priorities.

2.2.5 Accountability and oversight

The NEA will integrate accountability for GESI within its overall monitoring and evaluation framework. The monitoring framework for GESI will be integrated into the regular project monitoring system. At the organizational level, the NEA will:

- Regularly monitor activities and assess results against this strategy using GESI responsive indicators.

- Require projects to collect and report data disaggregated by sex, caste, ethnicity, and economic status, to track progress towards GESI outcomes.
- Work with partners when designing a new project to make sure that the GESI strategy informs the new intervention, and that lessons learned are taken into account.

2.2.6 Institutional arrangements

Mainstreaming GESI within the NEA calls for a well-resourced institutional structure that provides support to all levels within the organization including the central regional and district offices. At the same time, it is imperative to build capacities at various levels to understand the GESI concepts, the rationale and the mechanisms proposed in the Guidelines and adopt them. To achieve the desired level of priority at the institutional level, allocation of resources for GESI implementation is needed.

3. Institutional structure and mechanism for mainstreaming GESI in the NEA

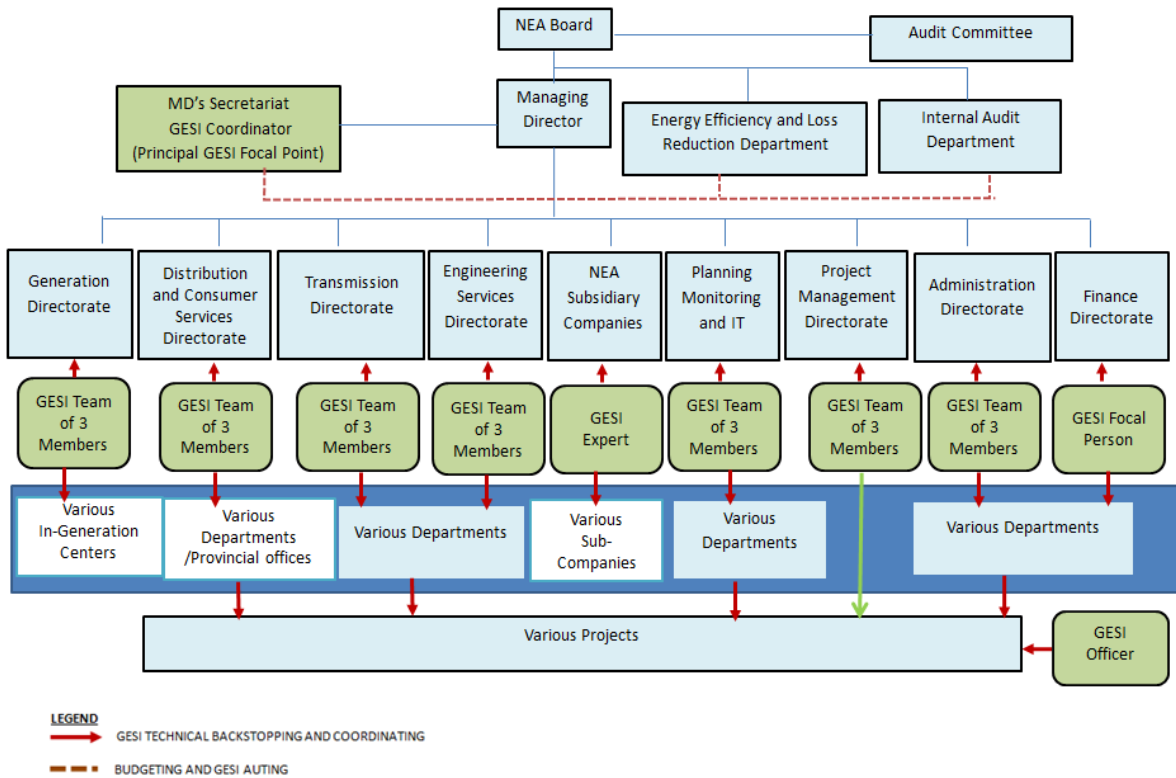
The success of the GESI Strategy will require the support of management, staff and other stakeholders as well as an allocation of financial resources, effort and expertise. The following institutional structure will guide the operationalization of the NEA GESI Strategy.

- **NEA:** The NEA will endorse the GESI strategy as an organizational policy and make gender equality and social inclusion as a core value.
- **GESI Coordinator:** A GESI Coordinator positioned within the NEA's Managing Director's Secretariat will lead the implementation of GESI Guidelines and report directly to the Managing Director. He/she will coordinate and provide technical guidance for the GESI strategy implementation, with support from designated GESI teams within each directorate. The GESI Coordinator will work closely with the Deputy Managing Directors (DMDs) heading the directorates, the GESI teams, project managers, GESI officers within projects and partner organizations to mainstream GESI into the projects.
- **Directorate-level GESI team:** For each directorate, the DMDs will have the final responsibility for the implementation of GESI strategy and operational guidelines within the directorate.
 - Each of the Directorates of Generation; Transmission; Distribution and Consumer Services; Engineering Services; Project Management Directorate; Planning, Monitoring and IT; and Administration will nominate a team of three persons (including men and women) for the implementation of GESI Strategy and Operational Guidelines within the Directorate and Departments as well as to support the integration of GESI issues within the projects being undertaken by the respective Directorates, under the overall guidance of the GESI Coordinator. One of these will be a GESI officer from one of the projects being implemented within the Directorate.
 - The NEA Subsidiary Company Directorate will nominate one person as a GESI Focal Person, who will be responsible for planning and executing specific GESI actions, as may be required within the Directorate. In addition, each of their projects will have a GESI Officer.
 - The Directorates of Finance will nominate one person as a GESI Focal Person, who will be responsible for planning and executing specific GESI actions, as may be required within the Directorate.

The GESI teams and GESI focal persons will be allocated time from their respective departments so they can work on GESI issues as part of their performance objectives.

- **Project level GESI Officer in Departments:** A GESI Officer, positioned within each project team will be responsible for ensuring that all provisions within the GESI Operational Guidelines, as applicable to the specific project, are implemented.

Figure 1. Institutional structure for mainstreaming GESI in the NEA



The following specific responsibilities are envisaged:

Roles	Responsibilities
NEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse GESI strategy as an organizational policy. • Ensure attention to GESI core values as part of its operations and image. • Ensure adoption and implementation of the GESI approach through the Management Team. • Periodic supervision and monitoring of interventions and results of GESI guidelines.
Organizational level (GESI Coordinator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and conduct periodic orientation sessions on the GESI strategy and Operational Guidelines for staff. • Coordinate capacity building of operational staff, including directorate level GESI teams and project level GESI officers to address GESI considerations in project planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring. • Develop necessary data collection instruments and M&E reporting formats for all levels and for all Directorates based on GESI Operational Guidelines. • Ensure that GESI considerations are properly referred to in the Terms of Reference for Consultants and Contractors. • Support the Administration directorate in the implementation and monitoring of human resource provisions, as suggested in the GESI Operational guidelines. • Prepare an annual work plan and budget on the implementation of the GESI Guidelines. • Liaise, co-ordinate with all directorates, collect and compile, prepare and report to MD • Liaise with the Finance directorate on budget allocation for the implementation of the GESI operational guidelines. • Report to the MD and management on the implementation of GESI Operational guidelines. • Liaise with the Ministry of energy, water resources and irrigation (MoEWR), Department of Electricity Department (DoED), and other Ministries and stakeholders (development partners, user organizations)for advocacy on GESI issues related to changes in policies, acts, regulations and directives, etc.
Directorate level (DMDs, GESI Team/GESI)	<p>In the Directorates of Generation; Transmission; Distribution and Consumer Services; Engineering Services; Planning, monitoring and IT; Project Management and Administration, the respective GESI teams will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the GESI Coordinator to orient the project teams (project manager, team members, GESI Officer) within the various departments on the GESI strategy and operational guidelines.

Focal Person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support project's GESI Officer on the implementation of GESI operational guidelines, through various stages of the project cycle. ○ Review project progress reports from a GESI perspective and share feedback with the GESI Officer and the project manager. ○ Report the implementation status of GESI guidelines in the regular reports to the DMDs and to the GESI coordinator. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the Directorate of NEA Subsidiary Company Monitoring and Finance, the GESI Focal Person will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify specific intervention areas where GESI can be meaningfully incorporated, make necessary arrangements for coordination, and liaise with other Directorates as needed.
<p>Department level/Subsidiary Company</p> <p>(Project Manager and GESI Officer)</p>	<p>At the project level, the project manager will have the final responsibility for the implementation of GESI strategy and operational guidelines within the project. In this task, they will be supported by the GESI Officer, who will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that GESI considerations are included in the Terms of Reference for Consultants and Contractors as applicable. ● Coordinate with the concerned local level stakeholders (municipalities, community based organizations and NGOs as applicable) so that the provisions on the GESI operational guidelines are followed. ● Ensure that the contractors adhere to the GESI-sensitive work condition requirements, as stipulated in their contracts. ● Ensure that the planning processes, including land acquisition, compensation provision, grievance redress mechanism, stakeholder engagement and livelihood restoration are in accordance with the GESI operational guidelines. ● Monitor and report on the status of GESI mainstreaming in the project cycle in the project progress reports.

4. Operational Guidelines for mainstreaming GESI in the NEA projects

4.1 Using the Guidelines

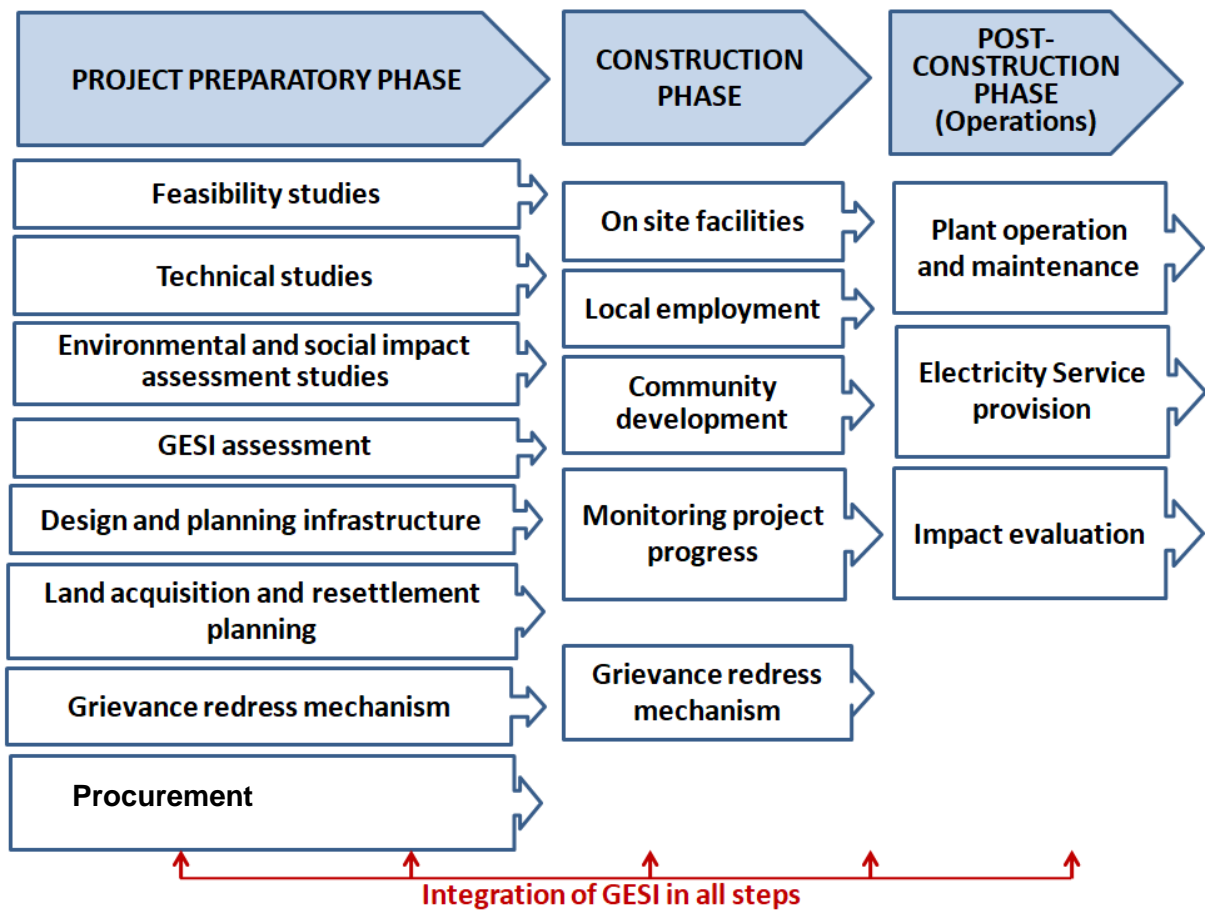
The purpose of the GESI Operational Guidelines is to assist the NEA in integrating a GESI perspective in their functions of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects in the areas of electricity generation, transmission and distribution including community rural electrification.

This section presents concrete measures for the three major phases in the NEA's project cycle: (i) project preparation, (ii) construction and (iii) post-construction (operations).

- The **Project Preparatory Phase** includes the period before the actual project implementation and when designs are prepared.
- The **Construction Phase** is the period from the time a "Notice to Proceed" is given to the Construction Contractor until the issuing of the "Certificate of Completion". During this period, the Contractor implements the project following the agreed design and technical specifications.
- The **Post-Construction (operations) Phase** is the period starting with the issuing of the "Certificate of Completion" issued to the contractor, until the end of the lifetime of the project.

Figure 2 presents a graphic on how each stage in the NEA's project cycle provides opportunities for specific GESI entry points. The Operational Guidelines contain a section on Community Rural Electrification, which is an integral strategy of the NEA. The Guidelines also provide measures to develop a GESI responsive human resource strategy, which is a cross-cutting area that affects operations in all directorates and departments.

Figure 2. The NEA project cycle and GESI entry points



4.2 Guidance for mainstreaming GESI in the project preparatory phase

The project preparatory phase includes the initial reconnaissance studies, pre-feasibility and feasibility, and various other environmental and social studies. In addition to identifying issues that may have potential adverse effects on local communities during project implementation, this period provides an opportunity to prepare the local community for upcoming employment (and other) opportunities that are likely to be created by the project.

From a GESI perspective, the project preparatory phase must accomplish the following:

- Ensure that engagement with the affected people, particularly with the vulnerable, is open and transparent.
- Ensure that the local communities are involved in the planning of infrastructure, so that potential benefits can be maximized and possible adverse impacts, including conflicts, can be minimized.

- Identify women, poor, the vulnerable and other excluded community members, who may be affected adversely by the project, whose interests must be safeguarded and hence, who must be consulted as part of the studies.
- Identify potential stakeholders, with whom the project can potentially collaborate during planning, implementation and post-implementation to maximize the benefits for women, vulnerable and excluded groups.
- Ensure that relevant project information reaches affected women and other excluded and vulnerable groups of the community by using appropriate and effective means.

The above can be accomplished through the various studies and public consultations that occur during the design phase of the NEA projects.

It is suggested to conduct a GESI assessment during the preparatory phase of the project. In addition, specific measures are recommended to ensure that GESI issues are adequately addressed during the various studies conducted during the project preparation.

4.2.1 GESI assessment

Along with other preparatory studies, a GESI study will be undertaken that involves direct consultations with men, women, the poor and representatives from excluded communities. The study may be conducted internally or through consultants with relevant expertise, and will assess:

- In what ways the project is likely to impact the excluded, both positively and negatively;
- What provisions must be made to mitigate the potential risks and negative impacts on the affected men, women, poor, vulnerable and other excluded groups;
- What provisions must be made to ensure equitable distribution of and maximize benefits (from the project) to men, women, poor, vulnerable and other excluded groups; and
- How can the project design/delivery be adjusted to increase the access, use and control of resources and benefits by women and excluded communities.

The assessment findings and recommendations will be used in project design.

Specific issues to examine are as follows:

Needs assessment of affected communities

- Systematically identify women, poor, the vulnerable and other groups who are likely to be excluded and map their priorities. This may include families who are residing or practicing any trade, occupation or vocation in the project-affected area; families who may lose their house, commercial establishment, agricultural land, employment; agricultural laborers and non-agriculture laborers, landless and squatters.
- Include socioeconomic issues in benefit and cost assessments, for example, map whose land will be acquired; will s/he have easy access to full compensation for

the land acquisition, and who are the land owners? Will women have access to the compensation received by the families? If not, what special arrangements need to be made to ensure women also have access and voice over the use of the compensation and decisions regarding resettlement? Who will benefit from increased land value, if any? Who will get more opportunities to use the services made available from the project activities?

- Include an end-use assessment of what electricity services would be most useful for women and the excluded e.g. three-phase electricity for grinding mills, use of rice cookers, sufficient energy for women-led businesses.

Identifying potential risks that may accrue for affected communities

- Would the proposed project likely increase any risks (e.g., job loss, increased workload, human trafficking or gender based violence due to labor influx and forced labor) or have adverse impacts that disproportionately affect women or excluded communities?
- What prevention and/or mitigation measures need to be included to address these?

Assessing potential benefits for the project-affected communities

- Assess whether the project can undertake activities that can contribute to empowering women, the vulnerable and excluded communities? What would be the measures (skill training, creation of community infrastructure, enterprise development), to maximize these?
- Assess what capacities women, poor and the excluded have for participating in the project activities and assess how to maximize the benefits that the project may bring in terms of different employment and livelihood opportunities.
- Conduct a labor survey (with GESI based disaggregation of data) and identify required gender-specific support and support for extremely poor laborers.

Ensuring representation

- Hold interactions with local leaders representing all sections of the community (including excluded groups) and government organizations.
- Identify possible representatives of women and the excluded and include them as spokespersons in various committees.
 - At least one-third of the spaces in committees must be reserved for women and representatives from the excluded community.
 - At least one woman and one person (either male or female) from the excluded groups must be represented in the key posts of the Users Committee.
- Identify government agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), women's groups, traditional authorities, etc. that can be effectively mobilized during project implementation, and assess their capacities.

In data collection, consider the following:

- Include both men and women in the sample population that is covered as part of the studies.
- Formats, questionnaires and checklists for primary data collection must include information requirements regarding issues affecting women, the poor and the excluded.
- Include women as well as persons familiar with the local language and culture, in the team of enumerators.

In consultations with women, keep in mind that:

- Conducting consultations in the local dialect through female facilitators and holding women-only consultations in a participatory mode will give local women a platform to voice their opinions and make them feel free and uninhibited in their discussions.
- Local women leaders, user/working groups and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can be engaged to assist in the process.
- It is important to note that women are not a homogenous group, and extra effort is needed to reach out to the people of various socioeconomic and ethnic groups.
- Holding consultations at a location and time convenient for women's daily schedules will ensure the best possible response and attendance during the assessments.
- Similar attention has to be paid when consulting with the poor and people of excluded groups. Their survival pressures, language/mobility barriers and discriminatory caste/ethnicity social norms may hamper participation.

4.2.2 Integrating GESI in feasibility studies

Pre-feasibility and feasibility studies should include a preliminary assessment of GESI issues as well as cost estimates related to resettlement, rehabilitation, relocation, environmental impact mitigation, and community development. Specifically, these estimates can include costs associated with:

- targeted consultations that may be required to capture the voice of the local women, the vulnerable and people from excluded groups;
- skill building of local women, the vulnerable and the excluded to prepare for upcoming construction opportunities (and others) within the project, and to increase their employment prospects in general;
- providing security and childcare support to women construction workers and women project officers;
- additional counseling that women and the excluded may need regarding the use of compensation money, including supporting them to open bank accounts;

- compensating the poor and excluded for their loss of land and access to common property resources, such as grazing lands or community water sources, and
- monitoring and supervision activities to support project efforts to reach unreached populations.

A provision may be assigned for such costs in the Optimization studies.

4.2.3 Integrating GESI in technical studies

This phase includes initial field investigations, topographical surveys, and hydrological and sedimentation studies.

- In the context of specific projects, encourage survey teams to undertake social mapping to understand people's views on present land use patterns to: (i) understand how land and other resources are likely to be affected by the project, (ii) who among the communities will be most affected, and (iii) how the likely adverse impacts can be mitigated.
- In hydrological and sedimentation studies, the survey teams should consult with local community women and men to get their perceptions and knowledge about floods, droughts and sedimentation.

4.2.4 Integrating GESI in initial environmental examination, environmental and social impact assessment studies

This section provides guidance to ensure that GESI concerns are integrated into the environmental and social safeguard studies that are conducted during the design phase. That is, in a manner that meets the statutory requirements as well as the specific needs of development partners financing these projects. These concerns are related not only to resettlement and construction activities, but also to the potential impacts of socioeconomic changes induced by the project (e.g., owing to an influx of migrant workers, construction of ancillary infrastructure, etc). The general guidance for all environmental and social studies is that:

- Ensure that GESI issues related to safeguards such as relocation, resettlement, labor management, community health and safety, livelihood restoration stakeholder consultation, etc., as well as others such as social and cultural heritage are included in the ToRs.
- Include women members and expertise on GESI in survey and study teams.
- Disaggregate the data collected by sex, caste, ethnicity, disability and income.
- Include specific questions related to GESI concerns, such as about the negative and positive effects of environmental damage and its differential impacts on men, women and excluded communities, as relevant in the survey.
- Design research methodology and data collection tools in a manner that give women, poor and excluded people the opportunity to voice their concerns and issues.

4.2.4.1 Initial Environmental Examination (IEE)/Environment Impact Assessments (EIAs)/ Social Impact Assessments (SIAs)

Preparation of ToRs for IEE/EIAs/SIAs

Before an EIA is conducted, a scoping exercise should be conducted to identify the relevant or significant issues to be examined as part of the EIA. Preliminary discussions are held with relevant authorities, interested parties and affected groups, and based on these, the ToR for an EIA is prepared by the Environment and Social Studies Department (ESSD) or by a consulting firm hired for this purpose. The basic objectives of the ToR are to define what types of information and analysis need to be in the study. The ToR also delineates the relevant issues to be examined, the timeframe, responsibilities, and the reporting structure.

In addition to environmental issues, include GESI issues in the ToR, including those identified in the scoping process. Specifically, the ToR should require:

- An assessment of the potential impacts and risks of the project on women and socially excluded communities, which may be greater in the case of these sections because of their higher dependency on natural resources.
- The identification of necessary measures that reduce negative impacts and maximize potential benefits for local communities and including these measures in the environmental management plan (EMP) and the GESI Action Plan.
- The dissemination of project information, ensuring that the majority of affected women and other excluded groups are reached.

Specific measures to ensure that GESI issues are adequately addressed are as follows:

Preparation for conducting IEE/EIA/SIA

- Before launching the field studies, use available secondary data to identify who (which women and men of which social groups) are excluded and undertake a preliminary assessment of how these barriers will affect their access to services/benefits from the project.
- Ensure the inclusion of gender and social inclusion expertise in the EIA team.
- Ensure that the field teams are familiar with the local socioeconomic issues and cultural norms, and have the ability to communicate in local languages.
- Carry out a review of the ToR from a GESI perspective. The GESI Coordinator can do this.

Conducting an IEE/EIA/SIA

4.2.4.2 Sharing results of environmental and social studies and reporting

- While preparing the EIA report, a public hearing has to be conducted about the proposal to collect opinions and suggestions. When completed, a copy of the approved EIA/IEE is sent to the offices of concerned rural municipalities or municipalities. It is recommended that the following happen for both IEEs and EIAs:

- Conduct public hearings with at least participation of 33% of women and people from excluded groups.
- In case this is not possible in large gatherings, conduct small gatherings with women and the excluded before the last large public consultations so that their inputs can be shared.
- Once the EIA reports are ready, disseminate the EIA results within the affected community.
- In the EIA/IEE report, present disaggregated findings and recommendations addressing issues experienced by women, poor and excluded persons with disabilities (PwD) and propose recommendations for key GESI-related activities.

4.2.5 Integrating GESI in design and planning infrastructure

4.2.5.1 Design and planning of infrastructural facilities

- Identify what assets (land, facilities, others) of women and the excluded are being impacted by the construction of infrastructure, such as a power house, sub-station or if they reside along a transmission line route.
- In alignment of transmission lines, minimize impacts on high-density residential areas by following existing rights of way (ROW) wherever possible, and exploring alternative options.
- Consult local community regarding the locational aspects of access roads, construction camps and its facilities before the contracts are awarded to construct these.
- While planning construction camps, plan and budget for proper facilities for women workers with separate toilets, rooms and childcare space.
- In the planning stage, consult with women's groups/cooperatives and the excluded to identify what possible employment opportunities there are for women and the excluded beyond just unskilled labor.

4.2.5.2 Mapping of electricity needs for future electricity consumers

- Assess the needs, capacities and willingness of local communities, especially the poorest, excluded and women-headed households, to pay for electricity services to be provided by the NEA.
- Assess the potential of providing electricity for businesses and enterprises in newly electrified areas, especially those owned by women and excluded community representatives. In planning, pay special attention to women's businesses that use or may potentially use electricity. Typically, women-owned businesses have less access to property and land for economic activities, and less access to credit needed for business investment, including electricity connection. Women-owned and men-owned businesses will hence have different constraints and also opportunities in developing productive uses of electricity.

4.2.6 Land acquisition and resettlement planning

The NEA's land acquisition and resettlement policies are governed by the Government of Nepal's Land Acquisition Act (LAA), 1977 and its amendment in 1993. Specific measures to ensure that GESI issues are adequately addressed are as follows:

- In identifying the affected people and lost assets, the Project Management Office (PMO) must ensure that the voices of women, poor, the vulnerable and excluded persons among the affected community are heard and their grievances solved.
- Ensure that the Notice containing the project information that will be disseminated is in local language, is easy to understand and uses locally appropriate media (e.g. radio, posters, wall paintings, pamphlets as well as in group interactions).
- Conduct awareness programs for people affected by land acquisition, informing them of the process and their rights.
- Ensure that women are included in the awareness programs even if they are not heads of household.
- Ensure that the resettlement plan includes a separate chapter focused on women, poor and the excluded, outlining the specific constraints faced by them and the specific support required to address these.
- In all committees that the affected communities form to negotiate with the project proponents, ensure that at least one-third of the members are either women or representatives from excluded communities.

In designing compensation strategies:

- Inform both spouses as well as all adult family members fully about compensation amounts.
- Explore whether the compensation amounts to the landowner can be handed in the presence of the spouse. Subject to the consent of the landowner, explore whether the compensation amount can be transferred into joint bank accounts of both spouses.
- In addition to cash compensations, where applicable take into account women's and men's preferences in terms of compensation mechanisms, such as replacement land or alternative access to natural resources rather than only cash.
- Consider the granting of land titles to women, or jointly to couples, where applicable, to protect women's access to assets and land use, and to increase women's voice and bargaining power.
- Take into account other adult female household members. Women residing within larger extended families—such as widows living with their fathers or fathers-in-law—may also be entitled to

compensation and rehabilitation assistance as independent households.

- Invest in financial awareness training for women and men of the project-affected families to educate them about ways to use cash compensation and of the risks associated with cash. This may be done in collaboration with agencies that are already engaged in financial literacy training.

4.2.7 Grievance redress mechanism

Establishing a culturally appropriate and gender-inclusive grievance redress mechanism is required for all contracted workers and laborers as well as affected community members so they can raise their concerns.

- A Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) is established once the land acquisition process is underway or as soon as the project is effective.
- The GRC will consist of representatives of the project management office/project supervision consultant (SC); affected persons; and a third-party (the Chief District Officer or other local body representatives). From the affected communities, the GRC must have a representation of women, poor and excluded, in accordance with prevailing government norms.
- GRC members should be familiar with GESI issues and legal frameworks on the protection of women and excluded.
- Measures should be put in place to make the grievance mechanism easily accessible to all project workers and the affected community.
- Special mechanisms for preventing and responding to sexual harassment and gender-based violence issues should be developed and made functional.
- The grievance mechanism will address concerns promptly, using a simple and transparent process that provides timely feedback (within three weeks) to those concerned, in a language they understand, without any retribution, and will operate in an independent and objective manner. Project staff and workers need to be informed about the grievance mechanism at the time of recruitment. Measures should also be put in place to maintain confidentiality and to protect them against any reprisal for its use.

4.2.8 Bidding and selection of contractors for construction of infrastructure

- During submission of bid, the applications should include a commitment letter to implement GESI action plan. Include conditions for the working environment, safety, security of employees and laborers, gender-based violence, and child labor among criteria for contractor selection, in accordance with the Labor Act.
- Encourage Women-led CBOs to undertake project works which do not require high technical skills (like gabion, maintenance and slope protection, etc.) until they are sufficiently skilled for other tasks.

- Ensure that the project staff and consultants (ESMU, PSC and project officials/staff members) provide full information about the project to the community, including entitlements, project impact, compensation payment schedule and process. The information about the project must be disseminated through designated Public Information Centers, local media (newspaper and/or FM radio) as well as national media.
- Additional measures such as small group gatherings may be required to ensure that women and all local social groups are reached.

In the agreement with the construction contractor, project managers need to ensure that the conditions of contract (CoC) include the following:

- Equal pay for work of equal value, and women's on-the-job health and safety.
- Opportunities for women and the excluded for different kinds of employment.
- Contractors must be warned against any misbehavior with the women of the communities, and labor influx management should be a part of the CoC.

4.2.9 Selection of consulting services for technical support

In projects which offer scope for GESI related activities:

- Wherever applicable, in criteria for evaluating proposals of consultants, include GESI criteria: (a) the consultant's experience in identifying issues impacting women, the poor and the excluded in sector; (b) a methodology for consulting with women, the poor and excluded, and for analyzing disaggregated evidence.
- Wherever applicable, ensure that the technical report prepared by the evaluation committee includes GESI related provisions and requirements. If possible, include persons with expertise on GESI issues in the evaluation committee for technical bids.
- In selection of service providers, encourage the inclusion of women and excluded groups in consulting teams.
- Ask the consultants to provide a letter agreeing to follow the GESI activities as planned by the project.
- Wherever applicable, include GESI responsive deliverables as a part of the consultants' deliverables and allocate the required budget to implement these. Link these deliverables to the consultants' performance evaluations.

4.3 Guidance for mainstreaming GESI in the Construction Phase

The Construction Phase is the period from when the "Notice to Proceed" is given to the construction contractor until the issuing of the "Certificate of Completion". The Contractor is required to implement the project following the technical design and specifications and in accordance with the environment management plan. Specific measures to ensure that GESI issues are adequately addressed in this phase are as follows.

4.3.1 On-site work facilities

- The project management office should provide an orientation to contractors and its staff on GESI related requirements and the legal framework.
- Project managers should confirm on a regular basis that all of the agreed working conditions and procedures regarding the facilities for men and women workers are satisfactorily met during construction work.
- As part of the contracts, the construction contractors must:
 - Comply with core labor standards and/or appropriate labor laws in relation to equal employment opportunities, equal pay for work of equal value, women's on-the-job health and safety, and avoidance of child and forced labor.
 - Provide women-friendly facilities, including separate toilets and hand-washing facilities, resting rooms, stocks of sanitary pads and childcare facilities, in project sites.
 - Provide suitable living accommodation for workers (separate sanitary, washing and sleeping facilities for men, women and families) at construction sites which are remote from their homes, where transportation between the site and their living accommodation is limited.
 - Maximize employment of local, poor and disadvantaged persons for construction purposes to the extent possible, provided that the requirements for efficiency are adequately met.
 - Disseminate or engage appropriate service providers to disseminate information on: i) the risks of sexually transmittable infections, including HIV/AIDS, and ii) to raise awareness of gender-based violence with employees, as well as men and women in the local communities near the project facilities.

4.3.2 Promoting local employment

The project managers should aim to maximize the opportunities for local communities to benefit from the project. In order to do so, they must:

- Encourage civil contractors to provide opportunities for women and the excluded to work as sub-contractors, suppliers, skilled workers and other roles beyond just unskilled labor.
- Set targets for training and, subsequent employment of women and representatives from excluded communities, in consultation with contractors.
- Ensure that in employing local labor, contractors adhere to core labor standards and/or appropriate labor laws in relation to equal employment opportunities, equal pay for work of equal value, and women's on-the-job health and safety.

- Inform local neighborhood communities before construction activities start about the planned civil works and how they could benefit from these.
- In addition to approaching women, actively reach out to husbands and family members of women, and local community leaders, to advocate for women to participate in skill training programs and to undertake employment in jobs that were previously predominantly done by men.

4.3.3 Implementing community development activities

Investments in local area development activities, such as education, skills training, health services, and energy infrastructure projects, can contribute to the project-affected communities' well-being. Further targeting these activities to reach the most disadvantaged groups, including women, can help address gender gaps in human and social development outcomes, as well as reduce social exclusion. If such investments are sensitive to the gender context of the project-affected community, they can contribute to a project's long-term sustainability and indirectly advance gender equality. Conversely, those that ignore considerations of women and the excluded groups lead to missed opportunities.

- With respect to the Environment and Social Unit (ESMU), or Environmental and Social Management Service Provider (ESMSP) that implements the environmental monitoring and social safeguard activities:
 - In the ToR of ESMU/ ESMP, include responsibility of the implementation of GESI focused actions and its monitoring,
 - Mandate the ESMU team to include expertise on GESI issues and aim to include women in the team.
- Provide technical and vocational training for women and excluded community members to promote their employment, e.g., as technicians, in routine operation and maintenance, meter readers, electricians, drivers, etc.
- When hiring consulting firms to undertake community development tasks, state clearly on the proposals and give adequate weightage to firms that have a positive track record of working with communities and mainstreaming GESI. The approach to community development requires close involvement of local women and excluded groups as fieldworkers in the team.

While implementing community development activities,

- Actively seek input from men and women including those representing excluded communities, on the preferred placement of roads, water infrastructure, etc.
- In designing and implementing activities, engage the social section of local government, women's groups, networks, cooperatives, youth clubs and representative organizations of the excluded groups such as Dalits, Madhesis and Janajatis.
- Employ both men and women with pre-existing ties to the local community as well as representatives from excluded communities as liaison officers.

- In the formation of committees such as the Local Consultative Forums, stipulate a representation of affected communities, including the most vulnerable groups and women. Ensure that addressing the needs of women and the excluded is clearly stated in their terms of reference.
- When women are to be involved in public participation activities and committee work, note that their availability (time-wise) may be quite different from that of men. Accordingly, take into account the differences in their daily and seasonal work activities while planning trainings and meetings.
- Encourage skills training and strengthening livelihood options for the excluded and women.

4.3.4 Project progress monitoring

The respective directorates routinely monitor the performance of their projects, verifying and comparing project progress with the scheduled plan. This includes the technical aspects as well as the planned environmental and social safeguard activities and mitigation measures. All NEA progress reports must specifically assess whether (or not) women, the poor and the excluded have benefitted from the project and how to improve their access to resources and benefits. Specifically, include the following in the project progress reports:

- Collect and report on a regular basis progress on GESI indicators (quantitative and qualitative) alongside the progress on technical aspects.
- Include GESI disaggregated data on households benefitting from the services provided under the NEA projects, as part of progress reports. At a minimum, indicators to report on include: (a) Number of jobs (person-days) generated and percentage of total jobs created for men, women and excluded communities, during project implementation; (b) Number of households headed by men, women and excluded communities connected with electricity and level of electricity usage in these; (c) Number of energy based enterprises established or trained (and percentage of total) that are owned or operated by women and by excluded community representatives; (d) Energy consumption by women-owned and male-owned businesses over time (for productive use applications); (e) Participation of women, men and excluded communities in community meetings, public consultations, and trainings; (f) Percentage of women represented in electricity user groups, committees, cooperatives, utility management, energy board, and other decision-making bodies.
- Verify and report on the implementation of GESI provisions in the Conditions of Contract (CoC) for contractors and other service providers, as part of monitoring.
- Include disaggregated data and information regarding the impacts and benefits of project activities on women, poor, the vulnerable and the excluded in project completion reports.

4.4 Guidance for mainstreaming GESI in post-construction, operations and service provision phase

4.4.1 Plant operation and maintenance

- Encourage the allocation of at least 30% of new positions to women and excluded groups in the NEA's operation and maintenance (O&M) project teams.
- Build the capacities of women and excluded groups to carry out routine O&M work at project sites.
- Include GESI responsive deliverables as a part of performance evaluation for O&M work at project sites.
- Provide separate facilities at project sites for women, including separate toilets, rest areas, and childcare facilities.

4.4.2 Electricity service provision

4.4.2.1 Awareness raising on electricity use

- Build awareness among electricity consumers, including men, women and grown up children on understanding electric bills, the process for filing complaints regarding electricity supply, and alternative payment options.
- Ensure that promotional materials are designed in line with the literacy levels of women as well as men, including excluded groups (with focused attention on ensuring that the message of promotional materials reach PwDs), and deal with aspects of connection, safety, and productive uses.
- Promote and inform women and men about these issues through information campaigns via local institutions and other channels, such as local radio, community notice boards, community gatherings, market days, etc.
- Conduct skills training and awareness raising for women to carry out basic maintenance of their electricity systems and appliances.

4.4.2.2 Promote productive use of energy by women and the excluded groups

- In electricity campaigns, include the topic of productive uses of electricity, reaching out to men, women, poor, the vulnerable and the excluded.
- For women, and the excluded interested in using electricity for enterprises, make linkages with other organizations that can provide the range of advisory services needed to build up successful enterprises and businesses (i.e. covering strategic planning, investments, operations/ logistics, financial planning and analysis, marketing and sales and project development, and training).
- Post-intervention, monitor the outcomes of interventions and if there has been an improvement in livelihoods (decide if monetary or another metric).

4.4.3 Impact evaluation

In project impact evaluations, firstly, assess impact by the project activities to the affected people. Then, collect evidence to capture and evaluate differential impact due to performance of activities to women and the excluded. Then after, address those differential impact to women and the excluded with mitigation measures mentioned in resettlement plan. Specifically, examine the following aspects:

- GESI aspects in studies and field investigations;
- Community-level consultations and mechanisms to reach the women and excluded;
- The design and implementation of training and community development programs;
- The level of local employment generated by the project;
- Representation of women and excluded communities in various local committees;
- Project results in relation to the integration of GESI, including which sections of the community are getting electricity connections and which are not, for what purposes electricity is being used, and what bottlenecks/constraints they may be facing in using electricity services from the NEA.

4.5 Community Rural Electrification

The Community Rural Electrification Program enables access to energy for people in the rural areas through grid extension, with the community contributing 10% of the total investment cost for the extension. Once the grid is extended, concerned local entities (whether government or community-led bodies such as community rural electrification entities or CREEs) operate as 'community utilities'. They will buy electricity in bulk from the NEA at a reduced price and sell it to its consumers. The bulk meter is situated at the entry point to the village, and hence all transmission losses up to this point are on account of the NEA. Once a month, the meter is read together by CREE and NEA staff members, and the bulk consumption (time of day tariffs) is invoiced to CREE.

A checklist of GESI responsive process steps in community rural electrification is as follows.

4.5.1.1 Design and planning

- Encourage the participation of a male and female representative from each household, who is also a member of a CREE, during community-level interactions.
- If necessary, conduct separate meetings for men, women and excluded groups to ensure their participation.
- When arranging meetings (timing, venue and duration), take care that the excluded group representatives are not forced to lose their daily wage in order to participate.

4.5.1.2 Implementation

- Create opportunities for the employment for women and the excluded during the implementation phase of the program.

- Ensure equal wages for the same jobs between men and women.
- Conduct on-the-job skill building for women and the excluded, considering possibilities for post-project engagement as well as other employment opportunities in the area of acquired skills.

4.5.1.3 Operations and use of electricity

- Engage women and excluded groups for household wiring with safety and security measures in place.
- Engage women and excluded in the operations of the distribution system as meter readers, or in repair and maintenance at the household level and transformer level.
- Mandatory engagement of women and marginalized groups as members of transformer management committee.
- Promote productive use of electricity.
- Build awareness on electricity use, conservation and safety.

4.5.1.4 Governance of CREEs

In the governing body:

- Mandate a minimum 33% representation of women in the executive body and in at least two key positions. Include an adequate representation of people from excluded groups as per the demographic diversity in the project area.
- Ensure participation of women and people from excluded groups in the periodic meetings.
- Enforce minute taking of meetings where there is attendance.
- Revisit the organizational regulations and norms accordingly.

5. Integrating GESI in the human resource (HR) strategy

The NEA's Administration Directorate is responsible for human resource management, logistical support, public relations enhancement, legal services, and the recruitment and promotion of related activities of the organization. The HR Department has a very important role in GESI mainstreaming, as it is responsible for HR management activities like human resource planning, preparation of job descriptions and job specifications based on job analysis, staff welfare, and disciplinary actions. The NEA has a number of provisions to support women and excluded communities in recruitment and promotion, which have to be followed. This section combines the existing provisions, along with some additional measures.

5.1 Recruitment

As per government provisions of the Civil Service Act:

- Allocate 45% of the new positions to women and people from excluded groups (within this, 33% of the positions will be reserved for women; 27% for Janajati/Adivasi; 22% for Madhesi; 9% for Dalit; 5% for persons with disability and 4% for backward areas).
- When applying for a new position, the incumbent's age on the date of application submission can be maximum 35 years for men and 40 in the case of women.
- Upon joining, women shall serve a probation period of 6 months and men a period of one year.

The following additional measures are recommended:

- Ensure that the vacancy announcements use simple language and are disseminated widely to reach women and men including excluded groups (with focused attention to ensure that the message reach PwDs), including in remote locations.
- Provide basic orientation on sensitivity to gender and exclusion issues to recruitment panels, before conducting interviews. If possible, include a woman be in the panel.
- Ensure that the interview panels do not ask questions which may be perceived as discriminatory or derogatory (e.g. regarding marriage and maternity leave causing problems in office, etc.).

5.2 Promotions

- As per current provisions, women staff, Janajatis/Adivasi, Madhesis, Dalits and persons with disability and those from remote areas shall be eligible for promotion after 3 years of service in the same position. Others will be eligible for promotion after 4 years of service in the same position.
- The NEA shall include GESI topics in all basic and organizational training courses.

5.3 Benefits

The NEA provides a number of benefits to its women employees, in line with the government provisions, which shall be continued.

Transfers: In case both spouses are in service with the NEA, when one is transferred to a certain location, the other may also be transferred to the same district provided there is an opening.

Maternity leave: Provide 90 days of maternity leave to women employees, which can be taken before or after delivery. Provide an additional 6 months of unpaid leave, which can be taken as a continuity of maternity leave. This leave is permitted only twice during the service period.

Mother and childcare leave: Provide 15 days of leave to male staff.

Childcare allowance: Provide a lump sum amount of NPR 5000 per child as a childcare allowance to employees. This allowance may be provided for up to two children. In case both spouses are in service with the NEA, only one of the spouses is eligible for the childcare allowance.

Mourning leave: In the event of the death of a family member, permit 15 days of leave during the mourning period for both female and men staff. In case the husband is in mourning, the wife is allowed mourning leave for 15 days.

Financial support: Establish a fund for the interest and welfare of the staff, which they may use for academic purposes, health, cultural purposes such as conducting mourning rights, critical health treatment, and resolving problems of natural disaster. Any staff can apply for this financial support for themselves or for a family member.

5.4 Promote professional development for women and excluded groups

In addition to the existing provisions, the following measures are recommended to enhance the performance of women and excluded community representatives within the NEA.

- Support women to take on leadership roles in the workplace by providing regular management training, mentoring and networking opportunities.
- Provide career counseling for all women at all levels and for employees from excluded communities, including support staff.
- Provide job rotation for all staff, including women, to provide exposure to different functions.
- Establish a reintegration program to help women returning from maternity leave to transition back into work and their teams.
- Ensure that targeted groups are proportionately represented in technical skills and project management training programs.

- Ensure proportional representation of women and excluded communities in training courses and career advancement opportunities at all levels.

5.5 Providing a GESI-sensitive work environment

5.5.1 Working conditions in the NEA offices

- Make benefits such as leave to look after sick children, flexible working and subsidized childcare available to women as well as men employees and encourage men to take advantage of them.
- Provide appropriate facilities at all worksites and offices responding to gender-based needs, including separate and convenient toilets, rest areas, nursing rooms and medical facilities for women. This must be done regardless of the number of women employees.
- Secure the health and safety of women staff by providing safe transportation, limiting travel that pregnant women are required to do, or giving staff the right to refuse assignments that pose undue risk.
- Consider the possibility of introducing a crèche or contributing to the provision of childcare facilities nearby.
- Consider arranging accommodation during field visits and at project sites for women and Dalit employees who experience trouble in renting houses.
- Ensure the workplace is friendly for persons with disabilities in the offices, to the extent feasible.

5.5.2 A no-tolerance policy for sexual harassment at work

The NEA will establish an anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy that protects staff from discrimination and harassment based on personal characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, among others. In line with The Sexual Harassment at Workplace Prevention Act, 2015 (2071) (“**Sexual Harassment Prevention Act**” or “**Act**”) enacted on February 20, 2015 (Falgun 08, 2071):

- Incorporate the necessary provisions relating to the prevention of sexual harassment as well as gender-based violence into the internal employment rules;
- Build awareness among staff on sexual harassment at workplace and the available response services and referral mechanisms that employees can access ;
- Provide the victims with psychological support and treatment, as required.
- Implement a confidential complaint handling mechanism for complainants to make anonymous complaints;
- Provide information to the victims on the procedure for filing complaints;

- Require staff to sign codes of conduct vowing not to engage in unethical, illegal, abusive or disrespectful behavior towards women and to intervene and report such behavior if they witness it;
- Provide trainings for supervisors and managers on how to recognize and deal with sexual harassment;
- Provide briefings on anti-sexual harassment policies and mechanisms to staff at all levels.

5.6 Monitoring the human resource strategy

The HR department will track the following indicators to assess how the organization is performing in terms of its HR management, and report it to management.

- Clearly articulate GESI responsive objectives in the HR policy on recruitment, promotion, transfer and benefits.
- Include GESI issues in the terms of references and job descriptions of the NEA's managerial positions.
- Design and implement an ongoing training program, which would be available for developing GESI competencies of all staff.
- Include GESI-responsive key performance indicators in performance appraisals at the managerial level.
- Maintain disaggregated data on sex, caste, and ethnicity of the NEA's staff overall and update it annually. This will help to assess progress against the reservation policy in recruitment.

6. Plan for operationalizing the GESI Strategy and Operational Guidelines

In operationalizing these Guidelines, the NEA commits to developing strong organizational support and using essential, available resources to successfully implement the GESI strategy.

Specific actions required to initiate the GESI mainstreaming process for this are as follows:

- Appoint a GESI Coordinator having GESI related academic qualifications and experience within the MD's Directorate.
- Nominate a GESI team comprising of three persons within the Generation; Transmission; Distribution and Consumer Services; Engineering Services; Project Management Directorate; Planning, Monitoring and IT; and Administration and a GESI Focal Person (one person) within the NEA Subsidiary Company Monitoring and Finance directorates.
- Share the GESI strategy across the organization (central office and regional offices) through appropriate channels.
- Familiarize all stakeholders with the roll-out of these guidelines.
- Orientate staff around developing a common understanding of GESI concepts and the mainstreaming of GESI in programs/projects.

Other actions required for the operationalization of the GESI strategy are as follows.

6.1 Planning and budgeting for GESI actions

The NEA's planning and programming systems have to integrate GESI to put it into practice. This section provides guidance on how issues impacting women and the poor and excluded people are to be addressed in planning and budgeting.

- **Project level:** Each project within a directorate, as part of its planning, should include costs associated with additional activities for addressing the concerns of women, the poor and people of excluded groups (such as additional skill building of women as skilled construction workers, heavy equipment operators and for other employment). The GESI Coordinator, together with the Directorate level GESI teams, will provide technical backstopping to the project teams on this task.
- **Directorate level:** Each directorate will consolidate the budgets of the individual projects into the directorate level's annual plan and budget.
- **Administration directorate:** The Administration directorate will estimate required human and financial resources for additional GESI-specific activities, such as GESI training and institutional capacity building, and the resources required for separate toilets and childcare facilities, etc., in the annual budget.
- **GESI Coordinator:** In addition to the project-specific GESI actions, the GESI coordinator will prepare an annual work plan and budget outlining the different

activities mandated by these guidelines including capacity building on GESI for different directorates' or other target groups, as required.

- **Corporate Planning and Monitoring Department:** Within the NEA, the Corporate Planning, Financing and Monitoring Department (within the Planning, Monitoring and Information Technology Directorate) is responsible for the consolidation of the annual planning and related budgeting at the corporate level. Based on the plans and budgets received from the individual directorates, this department will prepare a consolidated annual budget for all of NEA's projects and programs and submit it to the concerned authorities for approval.

6.2 Capacity development roll-out

A key action for the GESI Coordinator is to initiate a process of building the capacity of staff and project partners to implement the GSI strategy in their work. Specifically the following actions will be taken:

GESI team (or GESI Focal Person) in the directorates: The GESI coordinator, in coordination with the Administration Directorate, shall implement trainings of GESI teams within the directorates on the GESI strategy and hold them accountable for achieving the overarching GESI goals.

Capacity enhancement of implementing partners: The GESI Coordinator will assist NEA's partners (consultants, subsidiary agencies) in the roll-out of GESI friendly procedures.

Specific areas for capacity building are:

- GESI related program planning, including the identification of potentially excluded groups; understanding the interests, needs, potentialities of and constraints/barriers faced by the poor, women and other excluded groups; sensitizing and empowering GESI targeted households for equitable benefit-sharing through meaningful participation; and providing economic empowerment training to women and the excluded.
- GESI responsive monitoring, including developing relevant GESI-sensitive monitoring frameworks, indicators, data collection and reporting formats and collecting data that helps assess the impact of the projects supported for women, the poor and the excluded

6.3 Monitoring, review and communicating on the GESI Guidelines

The monitoring framework for GESI will be built into the regular monitoring system of the projects to complement and strengthen it. At the organizational level, the GESI Coordinator will be responsible for the following:

- Preparing an annual report on the implementation of these guidelines covering progress against the roadmap, issues encountered, good practices and lessons learned.

- Reporting progress to the NEA’s Board on an annual basis, highlighting the ways GESI has been integrated in specific projects and in organizational processes, including results, challenges, lessons learned and major observations.
- The NEA’s annual report will include a section on the implementation of GESI mainstreaming. This information will be drawn from the various directorates, and the regional and central offices.
- The NEA will include GESI-responsive language and content, activities (i.e. impact stories) and lessons learned, on its website and in publications.
- The communications team will ensure that the materials and publications positively depict and promote the diversity of the Nepalese population in terms of their age, gender, ethnicity and of persons with disabilities.

ⁱUN-INSTRAW (now part of UN Women), Glossary of Gender-related Terms and Concepts

ⁱⁱADB, 2010. Overview of gender equality and social inclusion in Nepal. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2010. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/32237/cga-nep-2010.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱGovernment of Nepal, 1977. [Land Acquisition Act, 2034 \(1977\)](http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/16293). <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/16293>

^{iv}Government of Nepal, 2017. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines 2017, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport Singha Durbar, Kathmandu.

^vNarayan, Deepa (ed). 2002. Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook. Washington DC: World Bank. . <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/15239>

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^{vii}Government of Nepal, 2017. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines 2017, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport Singha Durbar, Kathmandu.

^{viii}Government of Nepal, 2017. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines 2017, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport Singha Durbar, Kathmandu.

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^xGovernment of Nepal, 1977. [Land Acquisition Act, 2034 \(1977\)](http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/16293). <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/16293>

^{xi}World Bank, 2017. Environmental and Social Framework. Setting Environmental and Social Standards for Investment Project Financing, August 2016. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/383011492423734099/pdf/114278-WP-REVISED-PUBLIC-Environmental-and-Social-Framework.pdf>

^{xii}World Bank, 2013. Operational Manual OP 4.12 - Involuntary Resettlement. December 2001, Revised April 2013. <https://policies.worldbank.org/sites/ppf3/PPFDocuments/090224b0822f89db.pdf>

^{xiii}Government of Nepal 2009. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy of the Local Governance and Community Development Programme. Ministry of Local Development. 2009

^{xiv}Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS].(2011). Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics

^{xv}Kapadia K. 2004. Productive uses of renewable energy: A Review of Four Bank-GEF Projects. Consultant Report to World Bank; 2004

^{xvi}Government of Nepal, 2017. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines 2017, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport Singha Durbar, Kathmandu.

^{xvii}Expanded from World Bank, 2010. Making Infrastructure Work for Women and Men: A Review of World Bank Infrastructure Projects (1995-2009). Social Development Department and Sustainable Development Network, Washington, D.C.: World Bank

^{xviii}World Bank, 2013. Operational Manual OP 4.12 - Involuntary Resettlement. December, 2001, Revised April 2013. <https://policies.worldbank.org/sites/ppf3/PPFDocuments/090224b0822f89db.pdf>