"Environmental Project Implementation Unit" SA

GENDER POLICY

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BACKGROUND

This document outlines a gender policy for the "Environmental Project Implementation Unit" SA (the EPIU). The gender policy set forth below is designed to be integrated with the EPIU's existing policies, practices, and project cycle and is attached as Annex 8 to the Operational Manual of the EPIU.

Gender norms and related cultural rules are part of interactions and reactions to climate threats and opportunities in human systems. By supporting gender equality, supporting women as positive change agents with deep knowledge of adaptation, empowering women in its activities, the organization increases the adaptive capacity of human systems.

EPIU's gender policy builds on the existing gender policies and gender action plans of Adaptation fund, International treaties and documents, as well as Armenian National documents on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality.

The Gender Policy refers to the following key gender concepts.[1]

Gender: refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context and intersects with other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.[2]

Gender Balance: refers to the goal of having the same number of women and men in decision-making bodies and among staff in the different levels of organizational structures.

Gender Equality: refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities and access of women and men and boys and girls and the equal consideration of their respective interests, needs and priorities. Gender equality is not a women's issue

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[1] Definitions are drawn and adapted from the GCF gender policy or the Annex to the GEF Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).

[2] Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (UN OSAGI)

but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is a human rights issue as well as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable, people-centered development.[3]

Gender Equity: refers to the process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls. It recognizes the need for potential differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or historical or social disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms. The process of gender equity leads to gender equality as a legal right and obligation.

Gender Mainstreaming: refers to a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming involves the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the experiences and concerns of women as well as men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated, if necessary through targeted actions to ensure that women's voices as important actors are heard.

Gender responsive: refers to the consideration of gender norms, roles and relations and to addressing inequality generated by unequal norms, roles and relations through changes within a given social setting through remedial action.

Gender sensitive: refers to the consideration of gender norms, roles and relations but does not necessarily address inequality generated by unequal norms, roles or relations through remedial action beyond creating gender awareness.

Women's empowerment: can be best understood as an expansion of agency throughout women's lives, especially via participation and decision-making.[4]

EPIU shall strive to uphold women's rights as universal human rights and to attain the goal of gender equality and the equal treatment of women and men, including the equal opportunities for access to resources and services, as well as all operations through a gender mainstreaming approach.

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[3] UN OSAGI
[4] UNFPA

GENDER POLICY

A. Objectives

The EPIU gender policy has the following objectives:

- To ensure equal approaches to women and men in the EPIU programming;

- To provide women and men with an equal opportunity to build resilience, address their differentiated vulnerability, and increase their capability;

- To address and mitigate against assessed potential project/program risks for women and men in relation to concrete actions;

- To contribute to addressing the knowledge and data gaps on gender-related vulnerabilities and to accelerate learning about effective gender-equal measures and strategies;

- To consult with affected women and men actively, considering their experiences capabilities and knowledge of the situation and processes.

B. Principles

All projects implemented by the EPIU shall be designed and implemented to meet the following principles, although it is recognized that depending on the nature and scale of a project/program all the principles may not be relevant to every project/program.

The gender policy is based on the following principles:

Commitment

EPIU commits to upholding the women's human rights and to contributing to gender equality in line with international human rights instruments, ensuing applicable international and domestic law; to use methods and tools to promote gender equality and reduce gender discriminations and disparities in its operations; and to measure the outcomes and impacts of its activities on women and men's resilience to climate change impacts and their ability and agency to address gender differentiated vulnerability to climate change.

Comprehensiveness in scope and coverage

EPIU shall apply its gender policy to all its activities irrespective of project/program size, whether implemented in cooperation with international, regional or national entities. The policy will be implemented throughout the EPIU operational processes with guidelines to be issued by the EPIU board. EPIU projects and programs will be implemented with an initial assessment, screened for gender responsiveness with gender-responsive indicators at various stages of the project preparation, appraisal, approval and monitoring process by the relevant responsible and bodies.

Accountability

EPIU is accountable for its gender mainstreaming efforts and its gender-responsive results and outcomes, including through regular annual reports in a transparent and comprehensive manner. Gender monitoring for project/program impacts is to be integrated into the EPIU's management frameworks. EPIU shall demonstrate;

- An institutional framework for gender mainstreaming, such as designated expert staff and/or a commitment at highest management level to gender equality;

- Policy and action plans that address gender equality and gender-responsive activities, Ability to undertake socioeconomic and gender assessments, to assess the potential roles, benefits, impacts and risk for women and men;

- An ability to identify measures to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate adverse gender impacts; and/or

- A monitoring and evaluation process that accounts for gender mainstreaming efforts, including the use of gender-disaggregated indicators, and can provide social and gender expert support during project implementation.

- An ability to identify a grievance mechanism, which can be pre-existing, national, local, or institution- or project-specific, able and competent to provide men and women affected by EPIU projects and programs with an accessible, transparent, fair and effective process for reviewing and addressing gender-related complaints and grievances.

Competencies

EPIU shall consider relevant gender expertise and gender balance in the

appointments of its staff members and their designation to serve on the Project/ program decision makers.

Knowledge generation and communication

EPIU shall accelerate learning on the implementation of gender-responsive actions and to contribute to addressing existing knowledge and data gaps, EPIU will document the experiences and knowledge gained from the implementation of its gender policy. EPIU will communicate its commitment to gender equality, its gender policy and related implementation guidance to other stakeholders and the wider public and seek periodic feedback from stakeholders and partners on the implementation of the its gender policy, including possible future improvements.

Review and Revisions

The gender mainstreaming approach set forth in the EPIU gender policy requires sustained commitment and a regular tracking of its progress. EPIU shall adjust its approach in accordance with the experience gained in the implementation of the gender policy.

C. Implementation

The current Gender policy shall be implemented in accordance with the following schedule:

##	Actions	Responsible body	Timing
1.	Approval of the gender policy	Board	November 2019
2.	Update of the EPIU existing operational policies, templates and guidance documents to bring them in compliance with the objectives of the gender policy.	EPIU Management, assigned staff	November 2019- June 2020
3.	Improvement of the EPIU Monitoring and evaluation system in accordance with the Gender policy	EPIU Management, assigned staff	November 2019- June 2020
4.	Development of a roster of gender expert consultants	EPIU assigned staff	Jan-April 2020

5.	Establishment of a Gender Advisory Group with experts drawn from different stakeholders	EPIU Management	April 2020
6.	Enhancement of the staff capacity and expertise	EPIU Management	Ongoing
7.	Review of project/program through gender lenses.	EPIU Management, assigned staff	Ongoing
8.	Alignment of EPIU projects/programs with the national and international gender policies and international women's rights obligations	EPIU Management, assigned staff	Ongoing
9.	Gender-responsive project design, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation	EPIU Management, assigned staff	Ongoing
10.	Technical support and capacity building on gender to executing entities and local communities and stakeholders as needed.	EPIU assigned staff	Ongoing
11.	Regular progress reports to the Donors on the impact of the Gender mainstreaming of the projects/ programs	EPIU assigned staff	Quarterly
12.	Regular progress reports to the Board on the implementation of the gender policy	EPIU Staff	Annually
13.	Active participation in knowledge exchange venues/opportunities on gender and climate change with a focus on joint learning with GEF, GCF and adaptation Fund	EPIU Management, assigned staff	cc Ongoing
14.	Final evaluation of the implementation of the Gender policy in three years	Board	November 2022

The EPIU' management systems include the commitment and capacity to assess and respond to gender risks in light of this gender policy. The EPIU is responsible for screening all projects to determine the extent to which they present gender and discrimination risks, including gender sensitivity and gender responsive budgeting. The EPIU's gender assessment is to be done in accordance with the *Manual on*

Gender Mainstreaming developed by the EPIU for its internal use as well as *Risk Dashboard for Detection and Management of Environmental and Social risks in projects/programs.*

D. Capacity Development

By adopting this policy EPIU commits to organize regular gender training for the staff and partners and to complement its own gender capacity with consultants or through the establishment of a gender advisory group of experts. EPIU commits also on development of the Gender training module and support capacity development activities throughout its operations.

D. Reporting

The reporting through gender lenses is an essential step to ensure that the project management team has the adequate gender expertise, is cooperating with key stakeholders and implementing the project is a way to provide both women and men with equal rights, opportunities and benefits form the project implementation.

For the reporting purposes the following information should be collected, analyzed and reported:

1. *Information on Project implementation team:*

- Sex disaggregated data on project implementation team; comparative analyses of composition – challenges and opportunities; further steps

- Capacity and gender expertise to implement the project effectively, including:

    o Existence of the gender specialist, mains responsibilities

    o Training for women and men at all levels of the project team to ensure gender sensitivity

    o Inclusion of responsibilities for integrating gender aspects at project implementation in job descriptions, terms of references of management, technical staff, and consultants.

2. Information on the work with stakeholders:

It is important that project stakeholders are informed about existing gender inequality and Environmental Project Implementation Unit SA's commitment to address them. This means assessing and creating gender awareness among potential partners, such as civil society groups, and government and private sector institutions. Thus, the following information should be reported:

- Existence of targeted partnerships with civil society / women's advocacy groups;

- Initiatives on targeted capacity development/ gender sensitization for main partners and stakeholders, including government, local self-governance and private sector;

- Initiatives to support and encourage women and men to bring their voice, needs, potential, perspectives, and priorities to project implementation team and decision makers;

- Initiatives to engage and target men as agents of change and champions for gender equality;

- Initiatives to embed project processes within a national or sectoral context, including through capacity building and decision-making processes.

3. Gender mainstreaming efforts:

Even if specific gender-focused activities may not have been elaborated on at the project design phase, developing a gender action plan or framework for gender mainstreaming during and for the implementation is important.

Further analysis on gender-related issues is often required during the implementation phase, including sector-specific analysis/case studies or further assessment of gender opportunities, for the benefit of certain stakeholder groups and/or local communities.

Thus, there is a need to:

- Report on newly planned activities and processes to mainstream gender

- Provide information on the assumptions and information regarding the characteristics, needs, and interests of men and women, taken into consideration at the project design stage

- Provide sex-disaggregated data on project participants and beneficiaries

- Provide information on activities implemented/ undertaken during the reporting period, including gender indicators

- Provide information on processes, and the distribution of resources and benefits

- Provide information about the results - impact /changes the project is achieving in relation to women and men

- Provide information on any challenges or barriers arisen during project implementation hindered the equal participation of men and women in activities, decision-making; existence of any legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women's participation in the project

- Recommendations on:

  o How can the project's results framework be more gender responsive?

  o Adaptive management measures are needed to improve gender mainstreaming and the project's work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment (e.g. mid-term gender analysis; additional gender expertise, etc.)

4. *Gender responsive communication shall be also reported.*

Thus, there is a need to:

- Report on implementation planned communication activities and processes

- Provide information on:

- o other publications, presentations, or reporting paid attention to gender aspects of the project;

- o women's organizations, gender equality advocates, and experts included as sources of information in publications, presentations and reporting

- o publication, presentation, or other form of reporting contain gender insensitive language or perpetuate gender stereotypes

- Provide information about the results - impact /changes the project is achieving in relation to women and men

- Plan next period activities

- Recommend on further improvement of the gender responsive communication

5. *Lessons learnt and further activities shall be also reported.*

There is a need to provide:

- **Detailed Report** – organized by key fields from the lessons learned template and includes responses gathered during the project's cycle.
- **Summary** – a one-page brief summarizing the findings and providing recommendations for correcting the findings.
- **Findings** – a summary of the issues found during the review process.
- **Recommendations** – recommended actions to be taken to correct findings. The approved actions should be documented and tracked to completion. In some cases the approved action may become a project due to high level of resources required to address the finding.