

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy 2012



Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI) STRATEGY

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ACRONYMS

COs	Community Organisations
DDC	District Development Committees
DLGSP	Decentralised Local Governance Support Programme
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
HRC	Human Rights Cells
HRPC	Human Rights Promotion Centre
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IEC	Information Education Communication
IG	Income Generation
IPOs	Indigenous Peoples' Organisations
LPC	Local Peace Committee
LSGA	Local Self Governance Act
MCPM	Minimum condition and performance measure
MLD	Ministry of Local Development
MOWCSW	Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
OBC	Other Backward Community
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RRN	Rural Reconstruction Nepal
VDCs	Village Development committees

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 National Context

Nepal being the member of the United Nation and international community has a signatory of various conventions and instruments i.e., Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ILO convention 169, Convention on Elimination of All kinds of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW), and other 20 International Instruments to protect and promote women and human rights.

Government of Nepal has developed its national laws and policies in compliance with international instruments. The PRSP embodied in the Tenth Plan of GoN has identified gender and inclusion as its main strategy to reduce poverty.

There has been constant effort by the Government of Nepal and other stakeholders (I/NGOs) on GESI issue, and progress is being made for the meaningful participation and empowerment of women, disadvantage groups (DAGs), differently abled people and Dalit in various sectors i.e., political, social, access to productive resources, infrastructures etc. However, more effort is needed to make it effective.

1.2 Institutional Background

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN) has been implementing diverse programmes to address the issue of women, the poor, dalits Janjatis and other disadvantaged groups by organising them in various community/users groups. So far, RRN has completed more than 150 different development projects/programmes on education, health, peace, natural resource management and on social awareness at community level by keeping the GESI component as a mainstream component.

The major focus area of RRN is; protection and promotion of human rights, gender equality and social justice. It has significantly contributed to rural development and socio-economic reconstruction process, by embracing the rights- based, participatory and people centered approaches to sustain-

able development. Since the organisation has incorporated GESI as a cross-cutting component in all its projects/programmes, it aims to further intensify the momentum to strengthen the effectiveness of the GESI component while considering the changing context at national and local level.

To meet the national agenda the following are some of the practices that RRN has been doing:

Organisation's efforts:

- Promoting an equitable society and sustainability of GESI initiatives through advocacy efforts in all its projects/programmes
- Promoting and ensuring effective participation and equitable access to projects/programmes benefits to poor and excluded groups

Organisation's human resources:

- Provision of gender focal person
- Positive attitude and encouragement to female and DAG in recruitment and promotion process
- Capacity enhancement of staff through training on GESI
- Use of gender sensitive languages
- Action against sexual harassment issues

Organisation's facilities:

- Provision of maternity/paternity leave

Programme level:

- GESI mainstreaming in projects/programmes
- Ensure enabling environment for women, the poor and DAGs and encourage their meaningful participation in projects/programmes

1.3 Objectives of GESI Strategy

The following are objectives of GESI strategy:

- Institutionalising GESI in RRN structure and system through policy, approach and projects/programmes
- Facilitate the projects/programmes to implement GESI strategy in an effective way

- Provide guidance to stakeholders for effective implementation of GESI strategy having clear understanding and knowledge

The GESI strategy is a reference document that sets out a consistent intervention to address identified problems or existing situation of inequality and exclusion and mainstream GESI in projects and programmes. The strategy prioritizes actions for GESI mainstreaming and measures progress and setbacks by providing a guiding framework for monitoring and following up on the related interventions. With the implementation of this strategy, RRN will ensure mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion in planning, implementation and monitoring in all projects and programmes.

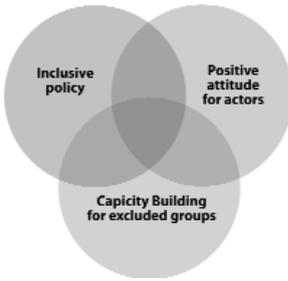
1.4 Conceptual Framework for GESI Mainstreaming

GESI mainstreaming is to integrate GESI perspective in policy, design, approach and implementation to achieve the goal of equality and inclusion in mainstream development agenda. Mainstreaming gives value to differences and diversity by stressing the need to reorganize, improve and assess policy and processes, from equality and inclusion perspective. It includes organising, mobilising, and building the capacity of various groups, networks and alliances of the excluded groups for their empowerment and sensitising of the stakeholders and policy makers at all levels.

Integration of GESI is to bring about extensive change in the social, political and economical sphere through promotion of human rights and effective participation of both women and men, especially socially excluded groups, both qualitatively and quantitatively. To mainstream the strategy, there is a need to intervene and sustain change processes at multiple levels.

Exclusion is the consequence of power relationship that places a person or group at a disadvantaged position; resulting in the reduction of social, political, economic, rights, and the ability and opportunity to access resources and to participate in decision making. Inequities in policies, institution, legislation and the way society functions mean that certain groups of the society are excluded from opportunities and resources because of their social identities. Social exclusion and its multidimensional consequence cannot be dealt without an integrated approach that encompasses explicit policies reforms, effective implementation and monitoring mechanism, collaboration between various stakeholders and intervention at different levels.

Gender equality and social inclusion refer to a societal state where women and men of all social groups enjoy the same status and have equal access to



- Inclusive policies and systems in favor of excluded groups at all levels - clear directions and mandates and clearly articulated rules and procedures.
- Positive change in the attitude and practices of the key actors and institutions. Whatever the policies are, implementers play a significant role on how they interpret the policies and translate them into actions. This constitutes sensitisation, expertise, tools and instruments for GESI mainstreaming into the projects/programmes.
- Capacity development of excluded groups with awareness, knowledge, livelihood means and various other opportunities.

all resources and benefit from all opportunities. It focuses on affirmative actions to create a level playing field between disadvantaged and advantaged women, men and groups based on socially-defined identity and prevailing power relations.

Gender equality means exercising an equal opportunity, empowerment and participation of both women and men in all spheres of public and private life. This does not mean providing girls and boys, women and men, equal treatment in all spheres of society but to recognize that men's and women's living conditions and position are different due to sex and gender role and ensure that these differences should not discriminate against them, but contribute to an equal sharing of power in socio-economic and political processes. Thus, gender equality calls for accepting and valuing the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in society AND change unequal power relationships between women and men, for a better balance in the values and priorities.

Social inclusion is understood as the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of excluded individuals and groups to development opportunities. Social inclusion is the process of outreach to include all sectors of society in planning and decision-making which affects their lives and making space for them to improve their living standards and their overall well-being.

Disadvantaged Groups (DAG): DAG is defined as those people who are discriminated based on gender, caste and ethnicity and are being economically poor.

2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Scope and Coverage of the Strategy

Mainstreaming gender and social inclusion entail being deliberate in giving visibility to, support contributions of and recognize excluded women and disadvantaged groups as equal development partners rather than making assumptions that they will benefit equally. The gender equality and social inclusion strategy will be an integral element that will aid RRN to ensure mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in all components of the projects/programmes. The strategy, besides drawing attention on the need for basic area of intervention to ensure equality and inclusion, will also focus on ensuring that the special needs of women and other disadvantaged groups are fully incorporated in the project/programme. It will comprise goals, objectives, activities, indicators and monitoring measures for ensuring that inclusion of women and other disadvantaged groups are built into the project/programmes.

2.2 Users of GESI Strategy

The main users of this strategy are the RRN and projects/programmes team.

3. CONTEXT

3.1 Existing Situation of Excluded Group

Social exclusion and gender inequality, which has been prevalent in Nepal for many centuries, has been supported and manifested by religious, cultural and political processes. Owing to deep-rooted exclusion and subjugation of excluded groups, uneven geographical development and poor governance, Nepal, in recent times, was caught in a socio-political violence for over a decade. The armed conflict adversely impacted all social groups. The poor and excluded people, especially women, *dalits*, disadvantaged indigenous people and marginalised groups, became the worst victims of the conflict and their already precarious livelihood condition became more severely affected. As a result, many of them had to leave their homes and live their lives as IDPs. A large proportion of the IDPs are still unable to return home for fear of reprisal and inadequate social and livelihood security. Moreover, many of them are bereft of much needed support and have to cope with unhealed psychological trauma on their own.

Patriarchal structure, prevalent in the Nepalese society, has placed women in a discriminated position regardless of class, caste, ethnicity, religion and age. Among the 31 percent of Nepalese who fall below the poverty line, the impact of poverty is more severe on women and girls. A huge income-gap persists between men and women both in terms of opportunities for employment and income generation. Women's common property rights have also been limited in many ways. Daughters lose rights over parental property after marriage. Despite the high average work burden of women, which at 16 hours a day is much higher than the global average,¹ women still lack access to and control over productive resources. Only 10% of women have land ownership while a meager 5.5% own a house of their own.²

An overwhelming gender gap persists in the literacy rate. The literacy rate of six years and above age females at 48.98% is significantly less than male

1 Nepal Human Development Report 2004

2 CBS. (2004-a). Women in Nepal: Some Statistical Facts. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics.

literacy rate of 71.4%.³ Many social, economic, and cultural factors contribute to lower enrollment and higher dropout rates for girls. The limited spread of the modern health care system contributes to high maternal and infant mortality rates. Nepal, which has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the world, has made progress in reducing it to 281 (per 100,000) in 2006 from 530 (per 100,000) in 2001 and is likely to meet the MDG target. However, only 17.7% women give birth to their child in health care facility. The situation of women, residing in rural areas and from the lowest wealth quintile (13.5 and 4.3 percent respectively) is even worse as their access to health facility during the time of child birth is very low.⁴

Women neither have the freedom of marital choice nor do they have fertility choice. Many women still go through unwanted pregnancy and childbirth due to lack of choice and decision-making. The fertility rate of Nepalese women is 3.1. This is higher in rural areas (3.3 births per woman) in comparison to the urban areas (2.7 births per woman).⁵ Gender based disparity in health care is also evident in relation to infant mortality rate (40.2 for girls as against 27.8 for boys); and under 5 mortality rate (112.4 for girls as against 104.8 for boys).⁶

The social attitude towards women, backed by their low socio-economic status in general, has led to many cases of gender-based violence, both in the domestic as well as in the public arena. Ninety-five percent of women surveyed reported firsthand knowledge of some kind of violence of which 77 percent was from their own family members. Such violence was reported across all ethnic, caste, and income group⁷. A total of 5,000 to 7,000 girls/women of 10 to 20 years of age are estimated to be trafficked every year⁸. All these widespread cases of violence remain unaddressed owing to lack of women's bargaining power, under-reporting of violence, scarcity of comprehensive data and the low level of government's commitment to address this issue.

3 Source: Statistical Year Book of Nepal, 2007, Central Bureau of Statistic, GoN

4 Source: Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2006, Ministry of Health and Population, GoN

5 Nepal Demographic Health Survey, 2006

6 Bhadra C Nepal Gender Country Profile, (2006) JICA

7 Country Briefing Paper, Women in Nepal, Asian Development Bank, Programmes Department West, Division 1, December 1999- M. Acharya, P. Mathema, & B. Acharya (citing SAATHI and the Asia Foundation - 1997)

8 Bhadra C Nepal Country Gender Profile, JICA 2006 (citing: Gautam, B. (2002). "Girl Trafficking in the Perspective of Poverty". Information Bulletin: Social Sector Economic Discussion Group, Vol. 4, Dec. 2002. Kathmandu: World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, HDS.

The constituent assembly, with 197 women members which is about 32.7% of the total members, has brought a historical change in the representation of women in the legislative structure of Nepal. However, as only a few of these women are in the decision making positions in their respective political parties, their voice and agency do not find adequate space in decision making structure of political parties. Thus, issues related to women's rights are often diluted by political leadership dominated by men. The interim constitution has also declared 33 percent representation of women in state machinery at all levels. Nevertheless, a mechanism for proper implementation of this provision is yet to be developed.

Despite the abolishment of untouchability and caste discrimination by the New National Civil Code of Nepal (1963), the practice is still a scourge in the society. The *dalit* communities remain marginalised from the State's economic and social services and political opportunities. The living conditions and human development indicators of *dalits* are far below the national average. The poverty index for *dalits* is 47 percent in comparison to the national average of 31 percent. The literacy rate of *dalit* is much lower than the national literacy rate. Among the *dalits*, *Sonars* have the highest literacy rate of 53.7 while *Mushars* have the lowest literacy rate of 6.5 percent.⁹ Women and girls are even more vulnerable than men and boys due to additional gender related obstacles that they have to face. The average life expectancy of *dalit* women is 5 years less than other women. Targeted programmes and policy reforms against caste based discrimination has not been able to change the bitter truth of existence of untouchability and incidence of poverty among *dalits*.

Though challenging these discriminations seemed unthinkable some time ago, the tables have turned as *dalits* backed by their organisational strength and supported by civil society organisations have challenged discriminatory practices to regain their dignity and constitutional rights. The formation of the *Dalit* Commission, which is primarily engaged in the protection of *dalits'* rights, by the Government in 2002, is an outcome of the *dalit* movement.

Indigenous nationalities fall behind the national average in terms of commonly accepted human development indicators. The literacy rate of Indigenous nationalities at 48.8 percent stands below the national average.

⁹ Dalit in Nepal, 2006, National Dalit Commission, Government of Nepal

The literacy rate of women from Indigenous nationalities, estimated to be about 20 percent,¹⁰ is even worse when compared to the national literacy average of women at 48.94 percent. They are also among the most vulnerable to under-employment, migration, bonded labor, child labor and trafficking.

Concrete efforts have not materialised for the protection and promotion of the culture and languages of the indigenous nationalities. Children from indigenous nationality, coming from non Nepali speaking community, are introduced to school and a new language at the same time. As the indigenous nationalities were deprived of education opportunities for ages, their human resource remained less productive and are not in a position to compete with people belonging to the dominant group. Thus, this discriminatory environment perpetuated the domination of the bureaucracy by some privileged classes and restrained the participation of indigenous nationalities in the nation's civil service. Indigenous Peoples' Organisations (IPOs) have emerged in recent times to raise a collective voice for the rights of indigenous nationalities.

Many youths, who have been actively involved in political activism during the conflict period, have become marginalised as political power flows to senior leadership. This led to frustration in a significant mass of young people and resulted in their apathy towards the political system and peace building process.

Out of the 300,000 to 350,000 Nepalese youths who enter the job market every year; only 10 percent are absorbed in the domestic market. More than 100,000 of these youths leave the country in search of jobs and the rest remain without regular employment. With the State's policies unable to dismantle the barriers that exclude youths from the development processes, an environment where there is no work and education for youth to be engaged in the productive sector still persists. Thus their exclusion from the peace process and the transitional structures has weakened the peace process and can also have a negative impact on the national economy.

Nepal, which began a peace process in June 2006, is in a post conflict transitional period of rehabilitation, reconciliation and reconstruction of a society that has endured centuries of discrimination and inequality. Despite

¹⁰ Project document, Inclusion and Empowerment of Janajati Women Project, Nepal Indigenous Women's Federation, 2006

unprecedented political changes¹¹ in recent times, poverty, injustice and poor governance still persist. Civil strife and protests accompanied by frequent *bandhs* (closures) and violence are still common features with various sections of the people, based on ethnic and geographical diversity, demanding the recognition and inclusion of their agenda in the new constitution. The peace and reconciliation process is fragile as mainstream political parties confront each other for a share of power and find it difficult to come to an agreement on contentious issues and sustain consensual polity for the formulation of a new constitution that can address the concerns and guarantee the rights of the excluded groups.

3.2 Policy and Institutional Framework

The Interim Constitution and various past and ongoing social movements of excluded groups for their rights and social justice has succeeded in placing issues of gender, caste and ethnic equality and justice in the forefront of the national agenda and has resulted in a number of significant policy reforms for social inclusion and protection of the rights of excluded groups. In this regard, positive steps have been taken in the form of the Interim Constitution, several legal provisions and policy documents and ratification of international human rights instruments. However, practicing these is a challenge. Though the constitution pledges inclusion and the primary policy document has made it a development priority, discriminatory provisions and practices are still entrenched in the society and are regarded by many as "common and generally accepted norms". The National Action Plan, integration of the Interim Plan and Constitutional provisions into sectoral policy documents, rules and regulations for their enforcement, devolution of authority to the local level and effective monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance are largely missing.

Constitution of Nepal:

The Constitution of Nepal, 1990 forbade discrimination on the basis of sex and advocated special legal provisions to protect and advance the interests of women and other socially excluded groups. Nepal's Constitution (1990) explicitly used the term disadvantaged group acknowledging both their presence and their relative social and economic deprivation.

11 This, among others, includes the election to the Constituent Assembly and the end of the 240 year old monarchy with the formal declaration of Nepal as a federal democratic republic on 28 May 2008 by the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly (CA).

The Interim Constitution, 2007 prohibits discrimination on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion and sex and advocates special legal provisions to protect the interests of women and other socially excluded groups.

Local Governance

The Local Self Governance Act (LSGA), 1999 introduced mandatory representation of women in ward level local government. Similarly, mandatory representation of women and *dalit* in the District Development Committees (DDC) was also introduced. However, with the suspension of the elected local bodies on July 2002, the provision of mandatory representation also remains suspended.

Minimum condition and performance measure: (MCPM) of the DDCs, which are used for formula based grants provided to all DDCs, mainly focus on financial management, planning and programme management, and reporting procedures. Minimum conditions do not include the integration of inclusion aspects in budgeting, planning and reporting. Though the performance measures do include a number of indicators related to GESI¹², the score allotted to these indicators are nominal and DDCs can easily bypass these indicators and still obtain the required score quite comfortably.

Gender responsive budget guideline: The Ministry of Local Development (MLD) has prepared Local Bodies Gender Budget Audit Guideline, 2008, which was approved by the Ministry level decision. The guideline was issued for the promotion of gender perspective in local bodies in line with the provisions of the LSGA, 1999. Local bodies are authorised to adopt it with the approval from their councils. As the guideline has recently been distributed by MLD to all DDCs, the result of its practical application, will take some time to materialize. Further, there also arises a need for a similar guideline on social inclusion.

Act and Legislature

The Gender Equality Bill, passed on 2006, introduced several provisions for protection of women's rights. Under the Act, women's right to ancestral land and property has been established as "daughters" have been included within the definition of "family" having legal rights to ancestral property.

12 i) participation of women, children, civil society, NGO and people with disabilities in annual plan and sectoral committee meeting; ii) budget allocation from internal resources of DDC for elderly, people with disabilities, destitute, dalit, indigenous nationalities; iii) budget allocation for programme

Women are entitled to use movable and immovable property without the consent of male members of the family which was required before. Similarly, marital rape is included within the definition of rape and also as a ground for divorce; and intention to rape includes all forms of sexual harassment (such as physical, verbal, written, gestures etc.) as against only physical harassment which, previously, was the only legal ground for determining intention to rape.

Ordinance on Public Service Commission Act 2008: This Act states that out of the total public services 45 percent post will be allocated to candidates from excluded groups: namely socially and economically backward women, indigenous nationalities, *dalits*, *madhesis*, Muslims, persons with disability and people from backward regions.

Domestic Violence Bill: The bill to combat *domestic violence* against women, which was lingering in *Nepal's* parliament for the past 13 year got through as 'The Domestic Violence and Punishment Act, 2065' in May 2009. This Bill defines physical, mental, sexual, financial as well as behavioral violence as domestic violence. Survivors of violence can file complaints at a police office, local body or Women's Commission within 90 days of facing an act of domestic violence. Hearings on such cases will be held in closed sessions. After this bill, the government has also made a provision to establish service centers for survivors to ensure security, treatment and rehabilitation. Such centers will, among other services, also provide victims with legal aid and psychological counseling.

Policy and Action Plans

The Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007), which was also Nepal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), gave prime importance to address exclusion based on gender, caste/ethnic, and region. It identified social inclusion as one of the four pillars for poverty reduction strategy. It recognised lack of voice, political representation and empowerment as important dimensions that are linked to human development.

The Three Year Interim Plan, 2007/08-2009/2010, the guiding policy document of Nepal in the present context, gives priority to mainstream excluded groups at all levels of the state's structure. For this purpose, a specific strategy has been prepared for mainstreaming excluded groups. Provision of block grant funds has been made for schools to hire bilingual teachers in the first grade and a programme is being piloted that will train and use

bilingual teachers in primary schools in areas where there are significant numbers of non-Nepali speakers.

National Plan of Action on CEDAW 2003, and National Plan Action on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment 2004: The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has prepared The National Plan of Action - 2003 for the effective implementation of CEDAW and other human rights-related instruments. The Action Plan envisages guaranteeing all rights as per the CEDAW covenants. The National Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment also prepared by the of Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare (MOWCSW), covers the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action.

Institutional Mechanism

Nepal was able to establish Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare in the year 1995, after 20 years of the First World Conference on Women in 1975, where the official call for institutional mechanism for the advancement of women was made. The Ministry is responsible for policy making, planning and coordination. After 1995, a number of institutional mechanism and structures has been established to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion at the government, semi government and non government level. Following the formal end to Maoist people's war after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Treaty in 2006, the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction was established in 2007 to take the peace process forward through reconciliation and rehabilitation. Major functions of these institutions are to advocate for and influence policies and formulate and review legislative provisions, provide awareness training and sensitisation and promote active involvement of institutional actors for the rights of excluded groups. However, establishing the legitimacy of their functions and coordination among each other to achieve the goal of equality and inclusion are among the biggest challenges faced by most of these institutions. Weak mandates and insufficient human and financial resources have further complicated the legitimacy of government institutions. Cultural resistance to gender equality and social inclusion has inhibited many institutional actors who consider the mainstreaming mandate as an added imposition rather than a moral commitment.

Commitment: RRN has defined gender equality and social inclusion as one of its main objectives. RRN will issue a 'task declaration' stating clearly its intention to mainstream the GESI perspective into all policies, approaches

and activities, and indicate that the objective is to effectively promote and implement gender equality and social inclusion.

Data base: Data on the existing situation of women and men of all the targeted groups are absolutely necessary for GESI mainstreaming. Statistics will comprise disaggregated data by sex and specific excluded groups targeted by the project. Data will portray relevant disaggregated data on socio-economic condition, caste, ethnicity and region for both women and men in totality and within specific excluded groups.

Knowledge on GESI: For the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy and processes, from GESI perspective, the actors who are involved at the organisational and projects/programmes level need expertise and knowledge of the tools for GESI.

Multi stakeholder mobilisation: Women and excluded groups will not be left alone to 'fight their own battle.' This will slow down the movement for equality and inclusion, which can pick up appreciably when it is able to build coalitions with all stakeholders and reform-minded activists belonging to the dominant groups. Similarly, involvement of both women and men is required to make full use of human resources.

Specific equality policy: To reach the goal of equality and inclusion, mainstreaming is the basic strategy, but the actual discrimination and disparities may be overlooked during the mainstreaming process. Specific gender equality policy is a strategy that directly addresses unfairness and imbalances by taking into account the specific needs of women and men of target groups and on issues that are not covered. For example to increase the participation of women, their responsibility of reproductive role needs to be taken into account by sensitisation of men to share the household chores, technology transfer for time and drudgery saving, and supporting for child care centers etc.

Adequate and flexible resources: Financial resources are unconditional requirement for GESI mainstreaming. Policy for equality entails reallocation of existing funds. Extra time, efforts and activities are needed to reach the disadvantaged groups which calls for allocation of extra budget. Long-term benefits have to be taken into consideration when considering short-term costs of activities for GESI.

4. RRN GESI Strategy

- Regular GESI assessment at organisation and different projects/programmes level
- Ensuring workforce diversity during the recruitment process
 - Ensure an inclusive staff structure: Ensuring that all possible steps are taken to integrate gender balance and inclusion in the composition of projects/programmes staff and board members
- Identification of GESI focal person
 - Link and coordinate all functions/department with the gender focal point: Functions and programmes within different departments and locations (central as well as district level) are linked and coordinated with respective gender focal person.
- Capacity building
 - Provide gender sensitivity training to staff members at all levels: Implementing gender-related activities often face difficulties due to a lack of understanding of gender issues and a lack of seriousness by projects/prgrammes staff. Building capacities of staff members to enable them to understand gender and inclusion as a crosscutting issue needs to be addressed in all elements of the projects/programmes
- Institutional accountability
 - GESI sensitive Job description
 - GESI guidelines/checklist
 - Ensuring gender friendly leave provision in organisational policy
- Promotion of GESI friendly work culture
 - Use of gender sensitive languages
 - Action against sexual harassment issues if any
 - Provision of gender friendly physical facilities

4.1 Operationalising the Strategic Plan

4.1.1 Implementation of GESI Strategy

RRN will give continuous emphasis to develop strong organisational support essential to the success of the GESI strategy. It will evolve with the changing environment by refining the strategy through learning and continuing to build on successful outcomes. However, the effective implementation of the strategy will also largely depend on the effort made and availability of financial resources for some specific activities which are required for the integration of GESI. At the operational level, the implementation of the GESI strategy will primarily focus on:

4.1.2 Institutional mechanism

- For the successful implementation of the GESI strategy, the institutional mechanism will primarily focus on:
- Ensuring that GESI strategy is an integral component of the project in relation to its objectives, approaches by periodic reviews and updates
- Strong commitment of senior management to GESI integration through constant follow up on the GESI result and application of participatory decision-making process that takes into account views and opinions of all staff members. This will be supported by reviews and reflection meetings/interactions, to be held at the district and central level, involving the management team and the project staff
- Ensuring the required number of staff having expertise and/or good knowledge on GESI issues are recruited and direct/facilitate project activities at the community, district and central level
- Ensuring that the GESI strategy is implemented through an accountability framework with well defined roles and responsibilities. Accountability framework is available **in Annex - 2**
- Expanding capacities of staff through training and sensitisation and emphasizing the importance to generate, capture and share knowledge on GESI.

4.1.3 Coordination and partnership

RRN acknowledges the significance of strategic partnership and collabora-

tion with key development actors, including the government, civil society organisations, foreign development agencies and the media, as well as the poor and excluded groups and organisations and their vital roles in addressing the causes of gender inequality and exclusion.

Peoples groups and organisations

The focal point of RRN's interventions will be women, poor and excluded rural people. RRN will place groups and organisation of women and excluded people at the center of all its projects/programmes and treat them as the primary stakeholder. RRN will work in close collaboration with a diverse group of civil society organisations, COs, people's organisations, networks, forums, alliances, rights activists that are engaged in a similar cause.

The Government

RRN acknowledges that the primary role of the Government (local, district, and national) in bringing sustainable change in the lives of women, poor and excluded people. RRN will constantly engage all levels of the Government (National and Local) for ensuring favorable policies and practices on behalf of women, poor and excluded people.

Development agencies

Foreign development agencies, including bilateral and multilateral agencies, with their financial leverage, have been playing an influential role in shaping policies in Nepal's development efforts. RRN will critically engage with these agencies, to influence policies and practices in favor of the poor and excluded people. It will also work in collaboration and partnership with like minded development agencies to implement holistic centered development programmes for women and excluded people

4.1.4 Documentation and publication

RRN will place strong emphasis on proper and quality documentation and publication of its work on gender equality and social inclusion with the view to strengthen institutional memory, share its learning and practices, and promote wider replication of its GESI centered holistic development interventions. Documentation and dissemination of best practices and practical lessons learned backed by meaningful and streamlined knowledge base on the status of men and women of excluded groups will be an ongoing effort.

4.2 Institutional Arrangement

- Identification of Focal Person and designated specific task to facilitate and strengthen GESI component
- Making job description sensitive towards gender and sexual harassment issue
- Response mechanism to address gender and sexual harassment issues if any

4.3 Monitoring of GESI Strategy

4.3.1 Monitoring Mechanism

A GESI responsive monitoring mechanism will be strengthened to ensure that the projects/programmes are being efficiently implemented achieving the set objectives and that the projects/programmes reach the intended target group. It will ensure that the different needs of women and men of excluded groups have been addressed while achieving the projects/programmes objectives.

The GESI monitoring framework will focus on logical framework and result monitoring of the projects/programmes and will be inbuilt in the regular monitoring system of the projects/programmes to complement and strengthen it. The monitoring mechanism will also focus on the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system for application of gender equality and social inclusion perspective by:

- Incorporating gender equality and social inclusion as one of the prime agenda in the review meetings
- Maintaining disaggregated data by sex, class, caste ,ethnicity
- Focusing not only on progress monitoring but also on process monitoring. Checklist of process monitoring is available in **Annex –3**.
- Involving organisations of women and disadvantaged groups, WDO, VDC secretary and local NGOs for qualitative monitoring
- Periodic sharing of common issues and problems among project staff of different districts

- Ensuring close coordination of M&E Division and specific projects/programmes
- Making assessment from gender and social inclusion perspective mandatory in midterm/final review meetings/visits
- Ensuring the proper adaptation of GESI policy/terms as a criteria of Project Staff's performance evaluation

ANNEXES

Annex – 1: List of Documents Reviewed

- Operational manual, Rural Reconstruction Nepal, June 2006
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Strategy, LGCDP, Ministry of Local Development , GoN, April 2009
- Social Mobilisation Mapping, Ministry of Local Development , GoN, 2008
- Disadvantaged Group Mapping, , Ministry of Local Development , GoN, 2008
- Manual for Assessment of Minimum Condition and Performance Measure of DDCs, Ministry of Local Government, GoN, 2008
- Interim Constitution of Nepal 2006
- Three Year Interim Plan, 2007/08 - 2009/2010, National Planning Commission, GoN
- Women in Nepal: Some Statistical Facts. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics.
- Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2006, Ministry of Health and Population, GoN
- Project document, Inclusion and Empowerment of Janajati Women Project, Nepal Indigenous Women's Federation, 2006
- The Question of Inclusion and Exclusion in Nepal Interface Between State and Ethnicity, Paper presented to the Conference on "The Agenda of Transformation: Inclusion in Nepal by Krishna Hachhethu
- Nepal Human Development Report 2004
- Country Briefing Paper, Women in Nepal, Asian Development Bank, Programmes Department West, Division 1, December 1999 by- M. Acharya, P. Mathema, & B. Acharya (citing SAATHI and the Asia Foundation -1997
- Nepal Gender Country Profile, (2006) JICA

Annex – 2: Accountability framework

The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in relation to operation and governance of this projects/programmes are presented hereunder:

Responsible organisation/ Institution	Roles and Responsibility for GESI integration
Regional and District level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring that projects/programmes benefits accrue equitably, regardless of race, creed, religion, language, age, caste or ethnicity of beneficiaries - Ensuring that adequate baseline data are collected in disaggregated form to measure progress towards results - Reviewing GESI strategy and providing feedback for improvement - Establishing coordination with local organisation and networks of women, CAP and excluded group - Ensuring regular interaction of GESI focal point with all other thematic officers
Rural Reconstruction Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure GESI friendly organisational culture - Reviewing GESI results in mid/annual meetings - Ensuring gender balance and inclusive staff structure - Ensuring project staff and other key stakeholders have the required skills, knowledge and personal attributes to contribute to GESI - Reviewing GESI strategy and providing suggestions for improvement, collaboration, and synergy with other programmes/projects - Developing required management, financial planning, human resource as well as communication practice/procedure for effective implementation of GESI strategy Facilitating wider coordination and alliance building to work for common agenda of gender equality and social inclusion - Ensuring regular interaction of GESI focal point with all other thematic groups - GESI disaggregated data recording system - GESI sensitive impact indicators - Collection of qualitative cases for the progress towards GESI

Annex – 3: Checklist for Process Monitoring

Process monitoring assesses the responsiveness of the project implementation process to the needs of both women and men of excluded groups. It is important that GESI sensitive monitoring will define the kind of information to be collected. This involves monitoring of specific issues during project implementation with GESI sensitive indicators to ensure that approaches are being implemented effectively and that targets are being achieved.

The process monitoring will look into:

- The extent of active involvement of target group in the management and implementation of projects/programmes. The key questions:
- Have they been involved in the project implementation team? If yes, to what extent?
- Is this involvement effective? If yes, how?? If no, why?
- Suggestions for improvement?
- Has any affirmative action been taken to include women and the socially excluded in the projects/programmes management, implementation and decision-making positions?
- Has the projects/programmes been collecting, measuring and reporting on both quantitative and qualitative indicators?
- Has the projects/programmes been using participatory approaches while selecting and prioritizing the projects?
- How meaningful was the participation of women and men from excluded groups? Were they able to influence the decision making according to their interests?
- Has the projects/programmes been soliciting feedback and suggestions from women, socially excluded, target groups and other stakeholders while monitoring its activities?
- Does the projects/programmes implementation team include GE/SI experts?
- Has the projects/programmes been focusing on the cultural ,caste, ethnicity, religion and geography related issues that will be dealt while addressing women's needs