

GENDER POLICY

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

THE GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEFINITIONS 3

1. INTRODUCTION 4

2. RATIONALE 4

3. OBJECTIVES..... 5

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES 5

5. REQUIREMENTS 7

6. DISCLOSURE AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION 7

7. GENDER DILIGENCE..... 8

8. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE 9

DEFINITIONS

Gender means 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.

Gender-Based Violence means any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between male and female individuals, including acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering; threats of such acts; and coercion and other deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life

Gender Equality means the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and of girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women and men will be afforded the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

Gender Equity refers to the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure equity, measures often need to be taken to compensate for (or reduce) disparity for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on an equitable basis. Equity, therefore, leads to equality (GCF Gender Policy)

Gender Mainstreaming refers to a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes or projects with a view to promoting equality between men and women, and combating discrimination.

Gender Sensitivity refers to the understanding of the ways in which people think about gender and the sociocultural factor underlying gender inequality, and how they might be addressed. Gender sensitivity implies a consideration of the potential contribution of women and men to societal changes as well as the methods and tools used to: promote gender equity, reduce gender disparities, and measure the impact of climate change and other development activities on men and women

Gender Transformation refers to attempts to change gender norms and promote relationships between men and women that are fair and just

1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Environment (“DOE”) is the overarching National Government Agency responsible for Environmental Management in Antigua and Barbuda. It is the focal point for implementing the Rio Conventions and was accepted as a Direct Access Accredited Entity to the Green Climate Fund (“GCF”) in 2017. It is guided by national legislation of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, and in particular the Environmental Protection and Management Act 2019 which codifies the Rio conventions into national law.

The Gender Policy formalizes the DOE’s commitment to mainstreaming gender nationally and achieving gender sensitivity in all areas. This involves the active and equal involvement of men and women in environmental management and implementation and understanding and mitigating against risks associated with the differentiated vulnerabilities of men and women to climate change events.

As such, the DOE’s Gender policy sets out the principles on which the approach to environmental social safeguards and gender review by the DoE is based and the gender safeguards and requirements that are applicable to each project. The Gender Policy is supported by the DOE’s ESS & Gender Policy, which provides detailed requirements that are applicable and include specifications on the gender considerations in Impact Assessments prepared for projects financed by domestic or international funding.

The Project Management Committee (“PMC”) is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy.

2. RATIONALE

This policy document seeks to implement a gender sensitive approach for the following reasons:

- i. Women and men are impacted significantly by the effects of climate change which has seen an increased vulnerability of both sexes to social and gender inequality and discrimination, gender related violence and poverty, albeit differently due to the economic, social and cultural differences of men and women. In addressing these vulnerabilities through the implementation of projects and programmes designed to combat climate change, the Gender Policy of the DOE seeks to promote the equal and equitable inclusion of men and women in all areas which would allow the DOE to accurately address gender vulnerabilities and risks.
- ii. Men and Women significantly contribute to combating climate change. In recognising the equal contribution of men and women, the Gender Policy therefore promotes the equal inclusion of men and women in environmental management and implementation.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Gender Policy are to:

- Promote a gender-transformative management culture;
- Determine and assess social and gender risks and impacts of projects, including through consultations with stakeholders and vulnerable communities, including women and men;
- Contribute to gender equality and achieve greater and more sustainable environmental and climate change, results, outcomes and impacts;
- Create gender safeguards and mechanisms to mitigate risks and negative social and gender impacts associated with projects;
- Ensure that DOE staff, partners and stakeholders receive training and capacity-building to enable them to mainstream gender into their work;
- Cooperate with partners to build capacity in gender risk mitigation and facilitate implementation of gender and social safeguards, as well as monitoring and evaluation;
- Ensure pro-active implementation of the Directorate of Gender Affairs' internal policy against sexual harassment; and
- Make efforts to achieve gender balance in recruitment and procurement.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This policy is based on 5 key principles:

- (a) Commitment to gender equality, equity and gender-responsive budgeting;
- (b) Inclusiveness and non-discrimination in all DOE activities
- (c) Accountability for gender in environmental and climate change results and impacts;
- (d) Alignment with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda's gender policies, priorities and principles aimed at protecting gender, human rights, and the environment; and
- (e) Equitable resource allocation to ensure that men and women benefit equally at the portfolio level from the DOE's environmental, adaptation and mitigation activities.

The DOE remains committed to promoting social gender and sustainable development through its environmental projects and works to fund projects that yield environmental, socio-economic, and gender benefits.

The Directorate of Gender Affairs, a Division of the Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development, is the national gender machinery and focal agency for gender and development. The Directorate of Gender Affairs works collaboratively with state agencies, private partners and civil society to mainstream gender and improve gender sensitization through all facets of social and public life. The DOE is committed to collaboration with the Directorate of Gender Affairs as

well as gender-oriented non-governmental and community groups in building capacity in the area of gender and climate change.

Additionally, the DOE's approach in terms of gender and social safeguards review and management draws upon relevant legislation of Antigua and Barbuda, and international Conventions to which Antigua and Barbuda is party. These include, *inter alia*, the:

- Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda, which provides for non-discrimination on the basis of gender;
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- The Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act;
- National Strategy Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence for Antigua and Barbuda;
- Sexual Offences Act 1995;
- Domestic Violence Act 2015;
- Offences of the Persons Act 2013;
- Disabilities and Equal Opportunities Act 2018;

In addition to the above, legislation under development include the Social Policy Bill.

The DOE emphasizes the need to be consistent with the principles inherent within the Environmental Protection and Management Act (2019) as well as other relevant approved manuals and policies of the DOE. These include:

- DOE Risk Management Manual and Policy
- DOE Code of Conduct and Ethics for Individuals (2017)
- DOE Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy (under development)
- DOE Stakeholder and Community Consultation Strategy

This policy elaborates on the DOE's approach to meeting gender considerations and mainstreaming based on the guidelines and principles of key multilateral partners, namely the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and the Global Environment Facility, through which the DOE accesses financing. This policy provides guidance with regard to the following:

- Standards and practices related to the gender impact assessment of projects;
- Environmental principles, substantive standards and practices on environmental protection, building regulations, land use development and planning, and enforcement

Through its gender impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation processes, the DOE will seek to ensure that the Projects it finances:

- Maximise gender, environmental and socio-economic benefits to society as a whole and

- to vulnerable communities;
- Minimize negative environmental, gender and socio-economic impacts;
- Include a gender policy and gender impact assessment; and
- Comply with gender, social and environmental standards.

The DOE will not knowingly finance projects which:

- Harm individuals or undermine human rights and gender protections
- Can potentially cause significant negative gender, socio-economic, or environmental impacts; and
- Fail to meet the environmental and social safeguard requirements of the DOE

5. REQUIREMENTS

The DOE respects stakeholder's right to privacy and confidentiality while being sensitive to possible gender, social, and environmental impacts during the development and implementation of its policies, programs and projects.

The DOE requires that all approved projects are non-discriminatory and strives to ensure that environmental, socio-economic and gender benefits, are equitably distributed among community members. To ensure this, the DOE welcomes applications and proposals from vulnerable communities, including youth, women, men, the elderly, differently-abled persons, persons living with HIV/AIDs, farmers, fisherfolk, and those addressing mental health challenges, to ensure equal access and benefits to basic health services, clean water and sanitation, energy, education, training, housing, safe and satisfactory working conditions, and land rights. As much as possible, project interventions strive to build capacity and utilize social entrepreneurship to integrate vulnerable groups into the DOE's processes, not only as beneficiaries/ recipients, but also as social businesses within the procurement process.

6. DISCLOSURE AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The DOE also requires that relevant information on a Project or sub-project activity's environmental, social or gender risks are made accessible and understandable to stakeholders likely to be affected in a fashion that enables them to provide input and offer risk mitigation measures that are integrated within the design and implementation of the project. This is particularly important in projects that may involve land acquisition, economic displacement or involuntary resettlement

The DOE makes projects related to gender as well as environmental and social safeguard information public and is committed to publishing on its website projects and summaries, including those that require Gender and Environmental and Social Impact Assessments, via its information database. Stakeholder engagement plans are disclosed early in project development and summary reports of

consultations are circulated and stored electronically

Women or men who may be affected by a development or donor funded project can communicate their concerns about any gender, environmental, social, or economic performance of the development through the DOE’s complaints mechanism.

Project consultations should be conducted according to the DOE’s Stakeholder and Community Consultation Strategy.

7. GENDER DILIGENCE

The DOE will conduct gender diligence through Gender Impact Assessment (“GIA”) at the overall portfolio level as well as the individual project level for higher risk projects (see Risk Management Policy and Manual of the DOE). Stakeholder consultations will present possible gender and social impacts to local communities and interested persons, in the presence of the DOE and other relevant Government agencies. Concerns of stakeholders are captured and submitted as part of the final report/ statement on the GIA. Development projects are required to appropriately address such concerns prior to formal approval and implementation. Annex 1 and the figure below illustrates the process for screening development projects and conducting portfolio-level as well as project level gender impact assessment.

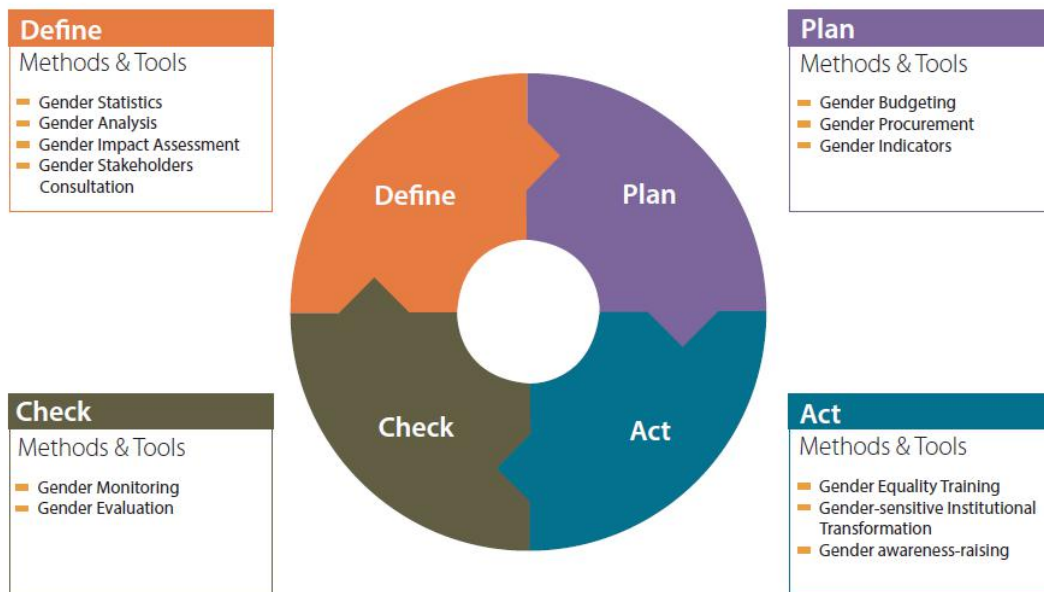


Figure 1. Methodology for conducting a Gender Impact Assessment (Source: European Institute for Gender Equality)

8. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

The DOE produces an annual business plan or programme of activities which is made available for review and assessment feedback reports from ministerial heads and other stakeholders. Internal evaluations are conducted periodically by the Data Management Unit, which also collects sex disaggregated project-specific data, aimed at ensuring gender-equal benefits. These are shared with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Project Management Committee (PMC), as well as other stakeholders. Additionally, donor funded projects implemented by the DOE are externally reviewed by experts.