Namibia Nature Foundation

Gender Policy

October 2024

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Approved by:
This Policy has been reviewed and approved by the NNF Board of Trustees on 19 November 2024.

1. Background

Empowering, enabling and actively engaging women can strengthen local governance structures, improve institutional capacity, which can foster sustainable growth. The exclusion of women in participatory processes and decision-making can lead to mal-adapted solutions and interventions to environmental and socio-economic challenges.

Although gender is only one facet of an individual's identity, it has implications on how individuals can be meaningfully engaged in sustainable development projects. Women and men interact differently with the environment, in many cases do not have the same access to resources and participation in decision-making and thus have different capacities to adapt to changes in the environment. There are often several barriers that limit the meaningful participation of women:

- Institutional and structural barriers such as policies, regulations or specific practices can disadvantage different parts of the population based on gender, age, ethnicity, or wealth, and often impact their access to resources and legal status. The lack of recognition of the rights of women and insecure land access drives inequality and impacts the ability of women to meaningfully engage at various levels. The inequitable control over and ownership of resources can contribute to gender-based violence and lead to the lack of participation of women in the co-management of resources. A lack of gender-disaggregated data can drive bias and exacerbate inequality.

- Cultural barriers are community- or society-driven limitations or customary principles that drive inequality and discrimination. Gender inequality is often deeply entrenched in social norms. These cultural norms perpetuate gender inequality, hinder women's economic empowerment and reinforce traditional gender roles, where women are seen as dependents and men as decision makers. This perpetuates harmful stereotypes and restricts women's autonomy and agency to make decisions about their own lives. When men dominate economic activities and decision-making processes, women are excluded from key opportunities and are limited in their ability to fully participate in economic development. This results in a significant gender wage gap and restricts women's ability to accumulate wealth and assets.

  The consequences of these gender and cultural norms are far-reaching. Women and their children are more likely to experience poverty and malnutrition. They are also more vulnerable to domestic violence and other forms of gender-based

The legal barriers and cultural barriers outlined below can disadvantage women by limiting their opportunities, access to benefits and meaningful engagement to find solutions to their specific problems, which can exacerbate their vulnerability to externalities -such as climate change. To address these issues, it is crucial to challenge and dismantle gender norms and promote gender equality. This includes promoting women's access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Efforts should also be made to ensure women's equal participation and representation in decision-making processes at all levels. Additionally, legal frameworks should be in place to protect women's rights and prevent discrimination based on gender.

2. Policies & Legislative Framework

Namibia has made significant progress in terms of national policies and legal frameworks for gender policy. Several International treaties and agreements promoting gender equality have been ratified by Namibia. These policies aim to address gender inequalities and promote gender equality in various sectors, including education, employment, politics, and health. Some of the key policies and legal frameworks in Namibia for gender policy include:

1. **Namibian Constitution:** The Namibian Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and guarantees equal rights and freedoms for all citizens. It provides a framework for gender equality and prohibits gender-based violence.
2. **National Gender Policy:** The National Gender Policy, launched in 2010, aims to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and social justice. It provides guidance to government ministries and agencies on mainstreaming gender in their policies, programs, and budgets.
3. **National Gender-Based Violence Policy:** The National Gender-Based Violence Policy, launched in 2019, seeks to address gender-based violence comprehensively. It focuses on prevention, protection, prosecution, and provision of services to survivors of gender-based violence.
4. **Affirmative Action Policy:** The Affirmative Action Policy aims to promote gender equality and women's representation in decision-making positions. It includes targets and quotas for women in political representation, public and private sector employment, and educational institutions.
5. **Labour Act:** The Labour Act prohibits discrimination based on gender in employment and provides provisions for equal pay for work of equal value. It also protects women from unfair dismissal due to pregnancy or maternity leave.
6. **Married Persons Equality Act:** The Married Persons Equality Act provides for gender equality within marriage, including equal rights and responsibilities of spouses, property rights, and inheritance.
7. **Combating of Rape Act:** The Combating of Rape Act provides legal provisions to combat and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence. It defines rape broadly and includes provisions for prosecution and support services for survivors.
8. **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy:** The Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy focuses on improving access to reproductive health services, reducing maternal mortality, and preventing gender-based violence.

These policies and legal frameworks demonstrate Namibia's commitment to gender equality and its efforts to address gender-based discrimination and violence. However, challenges remain in terms of implementation, awareness, and changing societal attitudes towards gender roles and stereotypes.

International treaties to which Namibia is a party to under the African Union -

1. Protocol to the African Charter for Human and People's Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol of 2003)
2. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
3. African Charter on Human and People's Rights (Banjul Charter)
4. SADC Declaration on Gender and Development
5. SADC Protocol on Gender and Development

6. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
7. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

3. Scope and Rationale of this Policy

The Gender Policy ensures that the Namibia Nature Foundation embraces a gender-sensitive approach in its operations and in the design or projects and programmes; is committed to equality between women and men; and ensures the empowerment, participation and protection of women, girls, men, and boys. The Gender Policy is linked and applies to all other existing and future policies of the NNF.

The Namibia Nature Foundation acknowledges that gender roles and responsibilities can have a considerable influence on access and control over resources, information, knowledge and decision-making and impacts the ability and capacity to adapt to environmental changes.

Through the Gender Policy the Namibia Nature Foundation:

a) Commits to promoting gender equality and female empowerment in its daily operations, organisational decisions, as well as the design and implementation of projects and programmes.
b) Opposes any form of discrimination, harassment, abuse of power, gender inequity, and sexual exploitation and abuse in the workplace and its projects and programmes. Rules of conduct in this regard and procedures in the case of misconduct are outlined in NNF's Code of Ethics.

NNF's Gender Policy has the following main objectives:

1. To promote an inclusive, non-discriminative, integrated participatory approach to its operations and projects / programmes acknowledging different characteristics, vulnerabilities and needs of individuals and communities.

2. To integrate gender equality and diversity into all of NNF's work including strategic planning, project design and implementation to ensure sustainable outcomes.

3. To actively promote gender equality and raise awareness of the importance of gender equality to achieve development objectives and social change among men and boys to strengthen communities and families.

4. To increase the capacity and ability of women to meaningfully participate in socio-economic, decision-making, and political processes.

5. To adopt a data driven approach and actively collect gender-disaggregated data to enhance decision-making, the design and implementation of programmes and projects, and facilitate adaptive management.

The Policy outlines principles and tools that aim to achieve gender equality, consider the value of contributions of both women and men, and minimise gender-related risks. Key principles include:

- Non-Discrimination: All individuals will be treated fairly and equitably, regardless of their gender, age, disability, race, or any other characteristic.

- **Gender Mainstreaming:** Gender perspectives will be integrated into all aspects of NNF's work, from planning and design to implementation and evaluation.
- **Participation and Representation:** NNF will actively promote gender and social inclusion in decision-making processes and ensure their representation in leadership roles.
- **Safe and Inclusive Environment:** NNF will foster a workplace and project spaces free from harassment, discrimination, and violence.

The Gender Policy applies to all NNF operations, projects and programmes and will be regularly revised to reflect national, regional, and international best practices. NNF Staff, stakeholders and project beneficiaries are encouraged to submit feedback to improve the contents of this Policy and improve NNF's gender-responsiveness.

4. Mainstreaming Gender Equality in NNF Operations

The Namibia Nature Foundation commits to creating a culture that promotes gender equality and addresses gender awareness and responsiveness in its daily operations, governance, and procedures. This includes considering gender sensitivity in NNF's strategy, staffing, structures and processes, incentives and rewards, culture and leadership, and operations / implementation.

NNF's Human Resources Manager will be responsible for guiding administrative and technical staff on the integration of gender equality and meaningful female empowerment in the daily operations of the NNF.

Staff Policies: All NNF staff policies, rules and regulations should promote gender equality, be gender sensitive and will be reviewed periodically. NNF policies establish procedures to avoid bias in human resources management, projects / programmes as well as policies and procedures to punish any form of gender-based violence, harassment, or discrimination.

Recruitment and Staffing: The NNF seeks a gender balance in their staffing. Women are encouraged to apply for all vacancies including management and leadership positions both in the field and at the head office. The NNF will ensure adequate representation of both men and women on the recruitment and interview panels. In addition, the NNF aims to ensure equality and promote participation of women in talent development activities, regularly review salary structures to ensure there is no gender pay gap and commits to create an institutional culture that actively promotes equality.

Performance Reviews: It is important to identify potential unconscious gender biases within the Namibia Nature Foundation to ensure these do not negatively influence NNF's organisational culture and the design and implementation of projects / programmes. Gender sensitivity will be one of the performance indicators for assessing employees.

Work Life Balance: The NNF acknowledges that current work structures are based on traditional family arrangements and that women often have additional responsibilities outside a full working week such as attending to their children and a household. The NNF adopts a flexible approach that is adapted to the individual needs of employees.

Organisational Culture: NNF aims at fostering a culture of gender sensitivity, respect, and inclusiveness through awareness campaigns, workshops, and communication.

Capacity Building: The NNF will organise sensitization and awareness raising events, training programs, and discussions to promote and support a gender sensitive work culture. All NNF Staff - especially those working with communities - should be mindful of gender dynamics and will be capacitated to identify negative dynamics and how to respond to gender-based risks and vulnerabilities in a socially acceptable way -for example through preventative or mitigative strategies in the case of gender-based violence.

5. Mainstreaming Gender in NNF Project Implementation

At the project or program level, the NNF demonstrates its dedication to the integration of gender considerations throughout the entire project lifecycle, encompassing design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The responsibility for embedding gender-responsive practices within project proposals, execution, and oversight rests with NNF's Management, Programme Leads, and Project Coordinators.

This commitment extends to bolstering the capabilities of NNF's workforce. Regular training initiatives will be facilitated for both staff and partners, with the aim of fostering heightened gender awareness and proficiency. By actively engaging in these developmental opportunities, NNF staff will be equipped to adeptly navigate and address gender-related dimensions within projects, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and impactful organizational framework. The NNF will promote education and awareness about gender equality throughout our work with rural communities with customary law practices such as child labour, child marriage and male primogeniture etc.

Mainstreaming gender approaches in programs refers to integrating gender considerations into all aspects of program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. It involves recognizing that gender inequalities exist and addressing them through gender-responsive strategies. There are several key steps involved in mainstreaming gender approaches in programs:

1. **Gender Analysis:** A gender analysis aims to understand the different roles, responsibilities, and needs of women, men, girls, and boys within a specific context. This analysis helps identify gender gaps and inequalities, as well as opportunities for positive change.
2. **Setting Gender Equality Goals:** Developing specific goals and objectives that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. These goals should be integrated into the overall program design to ensure that gender considerations are addressed in all program activities.
3. **Gender-Responsive Program Design:** Integrating gender considerations into program design, activities, target groups, and indicators. This involves ensuring that program activities are designed to address specific gender gaps and promote gender equality outcomes.
4. **Gender-Responsive Implementation:** Implementing the program with a focus on ensuring equal opportunities and benefits for all genders. This includes addressing barriers that may prevent women and girls from fully participating in the program and ensuring that men and boys are also engaged in gender equality efforts.

5. **Gender-Responsive Monitoring and Evaluation:** Developing gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress towards gender equality goals. This includes collecting sex-disaggregated data, measuring gender-specific outcomes, and incorporating learnings into program adaptations.
6. **Capacity-Building and Awareness-Raising:** Building the capacity of program staff and partners to mainstream gender approaches in their work. This includes providing training and resources on gender analysis, gender-responsive program design, and gender-sensitive data collection.

Mainstreaming gender approaches in programs is essential for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. It ensures that gender issues are not treated as separate or secondary concerns but are integrated into all aspects of program planning and implementation.

5.1. Gender Analysis & Gender Action Plan

A Gender Analysis should assess gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities. This includes assessing the legal context and existing customary laws that may lead to an uneven distribution of benefits from a project or programme, and a gender-disaggregated assessment of the costs and benefits of a project or programme to women and men. This will complement the ESMS Screening (outlined in NNF's Environmental and Social Policy), which assesses the potential risk of discrimination within a project, the potential to exacerbate gender inequality and potential adverse impacts of women and girls.

The Gender Analysis is based on a desktop review as well as stakeholder consultations. Some useful resources include the Gender Inequality Index (GII), Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database, Gender Data Portal, Social Institutions & Gender Index, older project reports, and Global Gender Gap (Blue Action Fund 2020). Some national institutions -such as the NSA- also offer gender disaggregated statistics. Stakeholder consultations should be embedded in the project's overall activities and M&E.

The Gender Analysis should include the following main components including guideline questions:

General Socio-Economic, Legal and Political Context of the Project

- *What is the general demographic context of the country the project is implemented in (e.g. population size, household size, cultural background, main economic activities, income and poverty indicators, access to education and education levels, main health issues – all disaggregated by gender?*
- *What social groups will be involved in the project? Are these groups characterised by class, ethnicity, age, female-headed or male-headed, caste, religion, or a combination of these categories?*
- *What kinds of behaviours, responsibilities and obligations of men/women are considered culturally acceptable or not?*
- *Are there any underlying gender related conflicts in the project area?*
- *Are gender issues (including GBV) identified and addressed? How?*
- *Are there any existing initiatives or organisations with similar gender-related work that could be relevant for implementation?*

Gender Division of Work and Gender Roles in the Environment

- *What are the different roles, responsibilities and activities, performed by individuals in the formal and informal economy in the community?*
- *Who manages the household and takes care of children and/or the elderly? How much time is spent doing so?*
- *What impacts are men and women experiencing due to climate change related risk (e.g. food insecurity, displacement)?*
- *What resources do women and men harvest (for food and for income)?*
- *What traditional knowledge and practices do they use? Whose knowledge about resources is valued and respected?*

Gender Access and Control of Resources

- *Who has access to formal education, land and natural resources?*
- *Do men and women have equal access to education and training regarding resource management and climate change adaptation?*
- *Who manages and controls household resources, assets and finances?*
- *What are the different levels of access to/control for women and for men?*
- *What resources do women mostly have control over and where are differences in knowledge?*

Gender Position and Condition

- *What are the immediate, material circumstances in which men and women live (considering present workload and responsibilities? Whose condition does the project improve?*
- *How will benefits be shared? Will the project cause an increase/decrease in women's, children, and men's workloads?*
- *How are women and men involved in community decision making?*
- *Are there measures in place to support women's productive and reproductive tasks, including unpaid domestic and care work?*
- *Are there opportunities to positively transform gender inequality by reducing women's exclusion and leading to equality in development outcomes across communities?*

Gender-Based Violence

- *Are there concerns around GBV in the project area?*
- *How might project activities change or affect gender and other social relationships? Is it possible these interventions could worsen tension and increase or instigate violence, or marginalisation, leading to GBV or other forms of violence?*
- *Are support networks available?*

Strategic Considerations

- *What measures can the project take to mitigate any relevant gender gaps and to ensure benefits for both women and men?*
- *What sex-disaggregated data is available or should be collected by the project to evaluate success / impact?*
- *What data still needs to be collected and how can it be addressed during project planning? How will these gaps be filled during the planning phase?*

The Gender Analysis identifies obstacles to meaningful participation and engagement of women. The Gender Action Plan will then map out strategies to overcome these barriers. The Gender Action Plan can be a stand-alone document or be integrated into project plans (ESMS Plan, M&E Plan and Work Plans, the LogFrame and Theory of Change of a project). Ideally the plan should be developed in close cooperation with key stakeholders and beneficiaries to enhance ownership, raise awareness and ensure solutions are adapted to the local context.

The **Gender Action Plan (GAP)** forms the basis for operationalizing the results and recommendations of the gender analysis. It contains specific gender elements to be considered in the programme design and during the implementation of programme activities. Moreover, it helps to monitor implementation of these measures and activities. The GAP is closely aligned with the outputs of the log-frame and planned activities. It complements the Environmental and Social Policy that already contains gender-related aspects.

The Gender Action Plan includes:

a) Actions to address vulnerabilities identified in the Gender Analysis, and proposes activities to strengthen gender equality in decision making, women's participation and access to resources in project implementation.
b) Clear, realistic gender equality targets linked to project outcomes and outputs are defined.
c) Parties who are responsible for, and own a particular activity are identified, including collaborating partners.
d) Accounting for adequate budget and resources to ensure implementation of gender-responsive activities.

5.2. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement should take Gender concerns into consideration. A stakeholder analysis generally includes identifying stakeholders who have a strong interest and will support or not support the project, key beneficiaries, and those that may be adversely impacted.

When engaging stakeholders, the barriers identified in the Gender Analysis should be considered:

- In some cases, women or youth may feel more comfortable without men. In these cases, separate meetings should be considered.
- The content and language during the meeting should be adapted to knowledge, literacy, and education levels.
- Time and travel constraints must be considered.
- Childcare may have to be provided to ensure women join meetings.

5.3. Monitoring

Monitoring gender mainstreaming, and gender action plans at the project level is part of the Project Monitoring process (See Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Policy). Monitoring formats are mostly determined by the project donor based on the logical framework and indicators agreed on in the project design and approval phase. Institutional-level gender activities are reported to the Management Committee that meets on a monthly basis. Institutional-level gender activities may also be included in Board reporting which takes place on a quarterly basis.

Annex 1: Gender Action Plan Template

GENDER ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

Activity	Target	Responsibility	Time Frame	Budget
Output indicator:				
Activity 1				
Activity 2				
Activity 3				
Activity 4				
Activity 5				