



ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

ROYAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

GENDER EQUALITY

TEMPORARY SPECIAL MEASURES (TSMs)

FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Table of Contents

List of Acronyms	2
List of Tables	4
List of Figures	4
Executive Summary	5
Context for the Feasibility Assessment	7
Rationale for Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) in Public Administration in Bhutan ...	9
What are Temporary Special Measures?.....	9
Figure 1. Selected Instruments that Can Work Together to Promote Gender Equality	11
Examples of Temporary Special Measures include two categorical policies:.....	11
Outreach Programs and Pipeline Policies	11
Numerical Outcome Measures.....	12
Figure 2: Measures Designed to Increase Women’s Numerical Representation in Public Administration.....	12
Global Best Practices for TSMs and their Enabling Environment in Public Administration	13
Leadership Targets	13
Pipeline Policies: Recruitment and Promotion Schemes.....	14
Leadership Capacity Building Opportunities.....	16
Leadership Accountability	17
Work-life Balance and Inclusive Work-Place Measures.....	18
Potential Entry Points for TSMs in Bhutan’s Public Administration.	20
Table 1: Potential TSMs actions for Consideration	23
Annex 1. Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points, National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC).....	28
Annex 2: Sample Terms of Reference for a Gender Focal Point System (GFPS) within a national civil service structure, inspired by best practices from countries like the Philippines, Mexico, and Rwanda.	30

Annex 3: Case of Philippines from Commitment to Results in Gender Equality in Public Administration (developed during the regional workshop in Bangkok by Kim Harold Tamayo Peji and Müge Finkel)	31
Annex 4: Bhutan Civil Service Structure (BSCR 2023)	34
Annex 5: Case Study on Promoting Recruitment and Retention of Women in Male-Dominated Sectors	35
Recourses Reviewed for Bhutan (May 31, 2025)	37

List of Acronyms

APSC – Australian Public Service Commission

BCSR – Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulations

BSCR – Bhutan Civil Service Rules

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CESB – Career Executive Service Board

CGR – Comptroller General’s Office

CSC – Civil Service Commission

GDT – General Department of Taxation

GEPA – Gender Equality in Public Administration

GEWE – Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

GFP – Gender Focal Point

GFPS – Gender Focal Point System

HJPC – High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council

HR – Human Resources

HRC – Human Resource Committee

IMF – International Monetary Fund

ILO – International Labour Organization

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

MCW – Magna Carta of Women

NCWC – National Commission for Women and Children

NGEP – National Gender Equality Policy

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

P1 – Professional Level 1

RCSC – Royal Civil Service Commission

RGoB – Royal Government of Bhutan

SOP – Standard Operating Procedure

TE – Electoral Tribunal

TSMs – Temporary Special Measures

UGPP – Pension and Parafiscal Management Unit

UN DESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UN Women – United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

List of Tables

Table 1: Potential TSMs actions for Consideration.

Table 2: Percent of Women in First and Second-Level Positions

List of Figures

Figure 1: Selected Instruments that Can Work Together to Promote Gender Equality.

Figure 2: Measures Designed to Increase Women’s Numerical Representation in Public Administration.

Executive Summary

This Feasibility Assessment examines the applicability and operational viability of relevant Gender Equality Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) within Bhutan's civil service to accelerate progress of toward gender equality in leadership and decision-making positions. The assessment was undertaken by the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) in partnership with National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), drawing on review of existing civil service policies and practices, administrative practices, consultation with key institutions, national civil service data, and international best practices.

Women account for over 41 percent of the civil service workforce in 2025, yet they hold only 23 percent of decision-making positions. While this reflects notable improvement over the past decade, current trends indicate that further progress towards the GEPA Action Plan target of at least 30 percent women in decision-making positions by 2029 will require additional, targeted interventions.

The assessment finds that the existing institutional and legal framework, including the Civil Service frameworks, including the Civil Service Rules and Regulations (2023) provide a strong foundation for equity and merit-based management, and workplace protection. However, persistent structural and institutional barriers continue to limit women's progression into senior leadership roles.

TSMs represent a lawful, time-bound, and evidence-based set of tools, consistent with Bhutan's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and aligned with the National Gender Equality Policy (2020) and the GEPA Action Plan (2025-2029).

This assessment confirms that relevant TSMs can be implemented within existing policies and management practices. When properly designed and applied, TSMs remain fully compatible with merit-based systems and focus on equalizing access, opportunity, and outcomes rather than lowering standards.

Drawing on global and regional experience, the assessment identifies feasible entry points across five complementary areas:

1. leadership targets and outcome measures;
2. recruitment and promotion practices;
3. leadership pipelines and capacity development;
4. leadership accountability mechanisms; and
5. work-life balance and inclusive workplace measures.

Based on this analysis, the report proposes a menu of practical and incremental TSM options, including progressive leadership targets aligned with GEPA Action Plan, priority consideration in tie-break situations, gender responsive recruitment practices, and fast-track leadership pipelines for potential women leaders, particularly in sectors where women remain underrepresented.

The assessment emphasizes that the effectiveness of these measures depends on strengthened managerial responsibility, systematic use of sex-disaggregated data, and sustained efforts to create safe, inclusive, and supportive work environments across the civil service.

The assessment was conducted between May and December 2025 and is intended to support the implementation of existing national commitments and accelerate implementation of the GEPA Action Plan.

Context for the Feasibility Assessment

Women’s full and effective participation across all levels and sectors of public administration is an essential component of the whole-of-government approach to gender equality. Gender equality across decision-making roles in public institutions expands employment opportunities, enhances productivity, improves the quality of public services, and strengthens public trust in governance. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in its General Recommendation No. 40 (2024), underscores 50:50 gender parity in decision-making as a cornerstone of good governance. Despite women comprising nearly half (46%) of the global public administration workforce, they remain underrepresented in decision-making positions, holding only 31% of such roles globally. Women’s participation declines further at higher levels of authority. Bhutan mirrors this global trend: although women account for 41.3% of its public administration workforce as per the civil service statistics (July 2025), women hold only 23% of decision-making positions. Notably, this marks significant progress, 9% increase from 14% in 2020—yet certain gaps remain.

Royal Government of Bhutan’s Action Plan to Promote Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA) developed under the project “*“Building capacities for promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at national and local levels,”*” a joint initiative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). At the country level the initiative was implemented by UNDP, the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC). The plan identifies three key categories of gaps hindering progress toward further gender equality in the civil service in Bhutan: Institutional and Policy Framework; Human Resource Policies and Practices; and Evidence and Data-Based Analysis. The Action Plan highlights several challenges, including a lack of clear roles, responsibilities, and regular communication between key institutions such as the RCSC, the NCWC, and Gender Focal Points across the agencies. There are also challenges related to limited awareness among civil servants particularly those in leadership roles on gender equality principles and the tools required to promote them, such as Temporary Special Measures (TSMs). Additionally, there is an absence of gender-sensitive human resource management practices across the civil service.

There are compelling reasons for the Government of Bhutan to address remaining gender gaps in decision-making roles across its civil service as identified in the Action Plan to Promote Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA), endorsed by the Commission in May 2024. First, gender equality delivers measurable benefits, not only in the private sector but also within public administration. A growing body of global evidence shows that greater representation of women, particularly in leadership, enhances government performance, improves the responsiveness and effectiveness of public services, strengthens crisis management, and, importantly, builds public trust. Furthermore, public administrations are central to implementing national policies and programs. Ensuring women’s equal participation in public decision-making is a commitment embedded in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which Bhutan ratified without reservations on August 31, 1981. When a government models gender parity in leadership, it sets a powerful precedent, encouraging broader societal shifts toward equality. Finally, in Bhutan, where the government is the second largest

employer of women 41.90¹ after agriculture, promoting gender equality in public institutions has a significant impact—not only on the careers and livelihoods of these women but also on advancing shared prosperity and social equity more broadly. This creates a ripple effect across society, fostering a more inclusive, accountable, and responsive governance system. Ultimately, addressing gender gaps in decision-making in civil service will help realize the Government of Bhutan’s recent commitment to building an **Enlightened Entrepreneurial Bureaucracy** within the next decade, reflecting the diversity, talents, and aspirations of all people.

The Government of Bhutan has taken significant steps to advance gender equality in decision-making roles within its public administration. As one of the four countries participating in the project “*Building capacities for promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at national and local levels*”—alongside Lao PDR, Mauritius, and Senegal—Bhutan engaged in this initiative led by UN DESA in partnership with UNDP from 2022 to 2024. As part of the project’s initial outputs, a national review was completed in 2023, which informed the development of a draft action plan. This plan underwent a national validation process through a stakeholder workshop, followed by further discussion at a regional workshop. In November 2024, Bhutan became the only participating country to formally adopt its action plan.

The GEPA Action Plan (2025-2029) sets targets that align with Bhutan’s National Gender Equality Policy (NGEP) 2020 and the 13th Five-Year Plan (2024–2029), while also supporting the goals outlined in the Royal Civil Service Commission’s Strategic Roadmap (2025–2035). The Action Plan aims to increase the representation of women in Bhutan’s civil service from 40% in 2023 to 45% by 2029, and to raise the proportion of women in decision-making positions from 23% to 30% over the same period. To realize these goals, the Plan outlines a set of priority actions, including TSMs designed to boost women’s participation in public administration at both national and sub-national levels. These measures focus on recruiting and mentoring women into leadership and decision-making roles, while also enhancing the awareness and capacity of managers to implement such initiatives across various government sectors at both national and subnational levels.

This feasibility assessment identifies TSM entry points to address specific gaps identified with the Action Plan. It does not call for legislative or policy changes but proposes several TSMs in human resource practices that the RCSC can implement at its discretion and in communication with NCWC. The feasibility assessment draws on international best practices to raise awareness about TSMs, clarify common misconceptions, and highlight how these measures align with Bhutan’s existing values and frameworks. It outlines strategic interventions to help eliminate institutional barriers, advance gender parity, and promote women’s leadership in public administration to accelerate implementation of the GEPA Action Plan. It aims to support and expedite ongoing progress set on record with the implementation of Gender Equality Strategy in the Bhutanese Civil Service 2018-2023, which set a target of 15 percent women’s representation at the executive level by 2023—an achievement reached ahead of schedule in 2022.

¹ [Civil Service Statistics 2025](#)

Rationale for Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) in Public Administration in Bhutan

Women make up half of the public administration workforce in Bhutan, but they are significantly underrepresented in public administration decision-making positions. This gap indicates the need for deliberate institutional measures to advance gender equality. In line with the NGEF and obligations under CEDAW, closing these gaps and enabling women's full and equal participation in decision-making positions require implementation of three mutually reinforcing approaches rather than single isolated interventions.

- First, **TSMs**, as provided for under Article 4 of CEDAW, including time-bound targets, preferential measures and accelerated promotion schemes are essential to address structural barriers and systemic disadvantages women face in their career progressions in civil service and to ensure de facto equality.
- Second, **leadership responsibility** must be strengthened through clear performance expectations, transparent reporting, and consequences for inaction, ensuring that gender equality is treated as a core civil service governance priority rather than a peripheral concern.
- Third, an **enabling environment** is needed to sustain progress, including gender-responsive human resource policies, safe and inclusive workplaces, work-life balance measures, and equitable access to leadership development, mentoring, and capacity-building opportunities.

Together, these approaches offer a pathway to transformative and sustainable change within the civil service, contributing to a more representative, effective, and gender-responsive public administration in Bhutan.

What are Temporary Special Measures?

Categorically, gender equality TSMs in civil service are targeted actions designed to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between men and women. The term 'temporary special measures' was coined in Article 4 of the CEDAW in 2004 to include a wide array of short-term measures such as "outreach or support program; allocation and/or reallocation of resources; preferential treatment; targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion; numerical goals connected with time frames; and quota systems."

TSMs are deliberate, targeted, and time-bound intervention designed to create access and accelerate progress toward gender equality and address persistent gaps and are discontinued once the intended objectives are achieved. Temporary by design, TSMs address structural barriers, not individual disadvantages, and focus on correcting systemic biases in recruitment, promotion, and career progression that limit equal outcomes, even in formally neutral systems.

A common misconception about TSMs is that they undermine meritocracy by promoting unqualified candidates and that they introduce unfairness. Contrary to this common misconception, when well designed, TSMs are fully compatible with **merit-based systems**. They do not lower standards or bypass competence; rather, they ensure that qualified women are not excluded by biased processes or unequal access to opportunity. Effective TSMs share several design principles:

they have clear objectives and timelines, transparent criteria and communication, and regular monitoring to assess impact and adjust.

Evidence shows that TSMs can improve the quality of candidates and the outcomes of organizations and political bodies. Studies on elected offices show that the inclusion of women through quotas does not necessarily lower the average qualifications of candidates; in some cases, it has led to an increase in the average level of education among elected officials.² Other studies also find that after adoption, quotas have not only influenced women's numbers, the performance and outcomes of decision-making bodies, and broader public attitudes.³ Research focusing on all-women shortlists have found that quotas actually reduce barriers for well-prepared women, leading to competent and active representatives.⁴ Overall, TSMs are a practical and lawful way to accelerate equality while strengthening professionalism and fairness in public administration.

Finally, TSMs are particularly appropriate and more effective when government agencies already have a supportive institutional framework including a well-established mechanism for leadership accountability and an enabling environment. As illustrated in figure 1 below, TSMs can be conceived as informal instruments connected to existing legal and institutional frameworks. They can work in tandem, and with varying levels of formality, to change institutional behavior and social expectations, and increase the effectiveness of existing formal institutional and policy commitments.

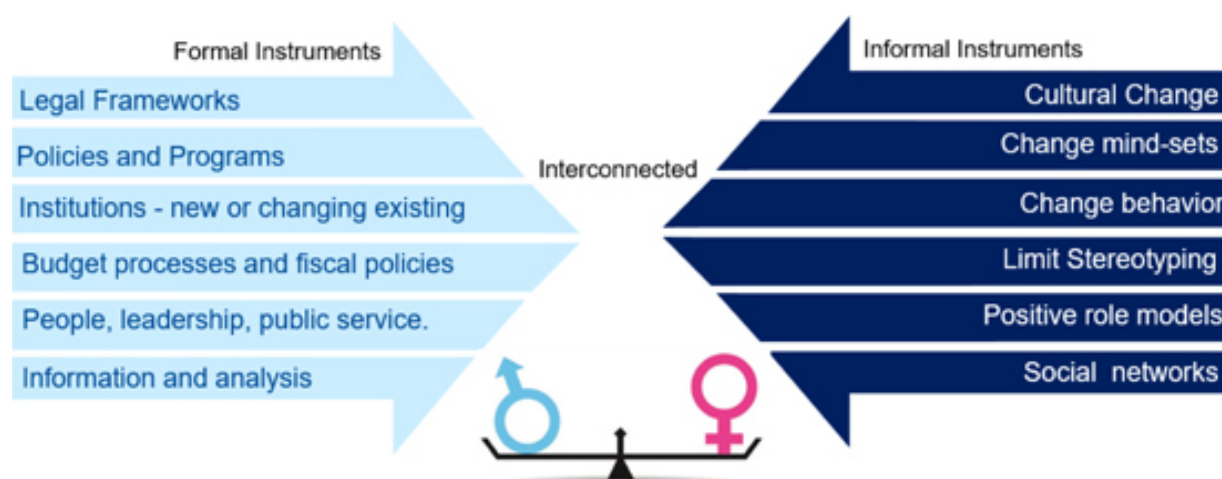
As illustrated in figure 1 below, TSMs are not one-size fit all measures. Instead, a number of interventions can be categorized as TSMs, which themselves are a subset of broader **gender equality measures** that include anti-discrimination policies and bias blockers. Anti-discrimination policies are formal rules and policies that prevent gender-based discrimination in the public administration. These include policies on equal pay for equal value work, clear policies and regulations preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. Bias blockers are intentional procedural safeguards to prevent unconscious gender bias from influencing recruitment, promotions, performance and leadership decisions. For example. use of structured performance appraisal systems and predefined promotion benchmarks, forming gender equal selection panels for recruitment, promotion, and training opportunities.

² Baltrunaite A, Bello P, Casarico A, Profeta P. 2014. Gender quotas and the quality of politicians. J. Public Econ. 118:62–74.

³ Hughes, Paxton, Krook, Annu Rev Sociol. 2017 May 19;43(1):331–352. doi: [10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053324](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053324)

⁴ <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/gender-quotas-do-not-pose-a-threat-to-merit-at-any-stage-of-the-political-process/#:~:text=From%20myths%20to%20realities,transformative%20and%20effective%20policy%20solution.&text=Note:%20this%20was%20originally%20published%20on%20Democratic%20Audit%20UK.>

Figure 1. Selected Instruments that Can Work Together to Promote Gender Equality



Source: IMF Working Papers 2021, 269; [10.5089/9781616354510.001.A001](https://doi.org/10.5089/9781616354510.001.A001)

Examples of Temporary Special Measures include two categorical policies:

Outreach Programs and Pipeline Policies

These include measures used in public administration to accelerate women's entry into leadership and decision-making categories where they remain underrepresented or in sectors where there is no or minimal presence of women. These measures operate within the existing merit-based system and include slight changes in the Human Resource Policies including recruitment and promotion process of senior leadership positions (i.e., by setting either a minimum number for women to be required on short lists, adopting gender-sensitive processes, or establishing gender balanced recruitment committees).⁵

One common form is the **tie-break** or **priority rule**, whereby preference is given to a woman candidate when two or more candidates are assessed as equally qualified for a leadership position/position in sectors where women are under-represented. This ensures that when candidates meet the same merit criteria, gender balance can be used as a deciding factor without compromising standards. Another one is prioritizing qualified and competent women for promotion into senior positions where women are significantly under-represented.

Gender-responsive selection and recruitment policies and practices such as ensuring at least minimum number of women in the shortlisted candidates for leadership positions or in agencies/sectors where women are underrepresented, ensuring gender balanced representation in recruitment and human resource committees, and encouraging qualified women to apply for positions. This also involves revising selection/promotion criteria that unintentionally disadvantage women

⁵ Dahlerup, 2021. Paper Prepared for CSW65 Expert Group Meetings.

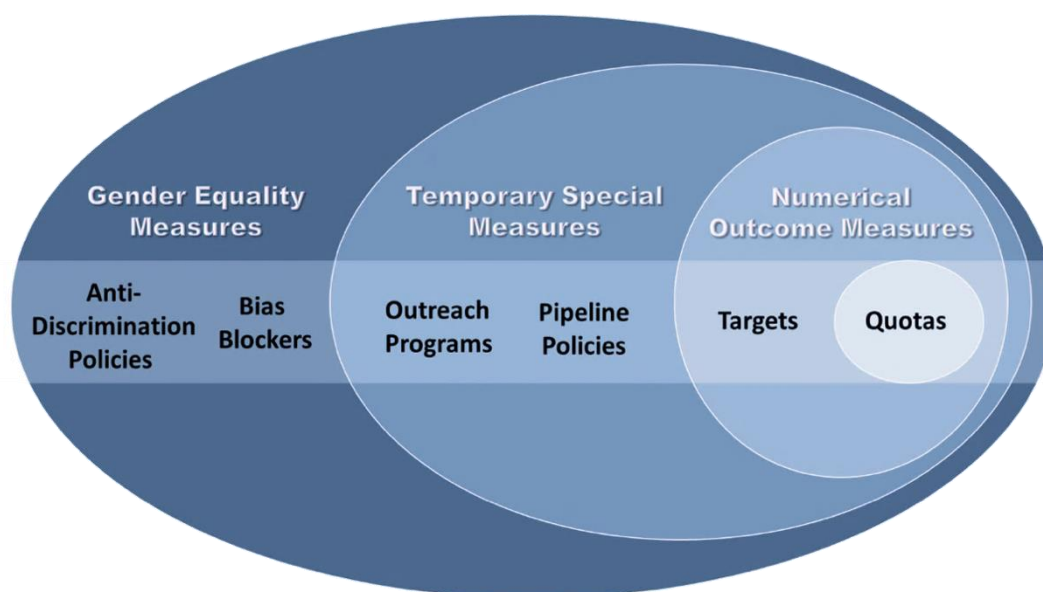
https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/65/EGM/Dahlerup_TSMs_EP3_EGMCSW65.pdf, p.14

Leadership development pipelines are also included in this category of measures, and they serve to identify high-potential women early, provide targeted training, mentoring, and exposure, and prepare them for senior roles more quickly. It often includes structured measures such as leadership academies for women where participants receive intensive training in leadership, or targeted short-term programs including mentoring, networking and workplace coaching designed for aspiring/emerging women leaders.

Numerical Outcome Measures

A specific subset of TSMs include **numerical outcome indicators**—such as **targets** and **quotas**—that define desired levels of women’s representation in public administration using concrete numbers or percentages. Although the terms "targets" and "quotas" are sometimes used interchangeably, they differ in important ways. Gender *targets* are aspirational. In contrast, gender quotas are mandatory and legally binding, often embedded in constitutions, laws, or public policies. At their core, these numerical commitments require that women—or, more broadly, the underrepresented gender—constitute a minimum proportion of a particular level or institutions.

Figure 2: Measures Designed to Increase Women’s Numerical Representation in Public Administration



Source: Finkel & Hughes, Categories and Examples of Measures Designed to Increase Women’s Numerical Representation in Public Administration, 2023.

Closing gender gaps is a complex challenge that goes beyond policy alone. While government policies are essential, achieving gender equality in leadership requires a gradual shift in cultural and societal norms. Governments can enact legislation to combat discrimination and promote gender equality and introduce temporary measures—such as inclusive public employment practices—to support the hiring and advancement of women and to increase the capacities and awareness of senior managers and human resource officials. These efforts not only improve

representation but also help reshape societal perceptions of women's roles. TSMs can be especially effective at this intersection, bridging legal reform with cultural and institutional change.

Global Best Practices for TSMs and their Enabling Environment in Public Administration

This section highlights global examples of temporary special measures in public administrations and the enabling conditions needed to advance the recruitment, development, mentoring, and promotion of qualified women into decision-making roles.

Leadership Targets

Globally, women are severely underrepresented at senior leadership roles in public administrations despite their increased levels of overall participation. A range of leadership focused quotas and targets attempt to undo this gap. As noted above, the main difference between quotas remains at the level of government commitment, whether they choose to make certain numerical commitments legally binding or leave them aspirational.

- i. **The Federal Equal Treatment Act in Austria**, adopted in 1993, includes affirmative action provisions specifically targeting the promotion of women in the public sectors to eliminate the existing under-representation of women, which is defined as less than 50% within a departmental sector or grade level.⁶ Ministers are required to implement affirmative action plans with binding gender targets for their ministries every six years. The quota applies only to top positions in the public sector for equally qualified candidates.
- ii. **The 2013 Sauvadet Law in France** introduced a progressive 40% gender quota for all nominations to top civil service. The increase was enforced gradually on an annual basis, requiring a minimum of 20% (of each gender) of new appointments in 2013-15, 30% in 2015-17 and 40% in 2018, which was successfully reached in 2017.⁷
- iii. **The Malaysian government** adopted a policy in 2014 requiring at least 30 % women decision-makers in the public sector. In 2019, Malaysia became one of the two leading countries in the world with highest numbers of women managers in the public sector with 66 percent in addition to securing 37 percent of women in senior manager positions.⁸
- iv. **The Philippines' Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710)** mandates temporary, special measures to achieve gender quotas within the civil service. The primary goal is to ensure equal (50-50) representation of women, particularly in decision-making and high-level positions where they have historically been underrepresented. (Please see the case study in the Annexes).

⁶ https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/en/themen/dokumente_und_recht/frauenfoerderung/Seite.3440002.html.

⁷ OECD, 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/fast-forward-to-gender-equality-g2g9faa5-en.htm>, p. 102.

⁸ Finkel, Hughes, and Hill, 2021. <https://www.undp.org/publications/global-report-gender-equality-public-administration>, p.49. Malaysia is second only to Lithuania with 68%. GEPA report categorizes decision-makers in public administration in three categories: top leaders, senior managers and managers.

- v. **Colombia's** adoption of a minimum of 30% quota for women in decision-making positions in 2000, allowed the country to achieve and exceed this commitment in 2020 with women averaging 41 percent of positions at the director level.⁹
- vi. Several countries have established quotas for the representation of women in the police including **Liberia**, which instituted a 20% quota for female officers in 2006 and has been making progress towards achieving this. In **Kosovo**, where women were absent from the police, the introduction of a mandatory quota after the war led to a significant increase to 18% by 2007.¹⁰
- vii. Similarly, India imposes mandatory quotas for gender diversity on its public boards and has also implemented quotas at the local government level.¹¹ The Japanese government, on the other hand, has set voluntary targets to increase the number of women in the national civil service, including for senior-level career-track positions.¹² The South Korean government uses a "gender equality quota" for recruitment that allows for the additional hiring of applicants from the underrepresented gender if their numbers fall below 30% of new hires.¹³

Pipeline Policies: Recruitment and Promotion Schemes

These measures include kinds of regulatory requirements to institute changes in the recruitment process of senior leadership positions (i.e., by setting either a minimum number for women to be required on short lists, adopting gender-sensitive processes, or establishing gender balanced recruitment committees).¹⁴ These affirmative action plans have proven effective and helped women 'leap over' the barriers embedded in cultural biases and the traditional recruitment process.

- i. **The Act on the Advertisement of Vacancies in Austria** further stipulates preferential treatment of equally qualified female candidates in public administration units with a percentage of female employees under 50%.¹⁵ Austria has successfully reported an increase from 11% of women in public administration decision-making positions in 2003 to 39% in 2020.
- ii. The Ministry of Women's Affairs in **New Zealand** runs the Nominations Service and maintains a database of women candidates to achieve the mandated 45 % participation of women on all state sector boards and committees. The database identifies eligible women candidates for nominations to state sector board vacancies and includes opportunities for professional support, advice, and tools for women in government careers.¹⁶

⁹ Finkel, Hughes, and Hill, 2021, <https://www.undp.org/publications/global-report-gender-equality-public-administration>, p.59.

¹⁰ <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1063-recruitment-policies-and-measures-.html> (UNIFEM and UNDP, 2007)

¹¹ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1d4402bd-40ce-58d6-a79a-b8f71704f44e/content>

¹² <https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/record-number-of-women-hired-to-japanese-civil-service-but-proportion-remains-low/>

¹³ <https://www.mpm.go.kr/english/system/humanBalance/>

¹⁴ Dahlerup, 2021. Paper Prepared for CSW65 Expert Group Meetings.

https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/65/EGM/Dahlerup_TSMs_EP3_EGMCWS65.pdf, p.14

¹⁵ OECD, 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/fast-forward-to-gender-equality-g2g9faa5-en.htm>, p. 102.

¹⁶ OECD, 2014. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/women-government-and-policy-making-in-oecd-countries-9789264210745-en.htm>, Box 2.14, p. 72.

- iii. **Liberian National Police** reformed their recruitment criteria, which had explicitly and implicitly excluded women through specific height and physical exercise criteria. They adopted public recruitment and awareness raising campaigns and public (e.g., gender-sensitive posters depicting both men and women in uniform) targeting young women to change the public perception that police and armed service work is only for men and increase the visibility of women in high profile security positions. Liberian police force further engaged in a review of the adequacy of uniforms, equipment, and barracks facilities to make sure they are appropriate for both genders of varying sizes and physical conditions, including pregnancy.¹⁷

UNDP's Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions provides further global examples of institutions that have been recognized for their effective and creative strategies to enhance gender equality outcomes.

- i. At the sub-national level, the UNDP Silver Seal awarded to **Municipality of Peñalolén in Chile** (Decree No. 1600/08; 2023) approved recruitment and selection processes for contract and fee-based personnel of the Municipality that promote gender equality. Under this decree, contracting units may recommend whether a vacancy should be filled by a man or a woman, applying an equity-based approach. The Procedure Manual for the Human Resources Management and Development Directorate (pending approval) further seeks to ensure gender-sensitive job postings by regulating the definition of the vacant position, promoting inclusive and non-sexist language, eliminating discriminatory requirements or biases, setting salary ranges, and encouraging the inclusion of persons with disabilities, among other measures.
- ii. **In Guatemala, the Gold UNDP Seal awarded to the Executive Secretariat of the National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction (SE-CONRED) in Guatemala** adopted job vacancy announcements that explicitly encourage women to apply, promoting gender diversity in its workforce. This initiative has shown notable success in a sector that remains highly male-dominated.¹⁸
- iii. **The Comptroller General's Office (CGR) in Peru** was awarded the Gold Seal for having taken steps to encourage greater female participation in its recruitment processes. Job vacancy announcements are shared directly with women's organizations, groups advocating for women's rights, and the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) for further dissemination. Additionally, national legislation supporting the autonomy and professionalization of the Government Auditor Career (Clause 5) 'Regulatory Provisions,' ensures equal access and states that in the event of a tie in merit-based public competitions, preference will be given to women.¹⁹

¹⁷ <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1064-policies-and-measures-to-promote-retention-of-women-.html>

¹⁸ Gender Seal Jurisprudence, Dimension3. 2025.

¹⁹ Gender Seal Jurisprudence, Dimension3. 2025.

Leadership Capacity Building Opportunities

Despite having achieved higher levels of education, women continue to face limitations in upward mobility in civil service. Professional development and leadership training opportunities are offered as stop-gap measures for promotions to managerial levels. These opportunities are significant not only for up-grading of skills and building additional capacities, but also for improving the visibility of employees eligible for promotion and creating venues for networking and mentorship.²⁰ Yet, women's equal access to such opportunities are limited.²¹ When managerial and leadership training programs prioritize women civil servants, they can contribute to women's career advancement by both building managerial capacities of eligible civil servants and challenging stereotypically 'male' image of effective public leaders.

- i. **The State Leads Equally (called *Staten leder jämsst*) Program in Sweden** was implemented with the goal of increasing the percentage of women in management and expert roles in the central administration. The experience underscored the necessity of a political commitment to incentivize agencies to participate. The program ran for 3 years, and 20 government agencies which took part in the training reported improved gender balance at senior management levels.²²
- ii. The **2022-2025 Civil Service Diversity Strategy** in the **UK** adopts a central learning platform for available training opportunities and allows all public servants 5 days of learning, which can be extended at the discretion of the managers. The strategy is also developing a new 'learning journey' for leadership and management programs that reflects on different leadership types and routes. It also incorporates a "Gender Champion," as a position at the highest level across public service to advocate and model gender diversity and inclusion. Gender champions are then replicated at the department levels.²³
- iii. Among the initiatives to help overcome unconscious beliefs of what an effective leader "looks like,"²⁴ and spark a virtuous cycle where women leaders serve as mentors to inspire more women to apply for leadership roles in the civil service is **The Women in the Lead – Leadership, Engagement, Advancement and Development (W-LEAD) Programme in Ireland**. The program was credited for successfully increasing representation of women in senior civil service positions following the 2007-2016 National strategy. As a pilot cross-departmental mentoring and leadership development program, W-LEAD targeted women principal officers in the civil service and assisted them with the development of a personal plan or strategy for career advancement and offered executive coaching.²⁵

²⁰ In order for training of women civil servants for promotion to be effective, it must allow for women's full and equal participation in training. Care should be taken to ensure women are offered equal opportunities for training compared to their men coworkers (Finkel, Hughes, and Hill, 2021); p. 62

²¹ Ibid.

²² OECD, 2014. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/women-government-and-policy-making-in-oecd-countries-9789264210745-en.htm>, p. 73.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ OECD, 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/fast-forward-to-gender-equality-g2g9faa5-en.htm>, p. 106.

²⁵ OECD, 2018. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/toolkit-for-mainstreaming-and-implementing-gender-equality.pdf>, p. 82.

- iv. **British Association for Women in Policing; South Africa Police Service Women’s Network;** and the **United States National Center for Women and Policing** are linked with regional and international associations such as the **European Network of Policewomen** and the **International Association of Women Police**. There are also sector-specific networks emerging, such as the Women in the Security Sector – Sierra Leone and Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association. Such regional and international connections increase the capacities of national or sector-specific networks and provide improved networking and mentoring possibilities.
- v. **The Senate Corporation in Chile** (a stellar example from the UNDP Gender Equality Seal awarded institutions) delivered multiple gender-related trainings in online and in-person formats, ranging from 3 to 18 hours. Courses addressed gender bias in recruitment, leadership with a gender perspective, workplace equity, gender-sensitive budgeting, and inclusion in statistical production. A leadership program specifically targeted women staff to strengthen empowerment and negotiation skills.²⁶
- vi. Similarly, another example if the UNDP Gender Equality Seal awarded institutions, **the Pension and Parafiscal Management Unit (UGPP) in Colombia** delivered gender equality and women’s rights training for leadership and all staff through online sessions. Activities included a 4-hour program on integrating gender into occupational health and safety management for directors and coordinators, and a 3-hour reinduction on gender equality policy for all personnel, with broad participation across the institution.²⁷
- vii. **The Silver UNDP Seal awarded National Institute for Vocational Training and Capacity Building for Human Development (INADEH) in Panama** conducted 23 gender equality awareness sessions on topics, including *Women and New Trends in Entrepreneurship; Peaceful Coexistence and Gender Equity; Youth Employment and the Gender Equality Seal; The Role of Men in Gender Equality; Gender Perspective for Middle Management; Gender Inclusion for Senior Managers; Gender Seal Training; Non-Sexist Language Talk; and Digital Divide Workshop*.²⁸

Leadership Accountability

Managers have a profound impact on an individual’s career progression. Their buy-in and perspectives on gender equality can shape their employees’ access to available opportunities.

- i. In **Spain**, an advanced course of 25 hours on gender equality in the public service has been offered to managers and human resources managers.²⁹
- ii. The **Australian Public Service Commission (APSC)** and the current Public Service Gender Equality Strategy of 2021-2026 highlight leadership and managerial accountability for the pursuit of gender equality in public institutions.³⁰ The strategy

²⁶ Gender Seal JurisPrudence, Dimension3. 2025.

²⁷ Gender Seal JurisPrudence, Dimension3. 2025.

²⁸ Gender Seal JurisPrudence, Dimension3. 2025.

²⁹ OECD, 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/fast-forward-to-gender-equality-g2g9faa5-en.htm>, p. 98.

³⁰ Australian Government, 2021b, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/APSC%20-%20Gender%20Equality%20Strategy.pdf>

calls for leaders to publicize their gender plans and targets, allocate resources, clearly set roles and expectations from employees, and suggest specific KPIs in senior leader performance agreements.³¹

Work-life Balance and Inclusive Work-Place Measures

The public sector is often seen as more women and family-friendly than the private sector, however, having gender-neutral work-life balance policies are often not enough to realize this vision. Intentionally designed gender-sensitive TSMs, including flexible work arrangements, through telework or other hybrid schemes have the potential to affirm gender equality in the workplace and transform the culture into one that is more gender inclusive.³²

The following examples from the UNDP Gender Equality Seal awarded institutions are illustrative:

- i. **The Silver awarded UNDP Gender Equality Seal General Department of Taxation of Mongolia** offers favorable working conditions including flexible and remote working arrangements, that support employees in balancing their professional and personal lives. GDT has established a comprehensive set of employee support measures, including maternity and paternity leave, financial assistance for medical needs, housing, and funeral-related expenses, as well as targeted aid for low-income staff. A formal "Remote Work Regulation" allows flexible work arrangements, and the creation of a children's room reflects GDT's commitment to family-friendly policies and an inclusive, supportive work environment.³³
- ii. **The Bronze awarded UNDP Gender Equality Seal Superintendency of Industry and Commerce (SIC) in Colombia** instituted the 2023 Annual Workplace Welfare Plan which includes measures to promote work-life balance and support employee well-being. Among them are teleworking, institutional transport services, flexible schedules, and family-friendly policies such as reduced hours for pregnant employees, quarterly leave for caregivers of family members with disabilities, and leave for medical or veterinary emergencies. Employees may also choose from multiple workday schedules, such as 7:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. or 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.³⁴
- iii. **In Bosnia Herzegovina, the Silver Seal awarded High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC)** adopted a comprehensive Rulebook governing working conditions, which includes provisions for maternity and paternity leave, leave for caring for children with disabilities, and unpaid leave (up to 3 months, or 5 months over a two-year period). Distributed to all staff, the Rulebook goes beyond legal requirements by

³¹ Australian Government, 2021b, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/APSC%20-%20Gender%20Equality%20Strategy.pdf>

³² Sweden has made part-time possible for both senior and general civil servants working in public administration and introduced "working time based on trust" where senior civil servants can make their own choices about working time. However, managers working under this arrangement cannot be compensated for overtime because they do not have fixed work hours. OECD, 2014. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/women-government-and-policy-making-in-oecd-countries-9789264210745-en.htm>, Box 2.16, p. 74.

³³ General Department of Taxation -GDT- Mongolia, External Evaluation Report, May 2025

³⁴ Gender Seal JurisPrudence, Dimension3. 2025.

- allowing flexible and part-time work arrangements and grants additional annual leave based on family circumstances, such as single parenthood or having children under the age of 7.³⁵
- iv. **The Electoral Tribunal (TE) in Panama, awarded with the Bronze Seal in 2023,** has implemented several work-life balance measures to support its staff. These include: **Parental Leave; Compensatory Time Off** for staff with 10 to 30 years of service; **Comprehensive Care Center** providing childcare services for employees' children aged 2 to 5, and educational support for children up to 12 years old; **Law 42 Benefit** of 144 annual hours for medical appointments or therapies for staff with disabilities or caring for a family member with a disability; and **Breastfeeding Rooms** on-site to support nursing mothers. To promote shared caregiving responsibilities, the TE also implemented two awareness initiatives: an internal Father's Day campaign and training sessions on new masculinities aimed at male employees.³⁶

Other initiatives besides the UNDP's Gender Equality Seal have ensured that gender equality concerns are intentionally integrated and mainstreamed through the necessary telework infrastructure, from training to IT access to evaluation of telework for promotion and retention purposes to health and safety guidelines in the home office. For example, emerging evidence suggests that people without children and men find it easier to organize teleworking and experience it more positively.³⁷ Such evidence, in turn suggests, for more gender-equal outcomes, a more flexible system, including different work hours, at night or alternating between two working couples, or a hybrid system that includes a mix of telework with in-person in-office work as opposed to full-time telework may be preferred.

- i. **The 2020 ILO Guide to Teleworking** calls employers to promote *“family-friendly policies and measures, with particular focus on encouraging men to equally share the responsibilities of unpaid care and domestic chores by means of targeted employee engagement and creative initiatives, such as role-modelling of good practices by male managers, social-media campaigns, internal blogs photos, videos, etc.”*³⁸
- ii. Making sure that new and permanent telework opportunities (including eligibility to telework, training for telework, IT support) are offered to both men and women employees equally and without strengthening existing gender stereotypes, becomes an institutional responsibility of the public sector. The implementation oversight falls onto managers. Performance management aspect of telework requires managers and supervisors to receive specialized training. The **Portuguese Public Administration** offered a free online training module for its teleworking employees and managers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The training module included ten webinars that were accessible 24/7, which allowed maximum flexibility to participants. Building on the

³⁵ Gender Seal JurisPrudence, Dimension3. 2025.

³⁶ Gender Seal JurisPrudence, Dimension3. 2025.

³⁷ Ortiz Lozano & Martinez-Moran, 2021,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353827548_Difficulties_for_Teleworking_of_Public_Employees_in_the_Spanish_Public_Administration The study on Spanish public employees finds that women are the ones who spend more time on household tasks and increased mental burden of telework has thus fallen mostly on them, also noting that that people without children find it easier to organize teleworking.

³⁸ ILO, 2020, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_751232.pdf

- success of the module, the Portuguese Public Administration announced plans for a more widespread implementation in the future.³⁹
- iii. **The Punjab Government in Pakistan**, provides transport services for women employees to retain women employees in its public sector. They also enacted a *Rotation Policy*, exempting women from the promotion requirement that civil servants must serve outside the officer's home province and allows them to choose to stay closer to their families.⁴⁰
 - v. Within the **United Kingdom's National Health Service**, which has flexible working options for men and women, women make up 46 percent of all executive directors and 38 percent of nonexecutive roles.⁴¹
 - vi. **Liberian National Police** conducted a review of adequacy of its uniforms, equipment and barrack facilities to make sure they are appropriate for both genders of varying sizes and physical conditions, including pregnancy.⁴²
 - vii. **In the UK, the 2022-2025 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**, aims to establish an anonymous reporting mechanism for diversity and inclusion related complaints and to accompany existing mechanisms to address sexual harassment in the workplace, and uses the Civil Service People Survey to monitor progress on bullying, harassment and discrimination.
 - viii. Implementation of family-friendly policies and provisions (e.g., clearly defined pregnancy policies that are flexible, fair and safe) have been effective in recruitment and retention of qualified women into civil service even in sectors where they have the lowest participation rates. **The Trinidad and Tobago Police Services Maternity and Sick Leave policy** provides for 3 months maternity leave – one month at full-pay and two months at half-pay. In the **United Kingdom**, Sussex Police's Maternity, Paternity, Adoption Policies allows 52 weeks of partially paid maternity /adoption leave, and two weeks of paternity/ maternal support leave.
 - ix. **Adequate maternity and paternity leave is defined by the ILO** as a minimum of 14 weeks maternity leave for all women (ILO, No.183) and some type of paternity leave or parental leave, including in cases of adoption (although no standards have been set by the ILO for such types of leave) ([ILO, 2009](#)).

Potential Entry Points for TSMs in Bhutan's Public Administration.

The Government of Bhutan has made important commitments to reform its public administration and instituted important policies to make sure its civil service is leading the nation towards an innovative and effective service delivery. To complement ongoing initiatives and accelerate progress toward the 30% women in decision-making positions by 2029 target, the

³⁹ ILO, 2020, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_751232.pdf

⁴⁰ Finkel, Hughes, and Hill, 2021, <https://www.undp.org/publications/global-report-gender-equality-public-administration> p.39.

⁴¹ 210 Gupta, Vasudha, et al., 2019, Accelerating Gender Parity: What Can Governments Do? McKinsey & Company, cited in OECD <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/001/2024/108/article-A001-en.xml?utm>

⁴² OECD, 2018. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/toolkit-for-mainstreaming-and-implementing-gender-equality.pdf>, p. 82.

following section outlines key entry points for TSMs and enabling environmental initiatives that can be piloted.

Bhutan’s existing institutional and policy frameworks—the Civil Service Reform Act (2022), and the Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulations (2023)—reflect a strong commitment to building a more inclusive, diverse, productive, and entrepreneurial civil service. These frameworks promote equal and fair treatment of all civil servants and ensure workplace protections through gender-neutral provisions. However, as the Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in Public Administration (2025) recognizes, these commitments alone are not sufficient to achieve the target of 30% women in decision-making positions by 2029. The RCSC and NCWC have already started undertaking key initiatives aligned with Action Plan recommendations. Some of these recent initiatives include:

- Improvement of regular communication of responsibilities between agencies.
- Disaggregation of civil service data by sex, position, category and region.
- Empowerment of and buy-in by gender focal points.
- Institutionalization of work-place protection procedures to prevent and address sexual harassment at workplace within respective sectors. A Standard Operating Procedure on prevention and response to sexual harassment within the civil service workplace has been developed and rolled out across civil service agencies both at the national and sub-national levels including central agencies.

The following table identifies TSMs and organizes enabling environmental features necessary for their successful implementation. Each recommended intervention is designed to address a specific gender equality gap identified in the Action Plan:

- 1) While Bhutan’s civil service has achieved near gender parity at the entry and mid-level positions, women’s representation declines steadily at higher and decision-making positions. Women are often overrepresented at junior and mid-level positions. This pattern points to structural and institutional barriers, rather than a lack of capacity, ambition, or merit among women civil servants.
- 2) Social and cultural norms and practices around traditional gendered roles, women’s leadership capabilities and gendered occupational segregation are prevalent. This obstacle hampers women’s career advancement limits their access to capacity-building opportunities and restricts their recruitment into certain job categories.
- 3) Women often have unequal access to informal networks and visibility. Senior roles are frequently shaped by informal mentoring, sponsorship, and networks, from which women may be excluded. Together, these dynamics create a “leaky pipeline,” where women’s representation declines at each higher level of leadership.

To address this specific gender gap in decision-making levels and accelerate toward progress effectively towards the 30% leadership target by 2029 as reflected in the GEPA Action Plan, the following feasible TSMs are recommended:

1. **Adopt progressive leadership targets, aligned with the GEPA Action Plan (for example 27% by 2028 and 30% by 2029).**

2. **Implement priority consideration in tie-break situations**, equally qualified candidate in leadership positions or agencies/departments where either men or women are under-represented (below 30 % of the decision-making positions or composition of staff). This initiative will apply gender balance criteria to be applied after all candidates meet the same merit criteria.
3. **Implement gender responsive recruitment policies and practices including gender balanced representation in recruitment and human resource committees**, at least an applicant from under-represented group (men or women in the shortlisted candidates for leadership positions or in agencies/sectors where they are underrepresented and encouraging competent and applicable women to apply for positions.
4. **Establish a fast-track leadership pipeline for women** (especially in sectors where women are significantly underrepresented). This intervention would seek and identify high-potential women early and offer executive training, mentoring, and exposure, and prepare them for senior roles more quickly.

For these TSMs to have their intended effects across ministries, agencies and local governments, these measures need to be supported with further commitments to strengthen leadership accountability and enabling environments. Recommended interventions in line with the National Gender Equality Policy 2020 and the Action Plan to Promote GEPA include:

Strengthening leadership responsibility

- Support ongoing efforts to build capacities of public servants including those in leadership and supervisory roles.
- Encourage ministries and agencies to set progressive targets in line with the GEPA Action Plan and reflect on these where appropriate within the planning and performance processes.
- Recognize and highlight good practices demonstrated by ministries and agencies in promoting inclusive and equitable workplace environment and promote gender equality.
- Ensure gender-based representation in key decision-making bodies including the human resource committees.
- Promote collection, management and analysis of gender disaggregated data across different sectors and at level.
- Encourage managers to reflect periodically gender related initiatives including in recruitment, promotions and workplace well-being.
- Enhance coordination and communication among managers, human resource officers and gender focal points⁴³ to ensure shared understanding and effective implementation of gender related intervention.

⁴³ Refer to sample ToRs in annex 2 and 3

Creating an enabling environment in public institutions that supports gender equality

- Encourage greater use of flexible and family-friendly work arrangements including flexible hours, part-time or job-share roles, parental leave policies, remote or hybrid work, and return-to-work programs for new mothers.
- Explore pilot of a targeted recruitment campaign with inclusive vacancy language to broaden outreach and attract more diverse pool of qualified candidates.
- Consider undertaking a national-level review of institutional infrastructure including availability of adequate facilities (such as restrooms and nursing rooms), digital and technical connectivity and accessibility through public transportation.
- Ensure implementation of the Standard Operating Procedure on Prevention and Response to Sexual Harassment and support awareness and consistency in application across agencies.
- Support leadership development opportunities for women employees identified through leadership pipelines.
- Promote continued gender equality initiatives for civil servants at all levels, building existing orientation, training and professional development programmes.
- Building on the 2024 review of measures to promote gender equality in civil service, consider regular review of human resource systems and practices to understand potential gender gaps and impacts.

The following table 1 outlines a list of TSM entry points for the Bhutanese Public Administration to consider for advancing gender equality in decision-making positions. The suggested entry points do not call for any changes in the existing policies or legislation; rather offer a menu of options to accelerate the implementation of the action plan to promote gender equality in public institutions.

Table 1: Potential TSMs actions for Consideration

Types of TSMs	Potential TSM Interventions	Managerial Responsibility	Enabling environment
Numerical Outcome Measures	Set Progressive target in line with the GEPA Action Plan. For example, 27% of women in decision-making positions by 2028; and 30% by 2030 in the public institutions.	▪ Mandatory gender equality training ▪ Clearly defined line of responsibilities between managers and Gender Focal points (<i>refer to sample ToR in annex 2 & 3</i>) ▪ Gender responsive HR audits	▪ Implementation of the SOP on Prevention and Response to SH. ▪ Review of HR Systems and institutional infrastructures

	Set five year and annual targets to support gender equality interventions across ministries and agencies which may include the work of GFPs and Go-to persons.	- Rewards for gender equality initiatives - Leadership to be present during annual GFP meeting and target setting	Conduct Gender awareness and capacity building for all civil servants including senior management
Recruitment and Promotion policies and practices	Priority consideration in tie-break situations, for equally qualified candidate in leadership positions or agencies/departments where either men or women are under-represented (below 30 %). - Ensuring at least one applicant from an under-represented group (men or women) is included in the shortlisted candidates for leadership positions or in agencies/sectors where they are under-represented. Review of max-moderation manuals and practices help ensure inclusive performance assessment by: - Clarifying that performance of staff on maternity leave consider only periods of active service,	- Gender equal HR and Selection Committees as per BCSR - Annual transparent reporting on hiring and promotion targets, and work-place harassment - Clear guidelines on TSM - Updated disaggregated data of civil servants	- Launch targeted recruitment campaign with inclusive and gender sensitive vacancy language - Promote and implement flexible and family-friendly work arrangements to support and retain women in leadership positions. - Establish/upgrade gender responsive infrastructure and facilities to create safe and conducive work environment - Conduct gender training for HRCs and recruitment committee. - Dissemination/orientation of relevant provisions of BCSR, and SOP on Prevention and Response to Sexual Harassment to ensure awareness and compliance.

	excluding duration of maternity leave. b) Exploring ways to ensure that performance criteria do not disproportionately rely on travel to remote locations, particularly where adequate facilities and support systems may be limited. Encourage qualified female candidates to apply for positions where there are no or few women through: a) Targeted outreach programmes (For examples job vacancy announcements. can be shared with Gender Focal in the Ministries and Dzongkhags for further dissemination to potential women civil servants). b) Adopt job vacancy announcements that explicitly encourage women to apply,		
--	---	--	--

	promoting gender diversity in the workforce for P1 and above or in sectors where women are under-represented.		
Fast-track leadership pipeline policies	Targeted mentorship and networking programs for women. Targeted leadership trainings and workplace coaching for women.	- Collection and management of gender disaggregated data across different programs, sectors and position categories. - Support women employees in leadership pipeline for professional opportunities.	- Increased availability of in person and online leadership capacity building opportunities targeted to women employees in the leadership pipeline. - Establish and strengthen gender friendly facilities and support services to create an inclusive and supportive work environment. - Promote and enhance awareness of women's leadership and its significance. - Create/facilitate/provide networking platforms to support mentorship, peer learning and professional advancement.

While well-designed temporary special measures can help remove structural barriers and expand opportunities for women to enter and advance within the civil service, their long-term effectiveness depends on strong leadership responsibility and their integration within safe, inclusive, and supportive workplaces. Taken together, these elements can foster an enabling environment across the public administration in which talented women are retained, supported, and able to progress into leadership and decision-making roles.

As articulated in the GEPA Action Plan, the Royal Government of Bhutan envisions sustained awareness-raising and advocacy among civil servants; dialogue across central agencies, line ministries, and local governments; and continuous monitoring, support, and systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data. These commitments are essential to achieving the national target of at least 30 % women in leadership positions by 2029.

Managers and supervisors play a pivotal role in advancing this agenda by actively challenging gender stereotypes through their leadership behaviors, management practices, and decision-making processes. In this regard, efforts to move from gender-neutral approaches toward gender-sensitive and gender-responsive policies must be both visible and institutionally recognized. Emphasis should be placed on accelerating the recruitment and advancement of women through the fast-tracked pipeline of eligible women for leadership positions. The temporary special measures outlined above can therefore support the effective implementation of existing national commitments and help embed transformative patterns of institutional behavior across the public sector. These changes align with Bhutan's vision of an Enlightened Entrepreneurial Bureaucracy and have the potential to generate positive spillover effects for broader progress in women's empowerment across Bhutan.

Annex 1. Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points, National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC)

In line with the national commitment to gender equality and child protection, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan (2008), and reinforced by key legislation such as the Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan (2011), the Child Adoption Act of Bhutan (2012), and the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of Bhutan (2013), the National Commission for Women and Children serves as the central coordinating authority for promoting and safeguarding the rights of women and children.

To effectively operationalize its role as a mainstreaming, coordinating regulatory and monitoring body, the National Commission for Women and Children formally assigns the Chief Planning Officer of the Ministries the role of Gender and Child Focal Points (GCFPs) across all levels of governance. This strategic shift aims to institutionalize gender mainstreaming and integrate the promotion and safeguarding of children's wellbeing across planning, policy development, budgeting, and monitoring in all sectors. In this regard, the Royal Civil Service Commission vide letter No. **RCSC/HRMD/7/2018/5087** dated 1 May 2018 has allocated five percent of their time with respect to their primary responsibility to carry forward the GCFP roles and responsibilities.

The Chief Planning Officers will serve as vital links to ensure that gender equality and children's wellbeing are embedded in the framework of national and local development planning and implementation.

This Terms of Reference (ToR) outlines the roles, responsibilities, and strategic importance of GCFPs in institutionalizing inclusive and responsive development practices across government, private, and civil society actors.

1. 2 Rationale

The designation of Chief Planning Officers as Gender and Child Focal Points is intended to firmly anchor gender equality and children's wellbeing within institutional planning and decision-making systems. By positioning the GCFP function at the senior planning level, the NCWC seeks to strengthen institutional accountability, enhance coherence with national gender equality and child protection priorities, and ensure sustained and systematic integration of inclusive and responsive development practices across sectors.

1.3 Purpose

To lead, coordinate and advocate for the integration of gender equality and children's wellbeing in the organizational policies, programs and processes, ensuring that development efforts are inclusive and aligned with the mandates of the NCWC.

2. Role of Gender and Child Focal Point

2.1 Definition

The Gender and Child Focal Point (GCFP) is a designated senior institutional representative, specifically the Chief Planning Officer, responsible for leading, coordinating and facilitating the integration of gender equality and children's wellbeing considerations into organizational policies, plans, programs, budgets, and monitoring systems.

The GCFP serves as the primary liaison between the institution and the Secretariat to the NCWC on matters related to gender equality and children's wellbeing, while supporting institutional compliance with national legal, policy, and reporting frameworks.

2.2 Designation

- Chief Planning Officer (CPO)

- In the absence of a Chief Planning Officer, the Head of the Agency shall designate a Planning Officer, Programme Officer, or another suitably qualified official to perform the functions of the GCFP.

2.3 Responsibilities

1. Mainstream gender equality and children's wellbeing across policies, plans, programs, and budgets within their respective institutions.
2. Coordinate with the Women and Children Division, Secretariat to the NCWC and relevant stakeholders to ensure that gender and child perspectives are aligned with national legal frameworks, policy mandates, and strategic priorities. Liaise with internal and external partners including CSOs, private sectors, development partners and government agencies to strengthen collaborative efforts.
3. Facilitate capacity-building initiatives to promote gender equality and children's wellbeing approaches within their organizations.
4. Promote inclusive participation by advocating for the needs of women and children to be reflected in decision-making processes.
5. Conduct monitoring, evaluation, and accountability activities to ensure that gender equality and children's wellbeing concerns are systematically integrated into institutional programs, plans, and processes.
6. Maintain gender/sex-disaggregated data on the Gender Equality Monitoring System (GEMS) and provide annual updates to the Secretariat to the NCWC, to facilitate continuous oversight of gender and child-related initiatives across all organizational levels.
7. Participate in technical and facilitation support and targeted capacity-building training provided by the NCWC to enhance the effective execution of their roles and responsibilities.

3. Other Provisions

3.1 Reporting Line

1. The GCFP shall maintain functional coordination with, and report to the Secretariat to the NCWC on tasks related to gender and children's wellbeing.

3.2 Adjournment

1. The outgoing GCFP, whether due to transfer, retirement, or any other reason, shall conduct a formal and complete handing-taking process with the incoming GCFP including all data records and documentation. The outgoing GCFP shall formally communicate with the Secretariat to the NCWC.

2. The outgoing GCFP shall hand over proceedings related to GEMS, ensuring that all data and information within the system are updated.

3.3 Revision Clause

The ToR shall be subject to periodic review to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. It shall be reviewed at least once every 3 years, or earlier as required to reflect changes in policy, legal frameworks, institutional mandates or operational requirements. Any proposed revisions shall be reviewed and endorsed by the NCWC to reflect evolving mandates, priorities, and operational needs.

Annex 2: Sample Terms of Reference for a Gender Focal Point System (GFPS) within a national civil service structure, inspired by best practices from countries like the Philippines, Mexico, and Rwanda.

1. Title: Gender Focal Point Officer

2. Purpose:

To lead and coordinate gender mainstreaming and implementation of Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) within the institution, ensuring compliance with national gender equality laws and international commitments

3. Responsibilities:

- **Policy Integration:**
 - Review ministry policies and programs to integrate gender perspectives.
 - Support gender analysis and development of gender-responsive strategies.
- **TSM Implementation:**
 - Coordinate the execution of gender quotas or affirmative action initiatives.

- Track TSM effectiveness through data collection and performance monitoring.
- **Capacity Building:**
 - Organize gender sensitivity and leadership training.
 - Act as the resource person for gender equality in the department.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:**
 - Develop gender indicators and monitor progress toward gender goals.
 - Submit quarterly reports to the central gender unit or national gender body.
- **Coordination:**
 - Serve as the liaison between the department and the national gender agency.
 - Participate in inter-ministerial working groups on gender.

4. Qualifications:

- Degree in gender studies, public policy, law, or social sciences.
- Training in gender mainstreaming, TSMs, or public sector reform.
- Minimum 3–5 years’ experience in government or gender-focused work.

5. Reporting Line:

Reports to: [Director of Planning/Secretary-General]

Functionally linked to: [National Gender Machinery/Central Gender Unit]

6. Term and Review:

- 2-year term, renewable.
- Annual performance review based on gender KPIs and impact metrics.

In sum, advancing gender equality in public institutions is not just a matter of rights—it is a strategic imperative. It strengthens representation, expands opportunities for women’s economic empowerment, and measurably improves how governments function and serve their people. When women are equally empowered to lead and shape public policy, the ripple effects benefit entire societies and bring us closer to the promises of sustainable development.

Annex 3: Case of Philippines from Commitment to Results in Gender Equality in Public Administration (developed during the regional workshop in Bangkok by Kim Harold Tamayo Peji and Müge Finkel)

The Magna Carta of Women (MCW) is a comprehensive women’s human rights legislation that seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by public and private entities or individuals in the Philippines, while protecting and fulfilling their rights as established in the Philippine Constitution. The legislation, also known as Republic Act 9710, was passed into law in 2009 after more than 10 years of lobbying, and attaches a significant priority to the achievement women’s equal participation and representation in all aspects of social, political, economic, and cultural life. As part of this mandate, the MCW seeks to increase participation of women in decision-making positions, both appointive and elective in the government and in private sectors.

Career positions in the Philippines' Civil Service make up 90% of civil service positions and are characterized by: competitive entrance exams based on merit and fitness or based on highly technical qualifications; advancement opportunities to higher career positions; and security of tenure. There are three levels of career service positions: the first-level positions include clerical, trades, crafts, and custodial service positions which involve non-professional or sub professional work in a non-supervisory or supervisory capacity, requiring less than four years of collegiate studies; the second-level which includes professional, technical, and scientific positions in a non-supervisory or supervisory capacity, requiring at least four years of college work up to Division Chief level; and the third-level covers positions in the Career Executive Service.

MCW mandates 50-50% gender balance in the third-level positions. The implementation of the law, therefore, focuses on the strengthening of women's capacity, particularly those in the second-level supervisory positions, to enable them to compete for the third-level positions (including, the positions of Undersecretary, Assistant Secretary, Bureau Director, Assistant Bureau Director, Regional Director, Assistant Regional Director, Chief of Department Service and such other positions of equivalent rank). For example, Department of Foreign Affairs, reported prioritizing women officers from the Home Office and Foreign Service Posts in their leadership training and other capacity-building programs such as the Cornell University's online certificate program entitled "Women in Leadership" since 2020.

While all of these positions are by design require Presidential appointments, MCW has aimed to provide qualified women with an equal if not better chance in the screening and nomination process. Civil service employment rules dictate that a person may take the [qualifying examinations](#) for third-level positions if, among others, he/she is: a) assigned or acts as officer in charge of a CES position for at least 6 months; b) an appointee or OIC of a division chief position with at least 3 years managerial experience; and c) an occupant of a position equivalent to or higher than a division chief level position.

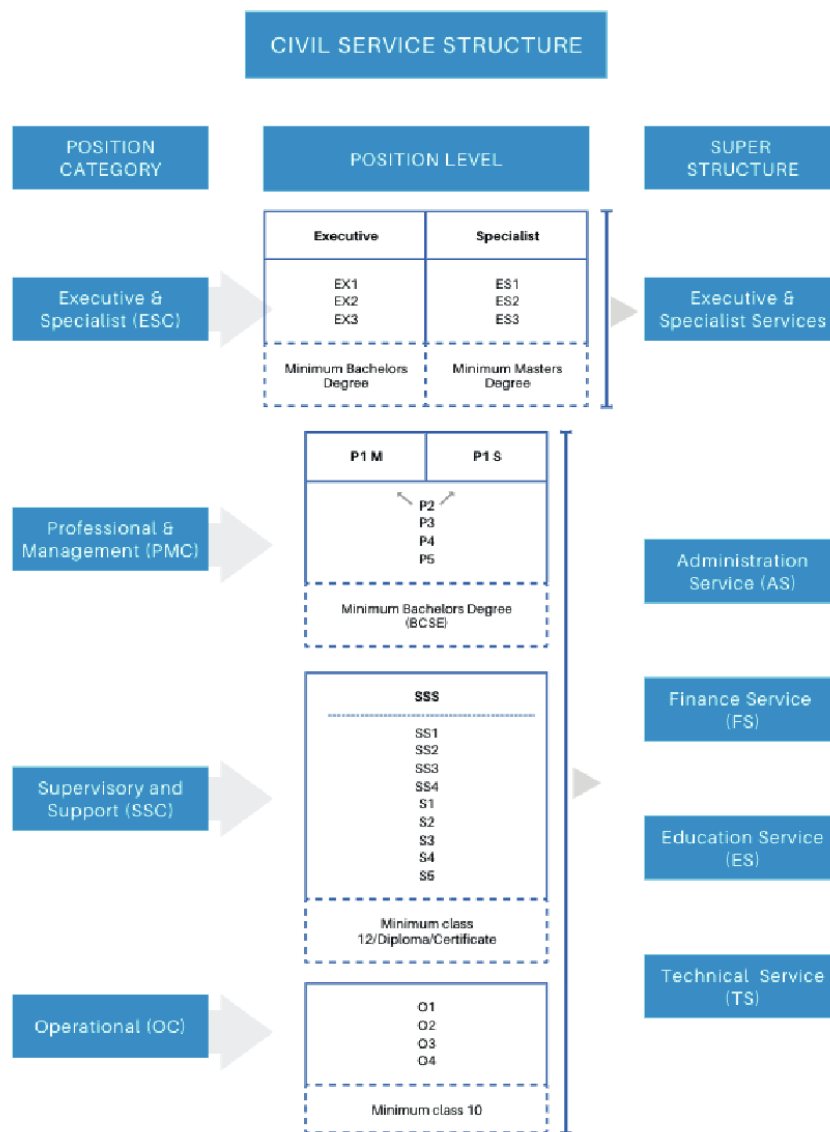
While there are no specific rules or guidance on exactly how to pursue the 50% gender equality, MCW requires the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and Career Executive Service Board (CESB) to monitor the representation of women in third-level position through the submission of a roster of eligible women to be considered by appointing officials. Further, it required all agencies to submit the list of women appointed to third level to the CES Board for inclusion in the PCW report on the implementation of the law.

CESB tracks appointment of women to the third level positions by posting the occupancy status of women appointed to CES positions in the Executive Department on its website. Every year, CESB submits to the Office of the President a compilation of Career Executive Service Bluebook which contains disaggregated data on CES Occupancy of each national agency including: CES Occupancy Statistics Summary; List of CESOs and CES Eligibles in CES Positions; List of CESOs and CES Eligibles in Non-CES Positions; List of Non-CESOs and Non-Eligibles in CES positions; List of Vacant CES Positions; and Positions held and date of appointment. Sharing such detailed information with the appointing authorities is meant to enable them to take measures to help women compete for third-level positions and increase accountability towards the achievement of 50% gender equality.

Table 2. Percent of Women in First and Second-Level Positions

	2020	2021	2022	2024
First Level	43.4	44.2	N/A	43.5
Second Level	58.9	61.2	N/A	61.8
Third Level	42.7	42.7	44.5	45

Annex 4: Bhutan Civil Service Structure (BSCR 2023)



Section	Positio Category	Positio Level
2.2.3.1	Executive & Specialist	3 (EX1-EX3)/(ES1-ES3)
2.2.3.2	Professional & Management	5 (P1-P5)
2.2.3.3	Supervisory & Support	10 (SSS-S5)
2.2.3.4	Operatioal	4 (O1-O4)

Annex 5: Case Study on Promoting Recruitment and Retention of Women in Male-Dominated Sectors

Promising practice: A comprehensive approach to increasing women's representation in the Liberian National Police⁴⁴

During 14 years of war, a quarter of a million Liberians were killed and an estimated 40 percent of Liberian women were raped. Women were abused, not only by Liberian men, but also by United Nations peacekeepers. To address the high rate of sexual violence, the UN Police deployed its first all-female Formed Police Unit to Liberia. Arriving from India in 2007, the unit made a substantial contribution to efforts addressing sexual violence against women and the quality of the UN Police response to women who had been victimized.

Alongside the increased visibility of female UN Police present in the country, which inspired Liberian women to join the national police service (Liberian National Police), in 2006, the Liberian Government established a 15% female representation quota for the reformed and restructured Liberian National Police, which was increased to 20% in 2008. To advance progress on the quota, a Committee for National Recruitment of Women involving relevant ministries of the government, in collaboration with representatives from the United Nations Mission and several agencies, developed a three-month intensive education support programme for women aged 18 - 35 interested in joining the National Police. The Programme enabled more women to meet the basic education requirements, which had been identified as barrier for many women pursuing recruitment into the police (UNMIL, 2007).

The programme initially identified 300 candidates who completed an aptitude test. A selected 150 candidates received three months of intensive classes resulting in the equivalent to a high school certificate at the Stella Maris Polytechnic in Monrovia, which covered educational materials, a daily lunch and a small monthly stipend. The curriculum was developed by the Ministry of Education and the West Africa Examinations Council and was followed by a special examination to identify women who were qualified to enroll into the 3-month national police training process. Prior to starting the intensive course, candidates agreed to remain in the police force for a minimum of five years. To retain and promote qualified women within the police and ensure they are not constrained to lower ranks, women have been placed in leadership roles across the police hierarchy, and an association of women police officers provides support as well as an institutional body to continue advocacy for women's advancement in the sector. The programme contributed to increasing female recruits, from an average of 4 recruits in the first 30 educational support classes to over 100 by 2009. Related to this achievement, the percentage of women in the police rose from 13% in 2008 to 17% in 2010.

The broader achievements of these efforts are highlighted in a [video](#) on women in the Liberian National Police.

Sources: Bastick, M., Grimm, K., and Kunz, R., (2007), '[Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Global Overview and Implications for the Security Sector](#)', Geneva: DCAF; UNMIL (2007), [Liberia Gains From Partners' Forum - No Sex For Help - All-female Police Contingent](#)

⁴⁴ Downloaded from <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1064-policies-and-measures-to-promote-retention-of-women.html>

Arrives UNMIL FOCUS, Dec 2006 - Feb 2007; IRIN News, May 2010. UN Peacekeeping Background Note 2010; UN News Centre, 2007 In first for UN peacekeeping, all-female police unit arrives in Liberia.

(Denham, 2008; UNIFEM, 2007)

Recourses Reviewed for Bhutan (May 31, 2025)

From UN DESA & UNDP & UN Women

- UN DESA, NCWC, UNDP, Capacity Development Workshop Promoting the Presence and Leadership of Women Within Public Institutions at the National and Local Levels, in Bhutan, Report, 2023. https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/BHUTAN_PostworkshopReport_12-12-23_0.pdf
- UN DESA, UNDP, Regional Workshop Promoting the Presence and Leadership of Women Within Public Institutions at the National and Local Levels in Asia and the Pacific, Report, 2024. https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/list-of-files/2024/BKK_Rev-PostRegionalWorkshopReport_15-06-24.pdf
- UN DESA, NCWC, UNDP, Gender Equality in Public Administration in Bhutan, An in- depth Review of Measures for Promoting the Presence and Leadership of Women and Gender Equality in Public Administration in Bhutan, 2024. <https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/Gender%20Equality%20in%20Public%20Administration%20in%20Bhutan-15.11.24.pdf>
- UN DESA, UNDP, Workshop, Gender-inclusive Leadership and Public Sector Innovation for Sustainable Development: Empowering Women Leaders for Future-ready Public Administration, Report, 2024. <https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/list-of-files/2024/RoK-PostRegionalWorkshopReport.rev-06-08-24.pdf>
- UN DESA, Global Review of Good Practices for Promoting Women's Access to Leadership Positions in Public Administration, 2022. <https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Analysis-good-practices-Rev-version-for-website%2001-03-23.pdf>
- UN DESA, Global Review of Existing Legislation and Organizational Policies and Analytical Framework for Promoting Women's Access to Leadership Positions in Public Administration, 2022. <https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Review%20of%20Policies%20and%20Legislation-Rev-version%20for%20website-3March-23.pdf>
- Website of the project Building capacities for promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at national and local levels. <https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/projects/building-capacities-promoting-presence-and-leadership-women-within-public-institutions>
- UNDP, Gender Seal Juris Prudence, Dimension3. 2025.
- <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1064-policies-and-measures-to-promote-retention-of-women-.html>

FROM BHUTAN RCSC website:

- National Action Plan to Promote Gender Equality in Public Administration for Bhutan. <https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/NAP%20GEPA%20Final%20version%20%28003%29%203-02-25.pdf>
- Chapter 5: Bhutan Civil Service Examination for Recruitment Of University Graduates
- Graduate Performance Report, Bhutan Civil Service Examination 2024
- His Majesty's Address to the Nation on National Day 2024
- Civil Servants' Welfare Scheme: A Self-Help Programme 'Of, By and for' The Civil Servants By-Law Revised 2022
- Royal Civil Service Commission Strategic Roadmap (2025-2035) Building an Accelerator Operating System (Aos) For An Enlightened Entrepreneurial Bureaucracy (E2b)
- Civil Service Rules and Regulation 2023
- Civil Service Reform Act ([Civil-Service-Reform-Act-of-Bhutan-2022.pdf](#))
- Civil Service Act 2010 ([CS_ACT2010.pdf](#)) Civil Service Annual Report ([CONSOLIDATED REPORT 2019-2024](#))
- HR Audit Manual ([HR-Audit-Manual-1-5-2018-1.pdf](#))
- ToR for HR Officials ([TOR-For-HR-Officers.pdf](#))
- Max Manual ([Final-MaX-Manual.pdf](#))
- CSW by Law 2015 ([CSWS-By-Law.pdf](#))
- Internal Framework to Address Gender Issues at Workplace
- Standard Operating Procedure for the Prevention and Response to Sexual Harassment in the Civil Service, endorsed by 44th Commission Meeting, held on May 13, 2025

EXTERNAL

- OECD, 2018. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/toolkit-for-mainstreaming-and-implementing-gender-equality.pdf>
- <https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/APSC%20-%20Gender%20Equality%20Strategy.pdf>
- OECD, 2014. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/women-government-and-policy-making-in-oecd-countries-9789264210745-en.htm>
- IMF, 2016, Managing Government Compensation and Employment – Institutions, Policies, and Reform Challenges. IMF: Washington DC.
- Winer, Stuart, 2020, Cabinet Sets Goal for Women to Fill Half Senior Civil Service Positions by 2023.
- Gupta, Vasudha, et al., 2019, Accelerating Gender Parity: What Can Governments Do? McKinsey & Company.