



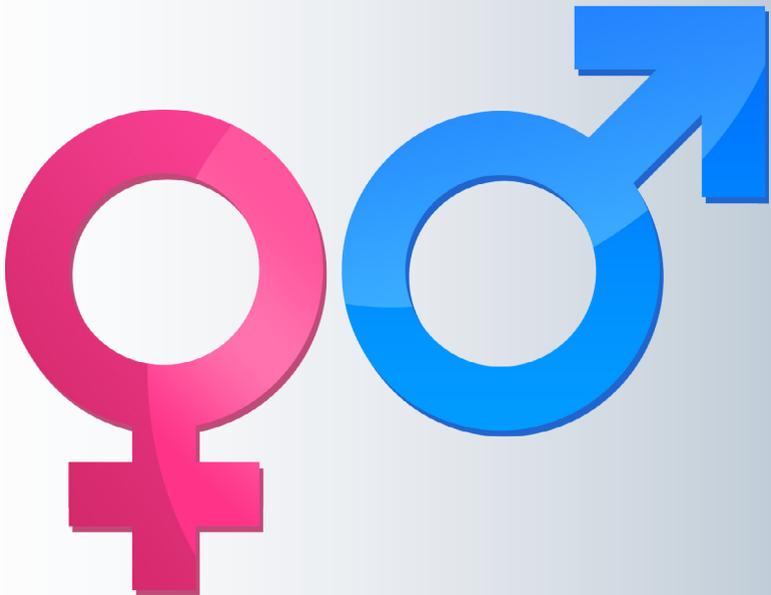
निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल  
ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

# GENDER AND INCLUSION POLICY

2013

# GENDER AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

2015-2020





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**ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL**



# Message from the **Chief Election Commissioner**

There is growing recognition that stable peace and national prosperity can only be achieved when institutions are democratic and inclusive of all groups of society, including women, ethnic minorities, disadvantaged and differently-abled people, etc. The statistics reveal that women make up half of the world's population, however, their representation in the political, socio-economic development, and policy-making is minimal in developing countries as well as in Nepal.

The present Constitution of Nepal provisioned the right to equality, which promotes the formulation of legislations and policies to protect and empower disadvantaged people and communities of Nepal. The Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) has adopted various reform initiatives in election management in order to make the election process more gender friendly and inclusive. Lately, the ECN has been involved in formulating and amending electoral legislations and policies for the possible participation of all genders at different levels from different geographical regions in Nepalese elections management.

For the Constituent Assembly Elections in 2013, the Commission introduced "Gender and Inclusion Policy 2013" on 23 September, 2013. This is an important step forward in actualizing the commitment of the ECN to promote it as a gender-friendly and inclusive institution. The gender and inclusion policy envisioning to promote participation of women and men throughout the overall electoral cycle.

In presenting this Gender and Inclusion Policy 2013, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my fellow Commissioners, ECN officials, representatives of government officials from other ministries, as well as representatives of non-government organizations who contributed during the drafting of the policy. Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the UNDP/Electoral Support Project (ESP) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Nepal for providing technical support during the process that led to its publication.



**Dr. Ayodhee Prasad Yadav**  
Chief Election Commissioner (a.e.)  
Election Commission, Nepal

# Foreword

Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) had taken many initiatives in the past, especially since last decade, that strive to make the elections inclusive and gender friendly. However, in the absence of a clear Policy, the actions sometimes lacked coherence and were difficult to assess and evaluate. As an election management body committed to electoral justice, we take pride in doing our utmost to enhance and ensure fairness and transparency in all our processes. Therefore it was high time we came up with a Gender and inclusion Policy.

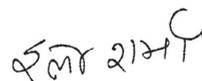
ECN measures the success of its inclusion by representation in proportion to the population of all groups, communities and classes in the whole of electoral process, i.e., as voters, as election administrators including security personnel and as candidates. This policy seeks to do just that.

ECN believes that lasting empowerment of the excluded can come only through empowerment of the grassroots. Therefore, of recent, our focus has shifted to the local bodies. It is at the local level where we need to bring in more women and other excluded groups so that a pool of inclusive local leadership is gradually built. Such a pool will automatically transform itself into national and state level leadership in the course of a couple of electoral cycles. This is why the Draft of Local Bodies (Election Procedure) Act 2048 BS, drafted by the ECN provides for 50% representation of women in key-position candidacies by political parties. We believe that such groundwork on inclusion will, in future, translate into the kind of inclusive electorate and political representation we aspire for.

ECN also believes that to be able to make these aspiratory goals of

inclusive elections and inclusive representation a reality, ECN itself must become inclusive and gender friendly as an organization. As it is important to walk the talk, we will soon be coming up with gender-responsive budgeting for ECN. It also gives me immense pleasure to announce the formation of a Gender unit at the ECN which makes sure the Gender and inclusion Policy and its work-plan are duly implemented.

As the co-ordinator of the Gender and inclusion Committee, I would like to thank the Chief Election Commissioner, all the Election Commissioners, ECN officers and staff, especially the Planning section for their contribution to the document. ECN is also thankful to other GON officials, NGOs/CSOs among our stakeholders for their contribution to the formulation of this Policy. I would also like to thank our development partners, both the Electoral Support Project of UNDP and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) for the technical assistance provided to our inclusion work.



**Ila Sharma**  
Election Commissioner  
Election Commission, Nepal

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## **1. Background**

The Article 12 of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 guarantees individual freedom for every citizen and Article 13 ensures the right to equality and also provides for formulating laws to make special provisions for protection, empowerment or advancement of backward persons or community including women, dalit, indigenous peoples and Madhesi from economic, social or cultural perspectives. Right of women to participate in state structure on the basis of principle of proportional inclusion is enshrined under the right to social justice in Article 21. Likewise, the Article 33 (D1) states that the state shall pursue the policy for ensuring participation, on the basis of proportional inclusion, of all citizens of backward class and region including Madhesi, Dalit, indigenous people, women and backward classes in all the bodies of the state structure. Similarly, Article 142 provides for inclusive participation so that people from neglected and oppressed section including women and dalits are made members at different levels of executive committees that have to be registered for being recognized as a political party for election purposes.

According to the national population census, 2011, participation of women, despite their larger share in population, is found to be minimal compared to men in various areas of development including economic, social, political, and administrative and policy making areas.

In order to build on the efforts made in the past for gender equality and inclusion, there is a need to formulate policies, laws, procedures and create institutional mechanism concerning election so as to address the needs and concepts of gender sensitivity and inclusion.

## **2. Past Efforts**

Although women were given voting right since the enactment

of the Government of Nepal Act, 1947, it was only in the parliamentary election held in 1958 when all women were allowed to participate. Local Self-governance Act, 1999, has the provision to ensure representation of at least a woman in a ward of a local body. It also provides for the promotion of participation of indigenous peoples, dalit and people pushed backward from social and economic point of view in activities that bring in social equality in balanced manner and ensure equal distribution of the outcome of mobilization and development of sources and means. The Election Commission had made an effort to accommodate the principle of gender and social inclusion while formulating and implementing policies and programs in course of managing the Constituent Assembly election, 2008. Attention was paid to gender aspects while publishing materials and mobilizing human resources for voter education in accordance with the provisions of gender inclusion in voter education policy as formulated by the Commission for CA Election 2008. Directives and code of conduct prepared for CA Election 2008 had prohibited the use of information that may have negative impact on principle of equality and social inclusion. Women enlists were prioritized while mobilizing enlists to conduct voter registration special program for that election. In addition to making arrangement for separate queues for men and women voters during the time of voting, women staffers were also mobilized in different tasks of conducting election including the indelible ink-markers.

### **3. Present situation**

The Election Commission has been taking different reforms initiatives in election management processes for making election process gender friendly and inclusive in accordance with letters and spirit of the constitution and different legal provisions. With a view that the women, dalit, indigenous peoples, Madhesi, oppressed, neglected and minority community, citizens of backward region are not left out in course of preparing electoral

rolls with photo, which was an improvement from the past process for electoral rolls collection, the task of voter name registration was taken to the local level, time and again. Due to the conduction of voter education and voter registration strategy based on targeted community, voter registration process has been even more gender-friendly and inclusive. Also, the Commission has been formulating and modifying new policies and laws, directives for increased participation of all region, class and gender in election. Efforts made in areas of gender sensitivity and inclusions in election need to be reformed as per the time and need and given continuity in the elections ahead.

#### **4. Problems, Challenges and Opportunities**

##### **4.1 Problems:**

Existing problems relating to gender and inclusion in election are as follows:-

- 1) Lack of adoption of proper measures and implementation of concept of gender proportion and inclusion as provisioned in the constitution and provided for by laws,
- 2) Lack of exact adoption of gender and proportional inclusion policy and processes on the part of political parties participating in the election,
- 3) Minimal participation of women in voting due to cultural and social discrimination,
- 4) Lack of gender-friendly physical infrastructure and materials as needed in electoral processes,
- 5) Lack of condition for women to fully enjoy their independent and confidential voting right.

##### **4.2 Challenges:**

The following are the challenges for fair, impartial, transparent and credible election in accordance with gender and inclusion principle.

- 1) Making gender sensitive and inclusive policies and laws relating to election,
- 2) Effective implementation of policy provision related to gender and inclusion during elections
- 3) Promoting effective public awareness by reaching out to the targeted community with issues concerning gender and inclusion
- 4) Mobilizing necessary resources for providing services and facilities in election as provisioned by policy and laws relating to gender and inclusion.

#### **4.3 Opportunities:**

- 1) To implement in practice the commitment expressed to recognize the concept of gender and inclusion by the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007.
- 2) To translate into action all the efforts made since past by Election Commission relating to gender and inclusion.
- 3) To put in practice the commitments expressed in the national, regional and international treaties and agreements that are ratified.
- 4) To address the issues of gender and inclusion raised through different media by women, dalit, oppressed caste/ethnic nationalities, backward community/class, backward region, Madhesi and other minority citizens.

### **5. Need of Policy**

In this context that Nepal has signed the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations Against Women (CEDAW), 1979, election can be gender friendly and inclusive only if the concept of gender and inclusion is internalized in all activities related to election management and from the time when voter education is imparted for ensuring participation of Nepali citizens in election.

To ensure participation of all the citizens in democratic election, it is necessary to formulate gender and inclusion policy through policy, structural and legal provisions and implement them. Against this background, this new policy has been formulated to consolidate the process of democratization as adopted by the state through increased participation, in every stage of election process, of women, men and third gender and dalit of all community, class and region that are deemed backward from the point of view of gender and inclusion and the oppressed, marginalized and excluded citizens.

## **6. Guiding Principles relating to gender and inclusion**

The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007, provides, under the right to social justice, for the right of women, dalit, indigenous peoples, Madhesi community, oppressed class, poor peasants and laborer left backward from economic, social or educational point of view to participate in state structure on the basis of principle of proportional inclusion. Article 63 (4) of the constitution provides for political parties to pay attention to principle of inclusion while nominating candidates for the formation of Constituent Assembly and making proportional representation of women, dalit, oppressed caste/indigenous people, backward region, Madhesi and all other class while preparing the list of candidates. The Election Commission may formulate necessary policy and adopt processes for this. Nepal's interim constitution expresses commitment to basic human rights as accepted worldwide, democratic system, social justice and equality, full observance of concept of periodic, impartial, fair and transparent election and effective implementation of international treaties and agreements to which Nepal is state party. Therefore, due to constitutional provision of the country and the different provisions in international treaties and agreements, implementation of which is the commitment expressed by the country, it is necessary to make national election inclusive and gender mainstreamed.

## **7. Vision**

To make proportional and inclusive representation of citizens in all state structures through elections as per constitutional provision and to develop the Election Commission as a gender sensitive and inclusive institution for making elections fair, impartial, credible and transparent.

## **8. Objectives**

- 8.1. To mainstream gender in all processes of elections;
- 8.2. To incorporate inclusive approach in all the electoral processes;
- 8.3. To develop the Election Commission as gender sensitive and inclusive institution.

## **9. Policy**

**(A) Pertaining to objective 8.1** (objective: To mainstream gender in all processes of election)

- 9.1. All laws, rules and guidelines relating to election will be improved and modified in accordance with gender perspective.
- 9.2. Continuous study and research will be conducted to identify different needs of the voters and candidates from gender perspective.
- 9.3. Records of the voters will be analyzed from gender perspective and while preparing electoral rolls, those with different needs from gender perspective will be identified.
- 9.4. Needs of the gender and other class will be addressed while imparting voter education.
- 9.5. Polling centers will be made gender friendly and adequate attention will be paid to gender needs

in course of voting process.

- 9.6. Different needs of women and third gender candidates will be addressed directly through policy and programs.
- 9.7. Special provision will be made for making election fully inclusive from gender perspective.

**(B) Pertaining to objective 8.2** (objective: To incorporate inclusive approaches in all the electoral processes)

- 9.8. Process will be continued to include gender issues in laws, rules and guidelines relating to election as per the inclusion policy.
- 9.9. Special programs for those with different needs from inclusion perspective will be formulated and implemented while collecting electoral rolls and in voting process.
- 9.10. Disaggregated records from inclusion perspective of women, dalit, oppressed caste/indigenous peoples, backward class, backward region, Madhesi and minority voters will be prepared.
- 9.11. Shortcomings will be corrected by analyzing voters from inclusion perspective at the time of electoral rolls preparation.
- 9.12. Principle of inclusion will be enforced when the political parties nominate candidates under the First Past the Post (FPTP) system for election and when they prepare list of candidates under the Proportional Representation (PR) system.
- 9.13. Women, dalit, oppressed caste/indigenous peoples, backward region, Madhesi and other minority citizens will be encouraged to participate in election through electoral education.

**(C) Pertaining to objective 8.3** (objective: To develop the Election Commission as a gender sensitive and inclusive institution.)

- 9.14. Efforts will be made to maintain gender balance and inclusion while appointing or nominating office bearers and staffers in the Election Commission.
- 9.15. A separate mechanism to focus on issues pertaining to gender and inclusion will be formed by bringing in organizational and structural changes in the Secretariat.
- 9.16. Emphasis will be given on continuous improvement by analyzing annual and periodic programs of the Election Commission from gender and inclusion perspective.

## **10. Strategy**

**(A) Pertaining to objective 8.1** (objective: To mainstream gender in all processes of election)

- 10.1. Issues to be addressed from gender perspective will be studied by subject experts before preparing the electoral rolls and in course of preparing electoral rolls and the list of subjects to be addressed will be approved by the Commission.
- 10.2. While preparing the guidelines for preparing the electoral rolls and determining the program for electoral rolls collection, analysis will be made from gender perspective and modification will be made accordingly.
- 10.3. If deemed necessary, the Commission will have the process of electoral rolls collection monitored and analyzed from gender perspective even during the time when electoral rolls collection program is

underway.

- 10.4. Voters with different needs from gender perspective will be informed about election process and necessity and importance of citizens' right to vote, during the time of electoral rolls collection.
- 10.5. The Commission will arrange for easy access to the maximum possible extent while preparing electoral rolls to pregnant women, women needing maternity care, women accompanying infant or children, elderly people, needy persons and people with disability.
- 10.6. Those with different abilities will be included from gender perspective while arranging for human resource to prepare electoral rolls.
- 10.7. Reports will be prepared by analyzing the facts from gender perspective on the basis of collected electoral rolls and the reports will be made public from time to time.
- 10.8. Code of conduct will be made and enforced against sexual violence and activities that undermine social harmony on racial, lingual or religious basis.
- 10.9. Women and third gender and other minority citizens will be encouraged to participate in election and file candidacy.
- 10.10. Arrangement of fast tract voting will be made for pregnant women, women needing maternity care, women accompanying infant or children, senior citizens, helpless, disable voter for easy access to voting place.
- 10.11. Arrangement will be made as far as practicable to mobilize female staffs to apply ink on fingers of female voters and male staffers to apply indelible ink on

fingers of male voters at the polling booth and that adequate number of women police and volunteers will be deployed.

10.12. The Commission will provide incentives and award to staffers of the outstanding polling centers from gender perspective.

**(B) Pertaining to objective 8.2** (objective: To incorporate inclusive approach in all the electoral processes)

10.13. The Election Commission will accord high importance to aspects of inclusion, in different stages of election process, while appointing staffs, forming monitoring teams, permitting election observation, appointing temporary staffs, seeking services from experts, registering political parties, enforcing code of conduct and conducting voter awareness program.

10.14. Provision of additional punishment will be incorporated in the law governing election offences if the offence is committed targeting voters belonging to backward communities from inclusion perspective.

10.15. The Commission could issue necessary instructions to add inclusion provisions in the statute of the existing political parties or the statute that is submitted during the registration of the political party.

10.16. Electoral rolls will be collected by planning program on the basis of segregated data for voters to be addressed from inclusion perspective.

10.17. While collecting electoral rolls on the basis of segregated data, participation of voters that are to be addressed from inclusion perspective will be monitored regularly.

10.18. The Commission shall conduct awareness-raising

training programs by involving office-bearers of the political parties registered at the Election Commission.

- 10.19. Issues related to inclusion will be incorporated while conducting voters' education program and that the voter education materials will be published in different languages and brought to publicity.
- 10.20. Emphasis will be given on studying to find out whether programs of voters' education are effective from inclusion perspective.
- 10.21. Necessary initiatives will be taken for incorporating appropriate subject matter of voters' education from inclusion perspective in school level curriculum.
- 10.22. The concept of inclusion in election process will be followed effectively on the basis of inclusion check list.

**(C) Pertaining to objective 8.3** (objective: To develop the Election Commission as a gender sensitive and inclusive institution)

- 10.23. The Commission will draw attention of concerned bodies on issues about balance of gender and inclusion while appointing office-bearers in the Commission.
- 10.24. Gender balance and inclusion will be taken as a basis while appointing, substituting staff in the Commission and agencies under it and while running capacity building programs.
- 10.25. Emphasis will be given to capacity building of the working staffs in the Commission and agencies under it; and they will be made capable to analyze from gender and inclusion perspectives.
- 10.26. Work place and working environment will be made

favorable from gender and inclusion perspectives.

- 10.27. Emphasis will be given on cooperation and partnership with bodies concerned with gender and inclusivity while conducting different programs in course of the election.

## **11. Institutional Arrangements**

### **11.1. Formation of Gender and Inclusion Coordination Committee:**

To make necessary arrangements for effective implementation of provisions stipulated in this policy, a Gender and Inclusion Coordination Committee will be formed as mentioned below:-

- 1) Election Commissioner as designated by the Commission -Coordinator
- 2) Member, National Women Commission -Member
- 3) Secretary, Election Commission -Member
- 4) Secretary, Ministry of Education -Member
- 5) Secretary, Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare -Member
- 6) Representatives from organizations working in the area of gender and inclusion and civil society as nominated by the Commission, 5 persons (Dalit Commission/Nationalities' Federation) -Members
- 7) Gender Focal Point, (Joint Secretary) Election Commission -Member Secretary

### **11.2. Functions, Responsibilities and Rights of Gender and Inclusion Coordination Committee:**

Functions, rights and responsibilities of the Committee will be as follows:

- 1) To help the Commission to make policy decision on issues relating to gender mainstreaming accompanied by inclusive perspective.
- 2) To examine whether acts, regulations, policy, work procedures, guidelines and codes of conduct related to the Commission are in accordance with the principle of inclusion and to give suggestions on those issues to the Commission for policy decision.
- 3) To receive suggestions through expert team on gender and inclusion in course of election and present that along with the recommendations to the Commission.
- 4) To conduct review of implementation status of this policy on annual basis and issue necessary directives to the Secretariat and the gender unit and submit the report to the Commission.

### **11.3. Formation of Gender and Inclusion Unit:**

A Gender and Inclusion Unit will be formed under Gender Focal Point of the Secretariat to work on issues of gender and inclusion in election.

### **11.4. Function, Rights and Responsibilities of the Gender and Inclusion Unit:**

Functions, rights and responsibilities of this Unit will be as follows:

- 1) To carry out work on issues of gender and inclusion in election.
- 2) To collect, analyze and publish segregated data of gender and inclusion.
- 3) To analyze Act, regulations, guidelines, work procedures, plans, budget, programs related to election process including existing social, cultural, economic and traditional values from the perspective of gender and inclusion and to

- take initiative to make these issues gender and inclusion friendly.
- 4) To make necessary work plan for carrying out policy as per the instructions of the Commission, Gender and Inclusion Coordination committee and the Secretariat.
  - 5) To address complaints relating to gender and inclusion in course of election.
  - 6) To stipulate and present gender budget in election process and submit report to the Secretariat by analyzing the allocated budget from gender perspective.
  - 7) To conduct examination as per the need over issues of gender and inclusion of the subject matter under one's own working areas.
  - 8) To prepare code of conduct against sexual violence that may happen in course of election and present that for approval and ensure implementation of the approved code of conduct.
  - 9) To help gender and inclusion coordination committee in its functioning.

## **12. Financial Management**

A plan of action will be made in order to implement this policy and necessary resources and means will be managed. For this, the Commission may mobilize resources of the government sector and national and international non government organizations and the private sector.

## **13. Policy and Legal Reform**

### **13.1 Legal Reform**

- 1) Timely reform will be made on Act, regulations and guidelines relating to election for effective implementation of this policy.

- 2) While formulating new laws, steps will be taken to incorporate provisions in the spirit of this policy.

### **13.2. Policy Reform and Amendment**

This policy will be reformed and modified as per need if the Commission deems it necessary after this comes into effect.

### **13.3. Policy Implementation Provision**

- 1) Action plans will be made by maintaining coordination and harmony with all sides for implementation of this policy.
- 2) Coordination with the other bodies of the Government of Nepal will be maintained and initiatives will be taken to update the existing or new policy and programs of those bodies so that they are compatible with this policy.

## **14. Monitoring and Evaluation Provision**

- 14.1. It is the responsibility of the Commission to conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of efforts made from the perspective of gender and inclusion in every activity performed by the Secretariat of the Commission and offices under it.
- 14.2. All the desks of the Secretariat of the Commission should collect and analyze the data from gender and inclusion perspective and provide that to the Gender and Inclusion Unit.
- 14.3. Gender and Inclusion Unit will prepare a periodic report every two months by integrating and analyzing all the data received and present the same to the Commission through the Secretariat for discussion.
- 14.4. Gender and Inclusion Unit will prepare its annual report within two months from the date of the end of fiscal year and submit it to Gender and Inclusion

Coordination Committee.

- 14.5. The annual report with suggestions presented by Gender and Inclusion Coordination Committee will be made public as per the decision of the Commission.

## **15. Risks:**

The following risks may remain in policy implementation

- 15.1. Policy implementation may be difficult in case the process to reform laws does not proceed effectively in harmony with Gender and Inclusion Policy.
- 15.2. Implementation of this policy may be neglected due to unhealthy competitive behaviors and practices among the political parties during electoral processes.
- 15.3. The goal targeted by the policy may not be achieved in case of unavailability of resources necessary for policy implementation.

# **GENDER AND INCLUSION STRATEGY**

2015-2020



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## **I. ACRONYMS**

BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CA	Constituent Assembly
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECN	Election Commission of Nepal
GI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GICC	Gender and Inclusion Coordination Committee
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development

## II. DEFINITIONS

**Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles and identities of men and women as well as the power relationships between them. These gender roles vary by household, family, community and culture, and are changeable depending on the social environment. In Nepal, the gender roles are a result of a number of factors including intra-ethnic group dynamics, as well as traditional practices and customs.

**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GI)** refers to a concept that addresses unequal power relations between women and men and between different social groups. It focuses on the need for actions to balance these power relations and ensure equal rights, opportunities and respect for all individuals regardless of their social identity. **Gender and Inclusion (GI) Audit** analyzes the following: 1) how an organization integrates/includes women and marginalized groups in its internal structures and programming/projects; 2) identifies aspects of an organization which promote or hinder: gender equality; women's empowerment; ethnic diversity; the meaningful participation of all castes; the inclusion of persons with disabilities; and a welcoming workplace atmosphere; 3) recommends ways to strengthen promotion of GI mainstreaming in policies, programs and structures; and 4) engages in a long term process of organizational learning on GI mainstreaming.

**GI Mainstreaming** is a process whereby the barriers and issues of women, poor and excluded people are identified and addressed in all functional areas of infrastructure development systems: policies, institutional systems, work environment and culture, program and budget formulation, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and research.)

**Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)** is government planning, programming and budgeting that contributes to the advancement of gender equality and the fulfillment of women's rights. It entails

identifying and reflecting needed interventions to address gender gaps in sector and local government policies, plans and budgets. GRB also aims to analyze the gender-differentiated impact of revenue-raising policies and the allocation of domestic resources and development programs. GRB initiatives seek to create enabling policy frameworks, build capacity and strengthen monitoring mechanisms to support accountability to gender equality.

**Social Inclusion** refers to the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase access by excluded women and diverse individuals and groups to elections and political processes. This requires changes in policies, rules, and social practices and shifts in people's perspectives and behavior toward excluded groups.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Low levels of participation of women, socially disadvantaged groups such as *Dalits*, *Adibasi/Janjatis*, *Madheshis* and persons with disabilities in social and economic sectors of Nepal can be attributed to numerous factors. These include low literacy rates, existing social patriarchal structures, poverty and unequal access to resources. The Government of Nepal has taken steps to develop a policy and legal framework to protect these groups and increase opportunities for their participation.

In an effort to create a more inclusive electoral environment, the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) has also been making a conscious effort to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) in its operations. ECN has endorsed and adopted a Gender and Inclusion Policy (henceforth the Policy)<sup>1</sup> in August 2013. Necessary institutional structures have been created for increasing the access of women, socially excluded groups and persons with disabilities to democracy, governance and elections. However, challenges remain in the implementation of the policy and achievement of the results.

## 2. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

As mentioned in the policy, a Gender and Inclusion Coordination Committee (GICC) has been formed, chaired by Honorable Election Commissioner Ms. Ila Sharma. Similarly, a Gender and Inclusion (GI) Unit has been formed under the coordination of Joint Secretary (Gender Focal Person) to provide assistance to the GICC. This strategy has been developed to achieve the objectives of ECN's Gender and Inclusion Policy. The methodology adopted in preparing this strategy has been presented in Annex 1.

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<sup>1</sup> The ECN is one of the few election monitoring bodies in developing countries with a written gender and inclusion policy.

### 3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As mentioned in the ECN's GI Policy and guided by the national and international legal instruments that promote inclusion and human rights, this Strategy was built on the following assumptions:

- a) The ECN makes a long term commitment for gender mainstreaming and inclusion in activities at all levels.
- b) All ECN officials and staff will be informed of the principles and practical aspects of gender and inclusion so as to ensure the achievement of the objectives through a successful implementation of the GI Policy.
- c) GI target groups shall be actively involved in the decision-making processes while ECN's programs and activities are being developed, rather than only being considered as beneficiaries of such programs and activities. Women and marginalized groups shall be empowered through active participation rather than being considered as passive beneficiaries. Gender equality and inclusion shall be promoted through additional activities within the ECN, in addition to interactions and discussions with stakeholders.
- d) Since GI in relation to election management and political participation is not a stand-alone issue, but an issue arising due to a larger system of discrimination including limited access to services and benefits such as economic resources and education, understanding these inter-relationships shall be crucial when collaborating with existing government and donor programs.
- e) In the process of developing the Commission's programs, procedures, strategies and targeted approaches will be taken into account to address Nepal's socio-cultural diversity and gender dynamics within different groups, as well as how gender and social differences affect access to information and services and participation in social networks, leadership and

decision making.

- f) The Strategy shall be effectively implemented in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.
- g) The ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the GI Policy and Strategy lies with the Election Commission.

#### **4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

In line with the Policy, all ECN activities will be focused mainly on achieving two objectives related to gender mainstreaming and inclusion. Firstly, the Election Commission will aim to be a gender responsive and inclusive institution and secondly, it is necessary that gender sensitivity and inclusion are addressed adequately while dealing and working with stakeholders. Outlined below are the strategic objectives within the framework of GI policy, and the activities that the Commission must implement to achieve them within the upcoming period of five years (2015-2020).

##### **4.1. Strategic Objective 1: The ECN as a Gender Sensitive and Inclusive Institution**

A GI-friendly organization fosters an internal culture of implementing Gender Equality and Inclusion as an indispensable objective. The ECN will use the following strategies to fulfill this strategic objective:

##### **4.1.1. GI Mainstreaming in Organizational Policies and Programs**

*The workplace and working environment shall be developed with a gender and inclusion perspective.*

ECN Gender and Inclusion Policy 2013, Art. 10.26

The ECN will ensure a work environment free of gender and social discrimination, as well as establish an institutional structure that effectively addresses discrimination and provides opportunities for personal and professional capacity development. For this, the ECN will undertake the following activities:

- a) Develop an Employee Code of Conduct that discourages discrimination. The Code of Conduct shall provide for severe punishment for discrimination in the workplace, including sexual harassment, use of discriminatory language such as jokes, teasing and the use of humiliating or derogatory words; The Code of Conduct shall ensure respectful behavior towards all, including women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups and respect the views of staff from all levels of the organization, while also providing for equal opportunity for all employees, regardless of their gender, age, disability, ethnicity/caste or religion.
- b) Include knowledge of GI principles and gender friendly behavior as important indicators of employees' work performance reviews.
- c) Ensure accessibility of persons with disabilities and elderly while constructing District Election Offices. The office building will have separate toilets for men and women.
- d) Develop working guidelines and provide for counselling for women employees where senior staff will act as mentors to junior staff, providing advice on career development and other concerns.

#### **4.1.2. Capacity Development of Staff and Stakeholders**

*Capacity development of employees of the Commission and its related agencies will be emphasized to enable analysis from a gender and inclusion perspective.*

ECN Gender and Inclusion Policy 2013, Art. 10.25

Only those employees who have a good knowledge of the concepts of gender and inclusion will be capable of effectively implementing the GI policy and strategy in technical aspects of their work and interactions with their colleagues. Therefore, the following activities will contribute towards enhancing the capacities of ECN staff on gender and inclusion related issues:

- a) Ensure the participation of employees (working in the Commission and in District Election Offices) in several capacity development programs such as: (1) Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) training on Gender and Elections, and Access to the Electoral Process; (2) Orientation on Gender and Inclusion; (3) Gender and Inclusion auditing; (4) Preparation of Gender responsive budget, etc. Through these programs, the employees will be able to better understand gender and inclusion inter-relationships.
- b) Enhance the capacities of GI Unit members on gender and inclusion issues so that they are able to implement the policy and ensure monitoring and reporting, as well capable of becoming Master Trainers in the areas of gender and inclusion.
- c) To ensure equal gender participation in training (participants and facilitators), a minimum of 50% women's participation will be ensured among ECN employees and its agencies, as far as possible. GI issues will be incorporated as cross cutting issues throughout all training programs implemented by the ECN.
- d) Develop and implement an internal policy on selecting participants for study and observation visits abroad. Women, employees from disadvantaged groups and employees with disability shall be included with priority in study and observation tours. In case of lack of women in senior positions, women from junior positions shall be included. These types of opportunities will make the ECN a more attractive career choice for women. In addition, it will build their capacities,

motivate and better prepare them for promotions and higher level positions.

- e) Ensure equal participation in capacity building trainings for ECN's employees. Training issues pertaining to gender mainstreaming and inclusion will be internalized in ECN's internal plans and programs. Institutionalizing this type of training will ensure that GI becomes a permanent part of the ECN's training repertoire, rather than being dependent on donor support.
- f) Develop a pool of trainers on GI in electoral processes coming from other Nepal Government agencies and civil society, in addition to ECN employees. These trainers shall train ECN district staff, as well as other relevant stakeholders during each phase of the electoral cycle, and shall be used to conduct Training of Trainers (TOT) as and when required to train other potential trainers. Priority shall be given to women, persons with disability and persons from marginalized groups in selecting the trainers.

#### **4.1.3. Ensuring Representation and Participation of Women and Socially Discriminated Groups**

*Gender balance and inclusiveness shall be adopted as the basis for the appointment, assignment of positions and capacity development of employees of the Commission and its related agencies.*

ECN Gender and Inclusion Policy 2013, Art. 10.24

The ECN currently has 147 permanent employees at the central office, 10.13% of whom are women. Dalits comprise less than 1% of all employees, and Janjatis comprise approximately 5%, while there are no employees with disability. At the district level,

there are 565 employees among whom only 6% of permanent staff are women. At the decision-making level of the ECN, two out of 11 section heads are women; and at least two represent an indigenous group. Furthermore, one out of four Joint Secretaries and one out of five Election Commissioners are women. The following illustrative activities will assist the ECN to increase diversity amongst its employees:

- a) Develop and update on a regular basis a staff roster disaggregated by gender (including third gender), ethnicity/ caste and disability.
- b) Ensure that 50% of all temporary advisors hired on a contract basis by the ECN are women.
- c) Request the Constitutional Council to ensure at least 33% women when nominating Election Commissioners.
- d) Expand the pool of female polling officers by including employees from the Government (public service, corporations and committees), representatives of civil society and teachers from schools.
- e) Request the Ministry of General Administration to assign a certain percentage of women, persons with disability and from disadvantaged groups to the ECN and its related offices.

#### **4.1.4. Implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)**

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) is the Government's lead agency in implementing and monitoring GRB activities at the government level. As all ministries are required to apply GRB principles in their budgeting, the ECN shall also do the same. To improve the participation of women and marginalized groups in the electoral process, the ECN will prioritize gender equality and inclusion during its budgeting.

- a) Coordinate with the MoF to implement GRB through developing a gender responsive budget and implementing

other necessary activities in relation to GRB. Training on GRB planning, implementation and monitoring will be organized for heads of related sections and members of the GI Unit. The capacity of the GI unit shall be developed and participation in gender and inclusion working groups existing in other government agencies shall be encouraged for sharing of information and practices.

#### **4.1.5. GI Mainstreaming in Monitoring and Evaluation**

*It shall be the duty of the Commission to continuously monitor and evaluate the efforts made for gender and inclusion by the Commission's Secretariat and related offices.*

ECN Gender and Inclusion Policy 2013, Art. 14.1

A GI responsive monitoring and evaluation mechanism is necessary to ensure that the Policy and the Strategy are implemented. A low level of commitment or know-how is among the most frequent reasons for the gap between design and implementation often experienced. Therefore, the GI unit will perform monitoring and evaluation. The GI unit shall, in addition to utilizing the Commission's already existing institutional structure for sharing information, also implement the following or similar activities:

- a) Develop a Work Plan for the implementation of the Policy and 5 year strategy.
- b) Develop a monitoring and evaluation system for implementation of the Policy and the strategy.
- c) Make the ECN's monitoring system inclusive of GI perspective with the following guidelines in mind: (1) Preparation of disaggregated data; (2) Collaboration with CSOs and relevant stakeholders to collect qualitative data; (3) Making use of GI indicators; and (4) Based on the disaggregated data,

identification of gaps and making programs gender and inclusion friendly.

- d) Develop a mechanism to organize periodic sharing of common GI-related issues and problems among employees of districts and the central office.
- e) Coordinate with the Commission and its related sections and district offices during program implementation and monitoring.
- f) Conduct an annual GI Audit.

## **4.2. Strategic Objective 2: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in all Stages of the Electoral Process**

The Commission will mainstream gender and inclusion in its programs. This strategic objective concerns the ways the ECN can take to mainstream GI in its programs, mainly in its provision of services to the public and its collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

### **4.2.1. Progressively improvement in Access of GI Target Groups to Voter Education and the Polling Process**

*Women, third gender and other marginalized citizens shall be motivated to participate and be candidates in the electoral process.*

ECN Gender and Inclusion Policy 2013, Art. 10.9

To improve access to voter education and the polling process, the ECN shall consider the following illustrative activities:

- a) Develop a voter registration program to motivate women, socially and economically disadvantaged communities/groups and voters with disability, with active participation

and input from these groups. The program shall take into account differences in environment and social interactions in different districts.

- b) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns to motivate women, third gender, youth and other marginalized groups to participate in electoral processes as voters and candidates. The campaigns should address issues such as improving awareness on the importance of their voting rights and how to make voting a priority. In this regard, voter education materials will be made available in the languages of the target groups.
- c) Address changing attitudes and behaviors as a crucial component in voter education programs.
- d) Increase ongoing efforts to ensure that the design and development of all voter and civic education materials is GI sensitive.
- e) Include topics related to the issues of political participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in training, interaction and talk programs to be held at the ECN or organized by the ECN. Guest speakers may feature representatives of those groups, including women in high government positions, such as Commissioners, female judges, Joint Secretaries, Ministers, and female parliamentarians.
- f) Mainstream voter education programs in other stakeholder's social mobilization and awareness programs at the community level.
- g) Develop an action plan on increasing access to polling centers for the rural disabled, women from disadvantaged groups, etc., based on the data collected and analyzed during previous elections. Efforts will be made to include provision of alternative voting such as mobile voting or pre-voting.
- h) Observe all elections from a GI perspective. This means not only

looking at positive outcomes (for example, enabling reasons for women's participation) but also considering any type of discrimination against GI target groups both in electoral management (including election observers) and voters; and considering issues that may be particularly relevant to these groups such as electoral violence, lack of physical access and low representation in election management.

- i) After each election, conduct a review of polling staff from a GI perspective to determine strengths and weaknesses and develop best practices and lessons learned for subsequent elections.

#### **4.2.2. Collaboration with Political Parties and Candidates**

*The ECN shall issue the required directive for the provision of inclusiveness in the manifesto submitted while registering a political party or in the regular party manifesto, if this has not been included.*

ECN Gender and Inclusion Policy 2013, Art. 10.15

The inclusion of political parties and candidates in ECN's approach to GI mainstreaming. This process can provide an opportunity not only to sensitize these actors to GI issues, but also to empower women and disadvantaged groups. The following illustrative activities can be useful in this process:

- a) Provide equal opportunities to women, disadvantaged groups and disabled candidates of political parties and potential candidates by training them on public speaking, lobbying for public support, using the media, developing and implementing gender-sensitive campaign platforms, and fund-raising.
- b) Make provisions to exempt or reduce candidacy nomination fees for GI target groups.

- c) Offer training programs for authorized officials of political parties registered to contest elections on the importance of gender equality and social inclusion, including on the need for greater support for women and other representatives from marginalized groups for election campaigning, and on eradicating issues such as harassment, character assassination and discrimination against candidates.
- d) Establish an informal Working Group consisting of female parliamentarians to discuss and analyze and recommend solutions to meet the challenges in political participation of women. The Working Group shall include members from the GICC and the GI Unit. The Working Group shall also include representatives of development partners working with the ECN.
- e) Implement capacity building programs targeting women leaders who have not been able to take political leadership due to a lack of opportunities for personal and professional skills development, arising from limited access to economic resources, and social barriers at the family and community level.

#### **4.2.3. Collaboration with Stakeholders**

CSOs who work in the areas of voter education and political processes are excellent partners for collaboration. They are experienced in reaching out to women, disadvantaged groups, persons with disability, and the youth, and have developed strategies on how to reach and motivate these hard-to-reach groups. Furthermore, existing capacity development programs in areas such as education and health, implemented by the Government of Nepal, can serve as vehicles for training individuals on civic and voter education. Therefore, the ECN may consider the following activities to collaborate with stakeholders:

- a) Develop a Working group including CSOs and other

stakeholders to discuss the subject of voter registration.

- b) Develop a sustainable network of CSOs, secondary school level social studies teachers, Electoral Education Volunteers (NISIKA), and other relevant stakeholders who provide voter education in all 75 districts and at the central level. This network will be useful in reaching out to under-served population such as women, Muslims, persons with disability and other excluded communities. Relying on the expertise and connections of such a network will enable the ECN to have a better understanding of, and reach out to these communities.
- c) Collaborate with existing government-implemented capacity building programs at the district level (for example, *Kishori* – youth development program), Children’s Clubs, women’s groups and cooperatives, teachers’ training programs to provide voter education through their ongoing programs.
- d) Collaborate with other relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations and training institutes that are currently active in Nepal.

#### **4.2.4. Collaboration with the Media**

Media plays an important role in all stages of the electoral cycle. It influences public perceptions of candidates and their parties as well as the conduct and management of elections. It is important that the media be aware of the ECN’s commitment to GI principles in the election cycle so that the right message can be disseminated. In this regard, the ECN will implement the following activities:

- a) Revise the Election Code of Conduct to ensure that the media recognizes and acts according to ECN’s enforcement of GI principles, and accepts and follows the Election Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct shall include that the media provide equitable space to women candidates, candidates from socially marginalized groups and candidates with

disability to the same extent as it provides to male candidates in its news and reports. Media will provide equal opportunity for all candidates during election campaigns. The Code of Conduct will include issues such as gender-based violence and discriminatory customary practices as much as it does other important electoral issues.

- b) Encourage the media to report on success stories of women and marginalized groups in electoral processes.
- c) Publicize through the media the legal provisions on punishment for character assassination, and include this in civic education campaigns.
- d) Collaborate with CSOs to monitor media from a GI perspective.
- e) Train female journalists on the electoral process.

#### **4.2.5. Gender and Inclusion in Legal Framework**

*The issue of gender shall be progressively included in all electoral laws, rules and directives, as per the policy of inclusiveness.*

ECN Gender and Inclusion Policy 2013, Art. 9.8

The electoral laws, policies, and directives are the foundations of election management. In Nepal, a number of such instruments with provisions for gender and inclusion already exist. However, there is still room for improvement. The ECN should therefore consider the following illustrative actions in its quest to mainstream GI in this area:

- a) Revise all discriminatory practices that may be found during the implementation of all electoral laws, regulations, directives, procedures and advice developed and issued by the ECN.

- b) In drafting of the Political Party Law, include a provision that would not allow political parties to register unless they are more socially inclusive and have a proportional representation of women and disadvantaged groups.
- c) The Political Party Law should mandate that all political party committees and groups include proportional representation of women and disadvantaged groups.
- d) Revise the Election Code of Conduct so that the punishment for political parties tolerating violence against its candidates (especially women) is clearly outlined and enforced.
- e) Revise the Election Observation Policy so that it contains a provision for proportional representation of female observers, as well as of those representing disadvantaged groups.

#### **4.2.6. Research on GI in Political Processes**

The post polling phase presents the most suitable period to address the lack of adequate in-depth research on GI-related issues/gaps in elections and political participation in Nepal. Specifically, the ECN shall consider the following illustrative activities:

- a) Conduct research on gender and inclusion in the electoral and political processes. Topics for research may include: gender friendly and inclusive election and campaign financing; effectiveness of voter education from a GI perspective; staff mobilization during elections; electoral violence and gender; men's network and family relations; access to economic resources; issues faced by women candidates, voters and election campaigners etc.
- b) Place strong emphasis on proper and quality documentation, reporting and publication of political parties' work focusing on gender equality and inclusion, with the view to strengthen institutional memory, share its learning and practices, and promote wider replication of its GI interventions.

- c) Ensure appropriate electronic and physical storage of all GI-related research as the ECN's assets, and ensure their accessibility to the general public.

## **5. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

The GI Strategy is a very important document for the ECN. Based on lessons learned and best practices, it will be progressively adapted and revised. Strong will and commitment to GI principles are necessary from the ECN leadership in order to create a GI-friendly organizational culture and accountability mechanisms for the Strategy's implementation.

The Commission and its related offices are very important institutional structures for mainstreaming gender and inclusion. In this regard, the ECN's GI Unit is the supportive and responsible institutional mechanism. However, the GI unit is not a separate unit, but is instead comprised of permanent ECN employees from various sections of the ECN. It will: (1) support other sections in the implementation of their GI activities; and (2) monitor implementation of the said activities implemented by various sections. It is therefore the responsibility of each ECN employee to ensure the implementation of this Strategy.

## ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the development of the Strategy is based on desk research and the feedback and opinions provided by numerous stakeholders representing the ECN, the government, civil society, women, persons with disability and socially excluded groups, international donors and representatives of political parties and candidates (see Table 1 below). Additionally, the recommendations and feedback collected from political party members during the ECN's gender interaction events held in Biratnagar, Nepalgunj, Kathmandu, and Dang have also been taken into account.

**Table 1. Strategy Consultations**

No.	Date	Name	Position	Organization
1.	June 26, 2014	Ila Sharma	Honorable Election Commissioner, GICC Chair Person	ECN
2.	June 26, 2014	Dr. Ram Bhakta PB Thakur	Honorable Election Commissioner	ECN
3.	June 27, 2014	Maheshwor Neupane, Bir Bahadur Rai, Gopal Prasad Aryal, Komal Prasad Dhamala, Subash Rai, Eak Narayan Sharma, Laxmi Homagain, Saroj Bhattarai, Anamika Pradhan, Pragya Basyal	GI Unit Members, Joint Secretaries and Under-secretaries of the ECN, observers, and UNDP staff	ECN, UNDP
4.	June 30, 2014	Madhu P Regmi, Bir Bahadur Rai	Secretary, GI Unit Lead	ECN
5.	July 1, 2014	Saroj Bhattarai, Laxmi Homagain	GI Unit Members	ECN

No.	Date	Name	Position	Organization
6.	July 1, 2014	Komal Dhamala	GI Unit Member	ECN
7.	July 2, 2014	Gopal Aryal	GI Unit Member	ECN
8.	July 2, 2014	Saroj Bhattarai	GI Unit Member	ECN
9.	July 2, 2014	Lila Devi Gadataula	Joint Secretary, Legal and Political Party relations division	ECN
10.	July 2, 2014	Paras Acharya, Bishal Rai	Executive Director, Program Coordinator	Youth Initiative
11.	July 2, 2014	Sabitra Pariyar, Suman Poudel, Gajadhar Sunar, Jitendra Paswan	Program Manager, Executive Director, President, Treasurer	Dalit NGO Federation
12.	July 3, 2014	Rajan Nepal, Tulasa Acharya	Executive Director, President	Janaki Women Awareness Society
13.	July 3, 2014	Gopal Krishna Siwakoti, Deepika Naidu, Shobha Gautam	Secretary General, Program Officer, Deputy Secretary General	NEOC
14.	July 3, 2014	Manish Prasai, Jaya KC	Administration Manager, National Project Coordinator	National Federation of the Disabled Nepal
15.	July 4, 2014	Subhash Chandra Rai	GI Unit Member	ECN
16.	July 4, 2014	Eak Narayan Sharma	GI Unit Member	ECN

No.	Date	Name	Position	Organization
17.	July 4, 2014	Leela Adhikari Ojha	Head, GI Unit	MoFALD
18.	July 4, 2014	Kiran Rapakhetee, Radhika Aryal Lamichhane	Under Secretary, Joint Secretary	Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare
19.	July 8, 2014	Tika Dahal	Secretary, NFDN and GICC Member	NFDN (National Federation of Disabled Nepal)
20.	July 8, 2014	Sharmila Karki	President	Jagaran Nepal
21.	July 9, 2014	Kenza Aqertit, John Lovdal	Resident Country Director, Political Party Program Director	National Democratic Institute (NDI)
22.	July 11, 2014	Kamala Panta	CA member	Nepali Congress Party
23.	July 14, 2014	Gitanjali Singh, Giorgia Depaoli, Durga Prasad Khatiwada	Deputy Representative, Consultant, Program Specialist	UN Women

## **ANNEX 2: EXEMPLARY INDICATORS**

### **Indicators measuring GI mainstreaming at the institutional level:**

- % of permanent women employees (disaggregated by the type of position, i.e. decision-making vs. non decision-making positions)
- % of employees representing marginalized groups (disaggregated by the type of position, i.e. decision-making vs. non decision-making positions; also disaggregated by gender)
- % of employees with disability (disaggregated by the type of position, i.e. decision-making vs. non decision-making positions; also disaggregated by gender)
- % of internal policies which have been GI-mainstreamed
- % of ECN district staff participating in BRIDGE Gender and Election training (disaggregated by gender)

### **Indicators measuring GI mainstreaming at the programmatic/ activity level:**

- % of fully accessible polling centers
- % of individuals from GI target groups who feel more confident about the voting process (based on pre- and post-intervention surveys)
- % of polling officers disaggregated by gender, caste and disability
- % of media coverage dedicated to female candidates
- Number of GI sensitive provisions adopted by the ECN
- Number of grass-roots level female leaders elected at the local level as a result of ECN intervention

- Level of satisfaction of female parliamentarians with ECN's support (measured via pre- and post- intervention surveys)
- Number of political parties including GI principles in their manifestos

## ANNEX 3: LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GI MAINSTREAMING AT ECN

Provisions relevant to GI Mainstreaming at the ECN	
National Level	
<b>The Interim Constitution (2007)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right to equality (13)</li> <li>• Right against untouchability and racial discrimination (14)</li> <li>• The economically, socially or educationally backward women, Dalits, indigenous peoples, Madhesi communities, oppressed classes, poor farmers and labors shall have the right to take part in the structures of the State on the basis of the principle of 'proportional inclusion.' (21)</li> <li>• To have participation of Madhesi, dalit, indigenous peoples, women, labors, farmers, disabled, backward classes and regions in all organs of the State structure on the basis of proportional inclusion (33.d.1)</li> <li>• Political parties shall take into account the principle of inclusiveness; and in enlisting candidates shall ensure proportional representation of the women, Dalit, oppressed communities/indigenous peoples, backward regions, Madhesi and other classes. (63.4)</li> <li>• There must be an inclusive provision that the executive committees at various levels include the members from women, Dalit and the excluded and oppressed sectors; (142.3.c)</li> <li>• The Election Commission shall not register any political party or organization which discriminates against any citizen of Nepal in becoming its member on the basis merely of religion, caste, tribe, language, or sex...(142.4)</li> </ul>

<b>Three Year Interim Plan 2064 (“Message from the Prime Minister”)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledges the disabled, women, Dalits, Adibasi/Janajati, Madhesi, Muslim and backward regions as “those who have experienced exclusion”</li> </ul>
<b>Civil Service Act (Amendment 2010)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45% of civil service posts are reserved for: women (33%), Madhesi (22%), Dalits (9%), persons with disability (5%) and backward areas (4%) (7.7)</li> </ul>
<b>Local Level</b>	
<b>Local Self Governance Act Amendment</b> (currently awaiting CA approval)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes quotas for the participation of women and socially disadvantaged population at the Ward and Village Development committee level and District and Municipality Council level</li> </ul>
<b>ECN Codes and Acts</b>	
<b>Election Code of Conduct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaigning for the election should be gender friendly and sensitive towards differently abled people and self-respect of women and differently abled people should not be attacked (8.100)</li> <li>• No one shall be incited to commit any gender based violence or encourage anyone to commit such an act (2.8)</li> </ul>
<b>Election Observation Directive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education requirements for female observers have been lowered from Bachelor’s degree to high school degree</li> </ul>

<p><b>CA Election Ordinance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Political Parties must include in their closed lists proportional representation of Women, Dalits, Oppressed groups Indigenous groups, backward regions, Madeshi including others groups on the basis of the per cent of population (7.3)</li> <li>• The number of women candidates must be at least one third of the total number comprising the number of women candidates to be fielded under the Proportional Electoral System added to the number of women candidates to be fielded under the First Past the Post Electoral System. (7.5)</li> <li>• The Commission may make special arrangements for voting by the blind, disabled, elderly persons, pregnant women and other voters suffering from other similar physical infirmities. (46.3)</li> </ul>
<p><b>CA Election Directive 2070</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As far as they are available, up to 50 per cent women staff shall be employed at polling stations (56.1.c.2)</li> <li>• Appropriate positions shall be managed for deployment of staff with a physical disability or differently abled (56.1.c.3)</li> <li>• The principle of inclusiveness shall be considered when deploying personnel (56.1.c.2)</li> <li>• The principle of inclusiveness is to be considered when deputing volunteers (56.d.6)/Voting is prioritized for individuals with visual impairment, disability, the elderly, pregnant or post-pregnant women or any other voters with physical difficulties (87)</li> <li>• Assistance in casting a ballot for individuals with visual impairment, disability, elderly, pregnant or post-pregnant women or any other voters with physical difficulties is permitted (88)</li> <li>• Collection of gender-disaggregated data of voters and separate queues for men and women are required</li> </ul>

<b>Voter Education Directive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% of local educators and volunteers should be female (13.5.c)</li> </ul>
<b>Local Bodies Election Procedure Act Amendment</b> (currently awaiting CA approval)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A political party shall have to file candidacy in such a manner that at least 50 percent of the positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Ward Member of Village Development Committee; Mayor and Deputy-Mayor of Municipality and President, Vice-President and Area Member are women.</li> </ul>



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