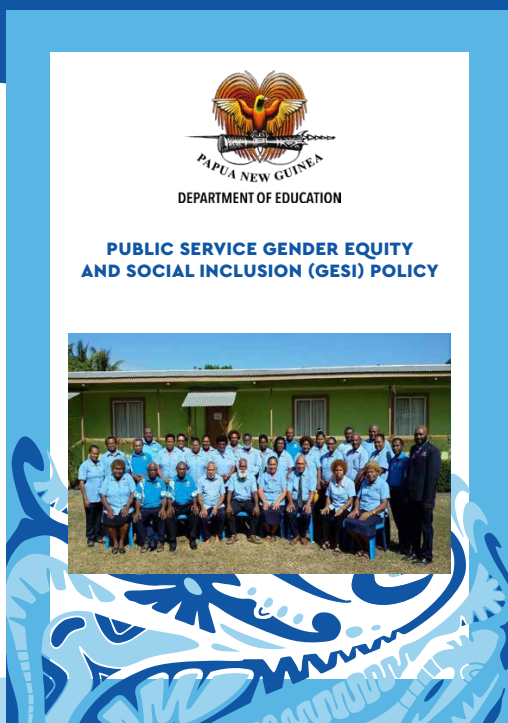




DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Department of Education Public Service **GENDER EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**



What does GESI mean and what are GESI principles and values?



Gender Equity

Fair treatment of men and boys and women and girls based on their needs. Achieving fairness may require providing different support or resources for women and men to address the different disadvantages each gender experiences. In the public service, this means that women and men are equally respected and receive the support they need to ensure they have equal rights and opportunities, both within the public sector and in delivering services.



Social Inclusion

Including and valuing individuals from ALL social groups, regardless of their background, caste, clan, disability status, health status, religion, sexual orientation, economic status, location or other social identities. In the public service, this means ensuring that socially excluded groups and individuals have equal opportunity for employment and receive the support they need to reach their full potential.



Diversity

The DoE should be a workplace that respects and represents the diversity of the people of Papua New Guinea. Women and disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities and those from underprivileged locations and backgrounds, must be provided with the opportunity to gain employment, access professional development, be promoted, and reach their full potential. It also means that the workplace must be safe, accessible and make reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.



Respect

Every employee has the right to be treated with respect in a fair, honest and transparent manner regardless of gender, race, sexuality, health status, disability status, religion, family, economic or cultural background.



Equality

Equity

It is important to understand that **equity is not the same as equality. We must first ensure equity before we can enjoy equality!**

Why is GESI important for the Department of Education?

GESI is a policy imperative of the PNG Government

The DoE is the biggest public sector employer

The public service is a role model for society

A happy, healthy and inclusive society leads to positive economic and human development of the nation

Overview of the DoE Public Service GESI Policy

The DoE Public Service GESI Policy aims to ensure an inclusive, safe, accessible and conducive working environment for all public service officers employed by the DoE and improved equity in education service delivery. It addresses situations where individuals are directly or indirectly disadvantaged or discriminated against, including women and persons with disabilities.

The policy seeks to drive forward collective action to improve equity in education service delivery and address GESI issues affecting employees both in the workplace and in their personal lives. By embracing GESI within the workplace, employees will be well placed to model these values in the community, influencing family, homes, schools, and broader society.



DoE Public Service GESI Policy Objectives

The policy has four objectives. Each objective has inter-connected outcomes that collectively support the achievement of the objective.

Objective 1

To create and maintain a safe and conducive working environment for all DoE public service employees.

Objective 2

To strengthen fair and transparent recruitment, professional development and promotion processes that advance GESI principles and values.

Objective 3

To empower and support women to take leadership roles and participate in decision making processes.

Objective 4

To strengthen support and resourcing for mainstreaming GESI.

Priority Action Areas

To achieve the policy objectives, the policy identifies seven Priority Action Areas.



Employee health, safety and well-being

What is this issue and why is it important?

The DPM National Public Service GESI Policy (2013) ensures that officers work in an environment that supports their health, safety, and wellbeing. However, many officers face challenges that affect these areas, such as:

- ✿ **Cultural integration:** The merging of different cultures due to urban migration can lead to social tension and workplace violence.
- ✿ **Health risks:** Poor work environments, unhealthy lifestyles, and workplace hazards contribute to physical and mental health issues, including obesity, heart disease, substance abuse, and communicable diseases.
- ✿ **Gender-based violence (GBV):** GBV, particularly affecting female officers, remains a significant concern in workplaces.

These health and safety challenges can negatively impact officers' motivation, productivity, and attendance. Poor health often leads to absenteeism or working while unwell, reducing focus and overall performance.

Therefore, implementing effective health, safety, and wellbeing programs is crucial for preventing illness, improving motivation, and enhancing productivity. The DoE has already introduced several initiatives to support its officers in these areas.

What implementation strategies will help address this issue?

- ✿ Conduct an annual employee health, safety and wellbeing survey.
- ✿ Develop and implement health and safety policies and procedures.
- ✿ Develop and implement employee health, safety and wellbeing support programs to address identified needs.
- ✿ Raise awareness of health, safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and programs among all employees.

GESI Complaint Handling Procedures

What is this issue and why is it important?

Officers within the DoE face various GESI-related workplace issues, including gender-based violence (GBV), sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination. These issues can severely affect the health, safety, and wellbeing of officers, impacting morale, productivity, and trust.

- ☀ **GBV:** This includes physical and sexual violence, sexual assault, and harassment. While often perpetrated by male colleagues, GBV is unacceptable regardless of the perpetrator's gender.
- ☀ **Harassment and Bullying:** Psychological and physical abuse, such as verbal bullying, intimidation, disability stigma, or exclusion, are also concerns in the workplace. These may be linked to personal or social grievances.

To address these, the DoE follows a **zero-tolerance policy** on GBV, aligning with national priorities like Papua New Guinea Vision 2050 and the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV. This policy ensures a strong, transparent complaint handling system that is confidential, timely, and responsive.

The DoE is committed to providing trauma-informed, survivor-centred support, raising awareness, and taking decisive actions to prevent and address all forms of violence and discrimination in the workplace.

What implementation strategies will help address this issue?

- ☀ Raise awareness among employees of complaint handling processes and procedures, including how to access support from the GESI Branch for GESI related complaints, such as GBV.
- ☀ Integrate GESI complaint handling processes and procedures within the DoE Complaints desk policy and procedures.
- ☀ Develop a complaint monitoring mechanism for tracking, identifying trends and reporting on GESI complaints.
- ☀ Develop awareness materials and provide training to employees to address GESI issues identified through GESI complaints monitoring.

Professional Development (Employment and Promotion)

What is this issue and why is it important?

Despite constitutional commitments to equality, women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups are underrepresented in the public sector.

- ✿ **Gender Inequality:** Women make up 38% of public service roles but hold only 18% of senior management and 7% of executive positions.
- ✿ **Barriers to Inclusion:** Cultural norms, limited access to education, and high rates of GBV contribute to this disparity. Persons with disabilities and people from diverse tribal groups also face exclusion and discrimination, with many fearing stigma if they disclose a disability.

Addressing these inequalities is essential for the country's growth. For example, achieving gender parity in the workforce could boost Papua New Guinea's economy by 14% annually.

By embedding GESI principles in recruitment and promotion, the DoE ensures fair, transparent processes that help create a diverse, high-performing workforce. This approach removes bias, nepotism, and discrimination, improving outcomes for the nation.

What implementation strategies will help address this issue?

- ✿ Ensure all job descriptions, advertisements and job descriptions are developed/ updated to: 1) include a commitment to GESI principles and values, 2) define GESI roles and responsibilities appropriate to the position level, and 3) remove bias by eliminating unnecessary requirements that may create barriers for women, persons with disabilities or other groups.
- ✿ Ensure selection criteria and interviews include questions that assess of an applicant's understanding of and commitment to, GESI principles and values.
- ✿ Ensure selection panels include: 1) at least one member with the expertise to assess an applicant's responses regarding GESI, and 2) at least one female representative.
- ✿ Ensure all selection panel members declare conflicts of interest and sign a Conflict of Interest Declaration.
- ✿ Ensure staff performance appraisals (SPAs) identify GESI successes and issues and set GESI goals.
- ✿ Ensure SPAs are submitted and reviewed as part of the selection requirement.



Priority Action Area 4:

Professional Development (Training, Mentoring and Coaching)

What is this issue and why is it important?

A key challenge for the DoE is providing the workforce with the skills and opportunities needed to meet the evolving demands of the education sector while ensuring gender equity and social inclusion (GESI). Limited access to education and professional development, especially for women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented groups, has led to disparities in recruitment, promotion, and representation.

Professional development, including training, mentoring, and coaching, is crucial to bridging these gaps. It helps employees, especially women and persons with disabilities, gain the skills and qualifications needed to excel in their careers. By investing in these opportunities, the DoE not only improves individual performance but also promotes a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

The DoE’s focus on professional development, including postgraduate study and leadership training, helps build a diverse, high-performing workforce. This strengthens the department’s ability to deliver better services and supports the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion across the public sector.

What implementation strategies will help address this issue?

- Develop and implement/integrate GESI within induction and leadership training.
- Undertake a training needs analysis with disaggregation of data by sex, disability status and other characteristics, mindful of potential risks when individual staff are identified as having a disability.
- Review and update the employee training plan.
- Develop and implement a 40% female, 40% male and 20% either female or male quota for professional development training.
- Include training plans within Division KRAs and ensure they are appropriately resourced.
- Develop and implement a mentoring and coaching program to support professional development and succession planning.

Promoting women in leadership

What is this issue and why is it important?

Women in the DoE make valuable contributions, but they remain underrepresented in leadership roles, mirroring national trends in Papua New Guinea's public service. While women hold 38% of public service positions, they occupy only 18% of senior management and 7% of executive roles.

Promoting women into leadership is crucial not only for fairness but also for a more inclusive, effective, and innovative education system. Studies show that women leaders bring more inclusive policies, better equity in services, and stronger organizational performance.

What implementation strategies will help address this issue?

- ✿ Establish and implement a Department of Education Women in Leadership network.
- ✿ Advocate for and celebrate women in leadership and decision-making roles within the public service and broader society.



GESI focal points and male advocates

What is this issue and why is it important?

GESI Focal Points and Male Advocates play a crucial role in driving change. When properly trained and supported, GESI Focal Points help integrate GESI principles into recruitment, decision-making, and service delivery. They raise awareness, support complaints, and advise leadership on GESI strategies. Male Advocates challenge gender stereotypes and promote respectful workplace behaviour, which is vital for shifting attitudes that sustain inequality.

However, these roles are underutilised within the DoE due to lack of formal recognition, training, and resources. Many staff are unaware of the Focal Points and Male Advocates, limiting their effectiveness. Strengthening these roles is essential to meeting national GESI commitments and creating a more inclusive, responsive education system.

What implementation strategies will help address this issue?

- GESI Focal Points and Male Advocates are appointed throughout all DoE Divisions, including at the provincial level.
- Develop GESI CoP ToR and workplans, including GESI awareness-raising events and activities.
- Conduct quarterly CoP meetings to track progress against workplans and identify GESI issues and challenges.
- Provide GESI Focal Points and Male Advocates with appropriate training to drive GESI improvements.
- Develop and distribute a Circular on 1) the role of the GESI CoP, GESI Focal Points and Male Advocates, and 2) the allocation of resources within KPAs to mainstream GESI throughout DoE programs and services.

Integrating GESI in Public Service Delivery

What is this issue and why is it important?

Papua New Guinea has made progress in gender parity in education, with more girls enrolling and completing primary education. However, challenges remain, especially for girls and boys in remote locations, girls, children with disabilities, and those from diverse backgrounds. These groups still face barriers in accessing quality education, and gender gaps widen at secondary and higher education levels.

Additionally, public education services often lack a consistent GESI approach. School infrastructure may not be accessible for students with disabilities, and curriculum materials may reinforce gender stereotypes. Community engagement often excludes women or those with limited literacy.

To address these issues, GESI principles must be integrated into all aspects of education delivery, including planning, budgeting, and implementation. Embedding GESI in Key Performance Areas (KPs) and ensuring access to GESI support will help the DoE provide more inclusive, responsive, and empowering education for all.

What implementation strategies will help address this issue?

- Integrate GESI objectives within KPs, divisional workplans, and budgets at national and provincial levels.
- Utilise GESI Focal Points or engage external GESI technical advisers to support GESI integration in policies, programs and services.
- Conduct GESI analysis during the development or review of all education sector policies, plans and programs.
- Conduct regular GESI service delivery audits to identify and address barriers to inclusive education.
- Include GESI-sensitive indicators and disaggregated data in education monitoring and evaluation frameworks.



PNGAus Partnership

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