

# **Gender Policy Statement for the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (PI Division)**

## ***Purpose:***

The purpose of this gender policy statement is to operationalize the National Gender Policy Framework (NGPF) in relation to the sector and in particular to the Division of Public Infrastructure.

## ***Background:***

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Public Infrastructure Division) is guided by the comprehensive vision of the National Gender Policy Framework [NGPF] which was adopted by the Government of Mauritius in March 2008.

In conformity with the NGPF, the Ministry is required to develop its own sectoral gender policy across key domains of intervention. In particular, the gender policy statement intends: to provide the basis for a concise analysis to identify gender gaps, challenges and opportunities for successful gender mainstreaming; to serve as a platform for action to address gender gaps in the areas of labour and industrial relations, occupational health and safety, and employment by mainstreaming gender into its programmes and activities; to serve as a platform for interaction – that is, a framework for collaboration – between the various stakeholders in these gender mainstreaming efforts.

The Public Infrastructure Division of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping is responsible for the implementation of Government Building infrastructural projects, construction, **maintenance and repairs of roads and bridges and also undertakes repairs and maintenance of government fleet vehicles.**

## ***Vision statement***

To construct, embellish, preserve and enrich the built and unbuilt environment in the interest of functionality, aesthetics, public health, safety, welfare and culture conducive to efficiency and comfort for all users.

## ***Mission statement***

To fulfill the needs of the nation in the design, construction, maintenance and repair of roads, bridges and government buildings by ensuring the provision of functional, aesthetic and environment-friendly **energy efficient** structures conforming to high construction standards and addressing the needs of all users, including specific needs of women, children, the elderly and disabled.

## ***Core values***

Integrity – we are guided by the highest standards of professional ethics and international norms.

Equity – we ensure that projects are administered professionally and in all fairness, and respond to the specific needs of men and women as well as any specific group of users.

Quality – we are committed to provide a quality service to our customers.

Team spirit – we work as a team and share acquired experience, and ensure that men and women are respected equally in the work place.

Timeliness – we strive to meet set targets.

## ***Scope***

The gender policy statement applies to activities, training, human resources management and advocacy efforts by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Public Infrastructure Division) as these are the activities that contribute positively to gender mainstreaming. In particular, the policy will cover:

- Provision of effective and efficient delivery of development assistance to all end-users and/or clients so that these enjoy equal access and benefit;
- Enhancing gender mainstreaming capacity within the Public Infrastructure Division
- providing equal opportunities for men and women within the construction industry and Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping and overall gender sensitive institutional environment/culture
- Increasing visibility of and advocacy for gender equality on the issues related to Public Infrastructure.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Public Infrastructure Division) adheres to the operational guidelines of the NGPF regarding the effective implementation of its sectoral gender policy: The gender policy framework will guide the development, implementation, monitoring of the

Programme-Based Budget [PBB] and Performance Management System [PMS] in service areas related to public infrastructure. It will develop gender-responsive strategic objectives, outcomes, targets and indicators.

### ***Legal framework***

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping will stay guided by all the Acts, legislative provisions, international and regional conventions that define the commitments of the Government of Mauritius to gender equality and non-discrimination. Although there are no policy documents that specifically spell out gender commitments in relation to public infrastructure, the Ministry will make a specific commitment to consider and identify gender-based inequalities relevant to the service area of public infrastructure and address these through corrective measures, in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in particular article 3 of CEDAW that states “States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men”.

### ***Situation analysis regarding gender issues***

Overall, the Public Infrastructure Division is already guided by a commitment to equality and non-discrimination. However, it recognizes that, in the same way that the young, elderly, or disabled have specific needs which need to be addressed to enable all to fully exercise their rights to access and benefit from public services, men and women may have different needs based on their gender roles and that there is scope to integrate these in the design of public buildings, and other infrastructural projects.

Such gender-based user needs must be identified and addressed at the design stage. Currently there are no specific regulations that require building plans and designs to be gender compliant. In addition, there is a widespread perception that construction of buildings is entirely gender neutral in that both men and women can use the facilities provided. Therefore the client institutions seldom, if ever, raise gender concerns as part of the design of the building they are commissioning, although it is clear that they may have specific needs that include but are not limited to:

- Adequate provision and location of cloak rooms and toilets
- Adequate provision of breastfeeding facilities

- Adequate installation of external lighting in car parking areas, roads, bridges, overhead walkways, public infrastructure in general, comprising also the perimeter of public buildings for security
- Considering the needs of pregnant and elderly women in the design of staircases, fire exits and escape routes
- Integration of privacy in open-plan offices.

Therefore, the Public Infrastructure Division proposes to review the draft Building Control Bill and Codes and to propose the inclusion of a clause requiring building plans and designs to explicitly identify the specific needs of male and female users, and state how these are considered in the design. It will also play a pro-active role in advising client institutions on potential gender issues and potential solutions. This means that the Public Infrastructure Division will initiate a dialogue with the clients and request the client institution to provide relevant and sex-disaggregated information about the users of the space. This will enable the client ministries to monitor whether the building is put to optimum use and how well it is suited to men and women's needs.

The construction industry is characterized by a preponderance of men in technical and supervisory positions. In the Public Infrastructure Division, 67% of administrative employees are female, while women only account for 5.7 % of technical staff and 1,7 % manual staff. In the Road Development Authority, just over half (52%) of administrative employees are female but women occupy mostly supportive and clerical posts and only 37% of finance staff are female. 94% of inspectorate staff, 98% of minor grade staff and 90% of technical staff are male.

The Construction Industry Development Board is mandated to provide training and sensitization to contractors, with a view to improve their competitive position on the market. To date the Construction Industry Development Board has not developed any initiatives on gender equality; however, it is possible to launch an awareness campaign that would encourage contractors to recruit and train a greater number of female employees, particularly in the technical and supervisory echelons.

## ***Policy commitments***

### ***In the area of service delivery***

The Ministry will review the Building Control Bill or Building Code with a view to ensure that all new designs for buildings or renovation/upgrading works will be gender compliant, i.e. technical specifications in the design will consider any special needs that women may have (e.g. make baby-friendly infrastructure, consider the needs of pregnant women etc.).

The Ministry will review the Application form for registration/upgrading for the undertaking of building, roads works and other works to ensure proposed works are gender compliant.

### ***In the area of capacity building***

The Public Infrastructure Division will provide gender training for its staff to enable the staff to advise the client ministries on potential gender issues that can be addressed in the building design.

### ***In the area of promoting a gender-responsive work environment***

The Public Infrastructure Division, the Road Development Authority (RDA) and the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) will develop an awareness campaign to ensure that all stakeholders are adequately informed of the sexual harassment policy and guidelines. Specific training will be provided for the Gender Focal Point responsible for implementing the sexual harassment policy.

The Public Infrastructure Division will investigate to what extent flexi-time can be implemented.

### ***In the area of advocacy and lobby for gender equality***

The Public Infrastructure Division will collaborate with the Procurement Policy Office and Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to define measures that encourage contractors to employ women and provide women with opportunities to accede to technical and supervisory positions.

The Public Infrastructure Division through the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) will encourage local contracts to recruit more female labour.

### ***Responsibility for implementation:***

The Public Infrastructure Division will be responsible for implementing the specific policy commitments that fall under its ambit. The Gender Cell, created in 2010, will be responsible for the overall coordination, guidance and monitoring of the gender policy statement and will coordinate with stakeholders such as the Construction Industry Development Board, Road Development Authority, Procurement Policy Office and authorities that give clearance for new buildings and other public infrastructure (e.g. fire authority, etc.).

### ***Review***

Considering that gender relations are in fact social relations, which may change over time, the present gender policy statement will be subject to a critical review in light of changing socio-economic conditions every 3 years.

<b>Policy owner:</b>	Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Public Infrastructure Division)
<b>Policy Author:</b>	Gender Cell
<b>Policy Approved by:</b>	Government
<b>Year effective:</b>	2011