

**Terms of Reference
for the LCG Working Group on
*Gender Equality and Social Inclusion***

1. Introduction

The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and development partners (DPs) have agreed to have a Joint Cooperation Strategy (JCS) in support of national strategies and policies. The main thrust of the JCS is to implement the Paris and Accra commitments on aid effectiveness for Bangladesh over the coming years. The Local Consultative Group (LCG) is the main platform for GoB–DP dialogue. LCGs support discussions between GoB and DPs at the annual high level meeting that takes stock of progress and agree on future joined up work.

The LCG has various working groups covering key development sectors and themes. In this context, the (LCG) subgroup on Women in Development (WID) was formed in March 1989. Due to the shift in development approach from WID to gender equality and women's rights the sub group was subsequently renamed as 'Women's Advancement and Gender Equality (WAGE)'.

The sub-group's main achievements so far have been to:

- Support Institutional Review of GOB's support for Gender and Social Exclusion issues.
- Advocacy for engendering the Country PRSP process (both I-PRSP & PRSP-I & II); and support campaigns (e.g. on domestic violence)
- Facilitation of Donor Harmonisation to Support Gender Specific Programming.
- Revision of National Women Development Policy
- Undertake need assessment of sectoral plans

2. Options for Reconfiguration

In the course of 2009, the LCG WAGE Subgroup had been rethinking its role and design, leading to the formulation of this new Terms of Reference. The new TOR foresees a change to the name of the Group to '***Gender Equality and Social Inclusion***' (***GESI***) to make it more inclusive of areas which are directly linked to gender and equality issues.

Emphasis is placed on the inclusion of the Government in the group in a more permanent basis through a co-chairing mechanism. This entails involvement of a GOB representative from a relevant ministry, i.e. Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWCA) and/or Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW)

The other chair will be appointed by general consensus of the members of the group for a recommended period of 2 years following the LCG mechanism and time frame. The group would meet quarterly and more often if required. Either of the co-chairs may call for ad-hoc stakeholder-or thematic meetings as needed. The TOR will be reviewed and if necessary revised every two year.

3. Objectives

The objective of this Sub-Group is to facilitate policy dialogue with GOB and among the DPs on the promotion of gender equality and social inclusion in order:

- To contribute towards effective and coordinated implementation of national policies, strategies, plans and programs on gender issues through joint results and monitoring framework with clear responsibilities and output
- To support policy advocacy on women's rights and facilitation for mainstreaming gender in development co-operation.(e.g support implementation of PRS, JCS and future FYP -Five Year Planning).
- To articulate a 'Development Results Framework' based on PRS and FYP

4. Scope of Work

The specific scope of work includes:

- promote harmonization and alignment of activities to enhance aid effectiveness and avoid duplication,
- report to GoB and the LCG Plenary through a bi-annual update highlighting progress and constraints in the achievement of goals set by GoB in the sector, area or theme, and as outlined in the joint "Development Results Framework."
- mutual monitoring, accountability and impact assessment of GoB and DPs in their engagement on gender equality and social inclusion;
- facilitate common understanding and integration of policies and approaches within the sector;
- coordinate with other relevant LCG working groups.

5. Membership

Members of the LCG working group are representatives of GoB and DPs, involved in the sector. Participation of Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tract will be sought on indigenous people issues. In addition to these regular members, resource persons are invited from relevant organizations/agencies as appropriate. The group may adopt member(s) when expertise and technical input is needed. The members who are not able to attend meetings will be kept informed of the proceedings and their inputs and suggestions will be solicited as required.

6. Specific Responsibilities

The LCG Working Group Guidelines (<http://www.lcgbangladesh.org/pages/guidelines.htm>) will guide the overall functioning of the working group in the context of the LCG mechanism. More specifically the tasks include:

- **Monitoring gender equality and social inclusion:** Prepare and monitor the "development results framework" and an annual action plan with clear

responsibilities and outputs based on the PRS and FYP. The key elements in the framework will be expected outcomes/results, targets/indicators, milestones and planned actions. These results would be the basis for planning every year. This will also include capacity building support to relevant government institutions/departments.

- **Communication, Advocacy and Networking** The group will report to GoB and the LCG Plenary on progress and constraints in the achievement of goal that is to achieve equal rights for women and ensure social inclusion. This could be done in cooperation with the lead ministry as well as with gender focal points positioned in various ministries and working-groups. Draft minutes will be circulated to all members after each meeting.

Network with CSOs/NGOs in order to create an enabling environment for relevant gender and inclusion related policy discussions. It will also act as a platform to share information among development partners as to who is doing what in the field of women's advancement and accordingly, to support MOWCA and other relevant ministries to improve capacity for donors coordination.

- **Supporting policy and legal framework:** Support will be provided to MOWCA or MOSW in order for them to work with General Economic Division (GED) for engendering PRS. This will also mean work towards enhancing women's empowerment by engaging proactively in following areas: National Women Development Policy, Full ratification of CEDAW, and amendment of all discriminating laws against women.

ENDs