

**Day 1:**

**GEPA Action Plan (BHUTAN)**

**Institutional and Policy Framework for  
Women's Participation and Leadership in  
Public Administration**

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## **BACKGROUND:**

### **Gender Mainstreaming Machinery and Strategies**

- National Commission of Women and Children (NCWC) as the national lead/nodal agency to advocate promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in agencies.
- Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in agencies, both at the central and local level, to help mainstream gender equality actions in agencies.
- National Gender Equality Policy (NGEP) 2020, as the key policy instrument on promotion and mainstreaming gender equality in agencies.
- The National Plan of Action for Gender Equality (NGEP)

## Key Statistics

- Total civil servants as of December 2022 = 30,194 (Civil Service Statistics 2022)
- Women in civil service = 40% (12,076); (Men = 60% or 18,116)
- Steady growth in the size of the civil servants over the past decade with a 24% increase in 2022 compared to 2012;
- Number of women civil servants in all position levels across all the position categories (except in the Support 5 level)<sup>1</sup> is lower than that of men.
- Representation of women in the overall civil service meets the national expectations (40%). However, % of women holding senior leadership and decision-making positions<sup>2</sup> (20.4%)<sup>3</sup> significantly lags behind that of men (79.6 percent).

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<sup>1</sup> Bhutanese civil service structure constitutes four broad position categories (Executive and Specialist; Professional and Management Category; Supervisory and Support Category; and, Operational Category) with several position levels within each position category (21 in total). The career progression within each position level and category is made by promotion through different criteria.

<sup>2</sup> 'Decision-making position' is used interchangeably with 'senior leadership position'. The P1-Management level is a managerial position with functional mandate and authority to make decisions, and the entry point to executive positions. Therefore, for the national review and this action plan, decision-making or leadership positions include P1-management and Executive-management positions.

<sup>3</sup> Established during the national capacity-development workshop in October 2023.

- The concentration of women civil servants in the Professional and Management Category (PMC) establishes a necessary reservoir and provides opportunities to foster women in the leadership positions

## **BASIS OF ACTION-PLAN:**

- *National review of the gender-based participation and measures for promoting the presence and leadership of women and gender-equality in public administration in Bhutan.*
  - Key Informant Interviews (Sr. Managers Interview) – at the central & local levels;
  - Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) – at the central and local levels.
- In-country ‘*Capacity Development Workshop on Promoting the Presence and Leadership of Women in Public Institutions at the National and Local Levels*’, 17 to 20 October 2023 (Paro, Bhutan).
  - Platform to validate the national review findings;
  - Provided action points to be included in the action plan.

## **ACTION PLAN GOAL**

*By end of 2029<sup>4</sup>, the participation of women in the civil service in Bhutan has increased to 45 percent (baseline of 2023 is 40%), with the proportion of women at the 'decision-making level' increased to 30% (baseline of 2023 = 20.4%).*

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<sup>4</sup> End of this five-year action-plan that corresponds to Bhutan's 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan cycle (2024/2025 to 2028/2029).

No.	ACTION	INDICATOR	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	REQUIRED BUT MISSING CAPACITIES
<b>I</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK</b>						
1	Revise the national gender equality policy (NGEP), with strategic guidelines and requirement for GEPA mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised NGEP enforced and implemented;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCWC report;</li> </ul>	2024 - 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Resource;</li> <li>Political will and support;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCWC as the coordinating agency.</li> <li>Ministries; Departments; Dzongkhags; Gewogs; Autonomous agencies; as implementing partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualified Gender Expert/Legal personnel</li> </ul>
2	Strengthen functional autonomy and independence of National Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender Equality Act enacted, with provisions on NCWC's functional autonomy,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parliament of Bhutan;</li> <li>NCWC report.</li> </ul>	2024 - 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Resource;</li> <li>Human Resources;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCWC as coordinating agency.</li> <li>Parliament of Bhutan and relevant public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender Equality Law expert</li> </ul>

	for Women and Children (NCWC) based on the Gender Equality Law	capacity support (adequate staff with required skills and knowledge, and adequate financial resources) and accountability mechanisms.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Political will and support;</li> </ul>	agencies, as implementing partners.	
3	Carry out rapid assessment to inform the impact of GFPs in promoting gender-equality in public administration and identify issues/challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assessment report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assessment report and recommendations</li> </ul>	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financial Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NCWC as coordinating agency</li> <li>● RCSC, public agencies and GFPs as implementing partners.</li> </ul>	

4	Streamline and institutionalise the appointment and operation of Gender Focal Points (GFP) with clear functional accountability mechanism and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government directive appointing a particular position and level of GFPs in public agencies at both central and local levels, with 30% of their time in gender-equality actions.</li> <li>● Revised ToR of GFPs that is functionally sustainable with clear accountability measures;</li> <li>● Separate budget for gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agency reports;</li> <li>● Annual work plans of GFPs;</li> </ul>	2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Political will and institutional support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NCWC and RCSC as coordinating agencies.</li> <li>● Ministry of Finance, public agencies and GFPs as implementing partners.</li> </ul>	
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		equality actions in the agencies.					
5	Implement internal framework for gender equality promotion and mainstreaming in public agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government (Cabinet) policy directive for all agencies to implement gender equality measures;</li> <li>● Guidelines and strategies implemented in agencies to encourage women's participation in decision-making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual, mid-term and five-year performance assessment report of agencies, showing clear gender action outputs/ results</li> </ul>	2024-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financial resources;</li> <li>● Technical expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NCWC, RCSC and PMO as coordinating agencies;</li> <li>● Public agencies as implementing partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Technical experts/expertise at NCWC/public agencies.</li> </ul>

6	Strengthen the institution and implementation of measures to prevent and address sexual exploitation and harassment (SEAH) and discrimination at workplaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Effective SEAH prevention framework and strategies in public agencies operationalised;</li> <li>● No. of SEAH reports through effective grievance and reporting mechanisms in public agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual performance report of public agencies.</li> <li>● Periodic survey; harassment and discrimination reports.</li> </ul>	2024-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financial and human resources;</li> <li>● Technical expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NCWC and RCSC as coordinating agencies;</li> <li>● Public agencies as implementing partners.</li> </ul>	
7	Establish national inter-governmental committee on gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government executive order on establishment of the national inter-governmental committee on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cabinet/PMO;</li> <li>● NCWC report;</li> </ul>	2025-2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NCWC and RCSC</li> </ul>	

		<p>gender mainstreaming issued;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● No. of gender equality initiatives implemented by the national intergovernmental committee.</li></ul>				
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