



Gender-Aware Guidelines for Policy-making and Regulatory Agencies

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender-aware guidelines for policy-making and regulatory agencies are intended to assist decision makers to conduct their work in such a way that both women and men are considered in the process – both as part of the processes themselves as well as in considering the impact of decisions made. It has been clear from years of experience that so-called gender-neutral policies or rules are not enough. The evidence lies in the facts: women are vastly under-represented in government, business, political and social institutions; men still hold most of the management and control positions in telecommunication companies and regulatory or policy making bodies; regulatory decisions are made without any impact analysis; service licenses are attributed to companies without equal opportunity policies and controlled mostly by men.

The following are a set of guidelines, with a brief discussion of each point. These should be used to ensure that gender analysis becomes an integral part of licensing and regulatory activities. Successful implementation of these guidelines requires the development and promotion of new policies within the institutions seeking transformation into a gender-aware environment, e.g., acceptance of these guidelines, in total or in partial form, as part of the institution's rules of conduct. The process of implementing these guidelines should also be conducted with full participation of all parties, and, if possible, with participation of gender experts (e.g., from Gender Units or consultants in the area) to ensure full understanding of the issues and avoid unproductive resistance to the process.

II. GENERAL

1. Facilitate and promote the establishment of a Gender Unit within the Regulatory Agency, the Ministry and/or as an inter-agency effort

Regulatory and policy making (usually the Ministry) agencies should establish units or inter-agency units to promote gender awareness and perspectives and further facilitate the process of mainstreaming gender in the institutions' processes and work.

2. Review, revise or develop new regulations, circulars, issuances and procedures to remove any gender bias.

Regulatory and policy making bodies should review, revise or develop new regulations to remove any gender bias that adversely affect women (e.g. poor working conditions, lack of child-care facilities, lack of maternity leave, limited opportunities for training and advancement, etc.).

3. Promote gender analysis as part of the policy process

Gender analysis is required to ensure that the policy process is based on a complete set of facts and a comprehensive analysis of the problem. Integrating gender analysis is a means to increase the quality and positive impact of the policy. As discussed in the Curriculum on “Gender Perspectives in Telecommunications Policy,” the engendered policy process is one that results in universally reaching telecommunications policies. [See Curriculum for details and proposed training activities]

4. Develop and establish systems to gather gender statistics

Regulatory and policy making bodies should work in conjunction with National Statistics Bureaus or other statistics agencies (such as the census Bureau) to develop sex disaggregated statistics and new gender-specific statistics (such as, access by gender or number of lines per women headed households).

Note: South Africa can be a good starting example as the country’s census already included some disaggregated statistics

5. Dialogue with other national entities

To assist in harmonizing national efforts, regulatory and policy-making agencies should promote contacts with other ministries and bodies that govern national policy on access and education issues.

III. HUMAN RESOURCES

1. Ensure equal hiring opportunities for all women and men, regardless of race, ethnicity, class and age.

Women and men should be afforded equal opportunity to all positions available in any institution. Institutions should ensure that all positions are advertised in public channels and in venues available to a diversified group of candidates (i.e., women and men of different racial, ethnic, class and age groups).

In addition, where appropriate, establish “affirmative action” policies or quotas (based on the real levels of qualified people for each position) to ensure equal opportunity and avoid any tendencies to increase labor segmentation and/or occupational segregation in the work place.

2. Ensure that a certain percentage, targeting 50%, of all supervisory and management positions are occupied by women

Institutions should establish a policy to raise the number of women in all supervisory and management positions at all levels of work, from clerical to top management.

3. Develop campaigns to attract women professionals (particularly for technical and decision making positions)

Institutions should develop hiring campaigns to attract women professionals to work in technical, regulatory and policy-making positions. Such campaigns can be developed in coordination with other governmental bodies as part of an overall campaign to increase the number of women at all levels and areas of government work.

4. Develop and ensure the existence of appropriate support systems for professional women and men

Institutions should provide (by themselves or in partnership with other government or non-government institutions) support systems for professional women and men, such as on-site support to deal with male/female tensions and other important issues, such as day care, access to training opportunities, and flexible work schedules. Such systems not only facilitate women's participation but also increase workers' productivity and dedication

5. Ensure that there are no wage disparities among the genders and establish a policy to eliminate any such gaps

Human resources divisions should ensure fair and non-discriminatory salary practices. Where disparities occur, these should be corrected immediately.

IV. TRAINING

1. Ensure equal access to training opportunities

Regulatory and policymaking institutions must ensure equal access to all training opportunities domestically and internationally. Women should not be discriminated against because of other responsibilities (e.g., motherhood) or their current professional level. Instead, institutions should attempt to provide the necessary conditions so that all employees have equal opportunity to attend training programmes and consequently benefit from improved qualifications.

In order to ensure equal access, institutions should, among other things: 1) invite women and men to attend programmes, 2) advertise training opportunities at all departments, divisions, or work groups, particularly those with a greater number of women workers, and 3) provide adequate conditions for women's participation (e.g., scholarships to cover training costs and a gender-aware environment, including women trainers for various specialties).

2. Promote gender-awareness training opportunities for women and men

Institutions should promote gender-awareness and gender analysis training for all their employees.

3. Support technical and management programmes that train women professionals and create internship programmes with educational institutions

Regulatory and policy making bodies should create partnerships with educational institutions to promote women's enrollment in educational programmes and, where possible, develop an internship programme to provide training opportunities for women in regulatory and policy making agencies. In addition, partnerships with educational programmes (such as business, law or engineering) may also increase the potential for future business ventures headed by women in the telecommunications market place.

V. LICENSING ACTIVITIES

Licensing activities are associated with the process of awarding authorization for provision of services in the telecommunications sector. This is usually the responsibility of the regulator, which, in addition to setting licensing criteria and rules, is responsible for awarding the licenses themselves. The following guidelines provide a basic checklist of issues that should be followed by regulators or those responsible for the licensing process. These guidelines assume that the implementing agency also follows the general gender-aware guidelines for regulatory purposes.

1. A certain percentage of licenses should be awarded to woman-owned companies and/or companies with women in top management positions

Regulatory Agencies should establish a policy to promote licensing criteria that gives preference to woman-owned companies and/or companies with women in top management positions.

2. Develop and market licensing procedures where potential women owners can have access to the information

Ensure that licensing procedures and advertisements are placed in public sources and in particular those that women have access to, such as newspapers, universities, local and regional commerce associations, women's organizations, the internet and specific web pages of interest to businesswomen.

3. Promote the development of business assistance programmes and partnerships with expertise in assisting women entrepreneurs

Institutions should promote the development of business assistance programmes or partnerships to ensure that interested women have access to all business related services, such as license application, development of successful business plans, access to financing and appropriate capital loans, and training programmes, among others.

4. Develop license award criteria based on social responsibility of the business as well as universal access objectives of the proposed venture

Institutions should develop licensing criteria that considers the companies' social responsibility record as well as their plans to contribute to universal access to communications, (such as willingness and plans to contribute to development projects, particularly those with a gender component, telecentre-type projects, funding of educational programmes to promote disadvantaged youth to attend technical degrees, or projects specifically targeting women).

5. Ensure that licenses awarded contain certain conditions to promote gender analysis and mainstreaming for the particular company.

As part of the license awards, regulators should include provisions to ensure that licensees engage in programmes to mainstream gender in their organizations, by accepting the gender-aware guidelines for regulatory purposes, by promoting gender analysis in their work, by offering training programmes for women technicians and managers, and by providing a gender-sensitive work environment.

VI. CONCLUSION

Use of these guidelines themselves should be the rule for policy and decision makers. They can be used in two ways: 1) as a checklist of issues to consider when making decisions, and 2) a consultative document to provide ideas on how to mainstream gender in regulatory and licensing agencies. These guidelines serve as a complement to existing human resources and licensing policies in place. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of rules and should not be used as such.

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August 2001