

Gender Policy

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1. Background

All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

The active participation and cooperation of all members of the community is at the heart of sustainable development. Such participation should build on people’s skills, knowledge and potential and enable them to be involved in activities, which are meaningful to them. In short, the goal and objectives of the South Pacific Tourism Organisation’s (SPTO) gender and development policy recognise’s that development programs cannot succeed if the people - men and women - affected do not participate in and support them.

Through the implementation of this policy, SPTO commits to ensuring that women and men are offered equal opportunities in all of its activities including publications, work programmes, projects and recruitment processes. A strong emphasis on full and equitable partnership between men and women is required for the advancement of women, to reduce poverty, and promote sustainable development.

This policy ensures gender-based dimensions in all SPTO project and policy approaches, such as equal participation in decision-making and benefit from SPTO activities, workshops, training programmes and other interventions. The SPTO supports the development of partnerships between the different industry stakeholders, especially communities and women, in order to support the participation of disadvantaged groups and to provide a more equitable distribution from tourism.

This policy also emphasizes the need for the promotion of responsible and sustainable tourism that could be beneficial to all sectors of society.

The commitment from the Regional leaders recognize the importance of women’s participation in the activities undertaken by the Council of the Regional Organisations of the Pacific through the *Pacific Plan* (PP) that was endorsed by leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in October 2005. The PP has outlined strategic objectives to improve gender equality through the CROP agencies, which SPTO is a member of.

The *Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) - for the Advancement of Women*, adopted in 1994 by all Forum members as part of the Noumea Declaration, formally recognises the importance of women’s participation in national and regional development activities. It identifies the critical areas of concern affecting the full and equal participation of women in the region including all aspects of economics and politics.

The PPA was the Pacific contribution to the Global Platform for Action which was endorsed in Beijing in 1995. Additionally, many Forum members are using the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as a guide for promotion of gender equity

Definitions:

GENDER refers to the roles, responsibilities, needs, interests and capacities of both men and women. These are influenced by social and cultural factors. Therefore the term "gender" does not replace the term "sex".

SEX refers exclusively to biological differences.

Policy Goal

The policy goal of the SPTO is to promote equal opportunities for women and men as participants and beneficiaries of development.

Tourism in the Pacific has demonstrated its potential for creating jobs, encouraging income-generating activities, and benefiting local communities in the region. The tourism sector provides various entry points for men and particularly women’s employment in small and medium sized enterprises creating potential pathways towards eliminating poverty of women, youth and local communities.

The SPTO recognises equality of men and women as an important development goal. Sustainable development can only be achieved with the active participation of all members of the community. Providing equal rights and access to resources and opportunities to women and girls is crucial to reducing poverty, illiteracy and disease. Achieving gender equality requires a focus on both men’s and women’s roles.

The policy acknowledges that the goals and priorities for tackling gender equity will vary from country to country and should be sensitive to the specific needs and priorities of developing country partners. The policy seeks to reflect the commitment of SPTO member countries in supporting and enhancing systematic consideration of gender at an institutional, policy and program level, as well as ensure that SPTO’s regional policies and strategies serves the needs of all people of the region equally.

Objectives

The objectives of the gender policy reflect the need for an approach that is both practical and forward-looking. They are:

- Mainstream gender policies and activities guided by these objectives and,
- Promote gender equality as a crosscutting goal in all Tourism related development.

Policy Principles and Goals

Principle One: SPTO member countries to formally recognise gender and as a development issue of core relevance to their programmes and formally commit to mainstream gender across all Member countries programmes and processes.

- **Policy Goals:** To provide support to members as they work to fulfil gender equity commitments made at national and regional levels;
- **Strategies:** i) Ensure that SPTO staff and Board of Directors are aware of the commitments in the area of gender equity and how these are relevant to divisional work;
- **Indicators**-number of SPTO member countries with reference to gender equality in their Corporate Strategic objectives; number of

SPTO member countries with major policy documents and statements include prominent reference to gender equality; number of SPTO member countries with transparent reporting on gender equality commitments and initiatives in their annual report.

Principle Two: SPTO build core gender awareness and analysis capacity of all staff, including familiarity with gender equality, commitments of member countries and how they relate to the SPTO’s mandate; provide ongoing professional development opportunities for staff in the area of gender development programming.

- **Policy Goal:** Ensure through professional development and training that all staff can respond with effective and appropriate analytical and technical skills to assist countries to meet their commitments to gender equity.
- **Strategies:** In all SPTO programs, trainings, staff will be encouraged to integrate an analysis of the value that the contributions of different groups can make to tourism, as well as the differential impacts that their work may have on the community development.
- **Indicators-** number of SPTO member countries staff who have undergone introductory gender awareness and analysis training by level of seniority; number and duration of gender analysis training programmes offered by SPTO; number of SPTO member countries that have incorporated gender analysis training into annual staff training plans.

Principle Three: Promotion of democratic access to development initiatives and establish lines of responsibility from executive through staff for addressing gender as an integral component of each member countries commitment to sound regional development, including gender equality commitments of governments;

- **Policy Goal:** To promote equitable participation of women and men in all programs stemming from SPTO initiatives and have measurable targets and allocation of responsibility, tied to member countries gender equality policy plan of action
- **Strategy:** The SPTO will encourage member countries to achieve a balance of qualified men and women to participate in meetings and programs organised by the SPTO.
- **Indicators-** the number of SPTO member countries that have a dedicated staff member to work on gender mainstreaming as part of their core job description; the number of SPTO member countries that refer to their organisations gender policy and need to address gender equality in all new Terms of Reference for Consultants and new Job descriptions for staff members;

Principle Four: Recognition of the importance of modeling best practices and learning from experience

- **Policy Goal:** The SPTO will apply the principles of this policy to the organisation itself as well as to its mandated work plan

- **Strategies:** i) Review of policies of the SPTO to ensure that they do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of sex and that they encourage equitable opportunity in i) hiring; ii) Establishment of a monitoring and review process for the gender policy and procedures to ensure effectiveness of the policy and achievement of goals; iii) documentation of best practices for gender analysis and production of training materials on gender and policy analysis.
- **Indicators**-SPTO member countries create a Gender Focal Point (GFP) Network; the GFP network/working group functioning through regular meetings and discussions.

Guidelines for Implementation

The Gender Focal point officer together with the upper Management/Executive should form a Gender Issues Team, which will:

- Assist in the implementation of the policy in light of each divisions responsibilities and commitments as defined by annual workplans;
- Monitor the implementation of the Policy Goals
- Measure progress in achieving policy goals through the indicators

Timeframe and Monitoring

To ensure that the policy is implemented and has a tangible impact, achievements and failures will be monitored and reported annually to SPTO Board of Directors (BODs).

- Gender policy issues should be included as a priority item on all regular Staff and Programme meeting agendas.
- Gender Focal Point should present progress reports to the Executive Management
- The Gender Focal Point will provide an update report on a six monthly basis to the BoDs.
- The BODs will undertake a full review on an annual basis at the end of the year.