



# **Standard Operating Procedures for Mainstreaming Gender**

**Land Ports Authority of India**

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## **1. Introduction**

In pursuit of gender inclusivity and neutrality, the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) has been actively implementing comprehensive reform measures including gender-sensitive action plan, development of gender-friendly infrastructure, supporting gender-related research studies, conducting regular training and capacity-building on gender sensitization and the POSH Act. These initiatives highlight LPAI's commitment to fostering an equitable and inclusive environment for all employees and stakeholders.

In pursuance with its vision to provide state-of-the-art facilities and address security imperatives while facilitating cross-border trade and passenger movement, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for gender mainstreaming have been developed for implementation at the LPAI HQ and across all Land Ports.

The SOP for Gender Mainstreaming is a compilation of Standard Procedures for LPAI and all the Stakeholders working at Land Ports.

## **2. Need for Common SOP for Gender Mainstreaming**

In line with the inclusive growth approach adopted by the Government of India, the LPAI recognizes the importance of integrating gender considerations into its operations at all land ports. As LPAI continues to develop and manage land ports along India's international borders, ensuring that infrastructure and services are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all users has become increasingly important.

The presence of multiple agencies at land ports further highlights the importance of a common SOP for gender mainstreaming to harmonize actions and responsibilities land ports. This SOP provides a framework of general procedures to be followed across both operational and upcoming land ports. While different agencies operating at land ports will continue to adhere to their respective protocols within their defined domains, the SOP ensures that these efforts are collectively aligned with gender mainstreaming objectives. It clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of various agencies in promoting gender sensitivity into various operational areas such as passenger processing, security screening, customs procedures, and access to public amenities.

By ensuring coordinated action among all stakeholders through a gender-sensitive lens, the SOP supports the development of a cohesive, inclusive, safe and gender-responsive environment at land ports. It serves as a practical tool for institutionalizing gender-responsive practices in day-to-day operations, infrastructure planning, and stakeholder engagement across all facilities managed by LPAI.

## **3. Objective**

- The SOP aims to promote gender inclusivity for all stakeholders involved in LPAI and provides precise steps and measures for incorporating gender considerations into LPAI's decision-making processes and organizational culture.

- This SOP offers a guide for integrating gender mainstreaming in LPAI's operations, ensuring consistent and gender-responsive practices at HQ and all Land Ports across India under the jurisdiction of LPAI.
- The SOP will help in developing capacity for gender analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation in administration of Land Ports.

#### 4. Definitions and Key Terms

- **Gender:** Gender refers to the socially defined attributes and opportunities, including rights, responsibilities, and roles in society, associated with being male or female, as well as the related power dynamics.
- **Gender Mainstreaming:** The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels.
- **Gender-responsive:** Policies, programs, and interventions that consider gender norms, roles, and inequalities and which try to either reduce gender disparities or foster gender equality and women's empowerment.
- **Gender Equality:** Equal valuing by society of both the similarities and differences between men and women and the varying roles that they play.
- **Gender Equity:** Refers to the practice of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, access to and control of resource, power, opportunities and services. It is essentially, the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender.
- **Gender Sensitization:** The process of developing people's awareness, knowledge and skills on gender issues.
- **Gender Analysis:** Gender analysis is the process of examining roles, responsibilities, and needs of women, men, girls, and boys to identify gaps, raise concerns, and inform gender-responsive policy and program development.
- **Sex Disaggregated Data:** Statistical data which differentiates between men and women, e.g., "number of people" in the labour force". This allows one to see where there are gender gaps and being to think about remedial actions.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwanted acts of a sexual nature that cause discomfort to the harassed. They include word; persistent requirement for sexual favours or dates, gestures, touching, uninvited sexual overtures, coerced sexual intercourse and rape.
- **Gender Budgeting:** Gender Budgeting is a tool for gender mainstreaming that uses the budget as an entry point to apply a gender lens across the entire policy process. It involves gender-sensitive planning, resource allocation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to address and reduce gender disparities.
- **Gender-sensitive Approach in Handling Movement:** This means, among other things, training border authorities to identify travellers who may be victims of gender-based violence, trafficking, or related exploitation, and ensure they receive appropriate assistance and protection.

## 5. Gender Mainstreaming in LPAI's Operations and Management

Gender considerations in the operations and management of Land Ports are crucial, as different groups (women, men, girls, boys, and those who identify as neither male nor female) experience situations differently. The purview of these SOPs cover operations at LPAI HQ and all Land Ports, including but not limited to human resource management, infrastructure development, and stakeholder engagement. To enhance gender integration in LPAI following aspects have been considered:

- a) 1.Information and Awareness
- b) 2.Infrastructure and Facilities
- c) 3.Digitization and Automation
- d) 4.Strengthening Trade Facilitation
- e) 5.Staffing and Human Resources
- f) 6.Capacity Building and Training

## 6. Guiding Principles

- a) **Commitment to Gender Equality:** LPAI is committed to promoting gender equality and ensuring that its policies, programs, and operations are responsive to the needs of both men and women.
- b) **Inclusive Participation:** LPAI will ensure the meaningful participation of women and men in the development, implementation, and monitoring of its policies and programs.
- c) **Accountability:** LPAI will establish clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming across the organization.
- d) **Evidence-based Approach:** LPAI will use gender-disaggregated data and gender analysis to inform its decision-making and program design.
- e) **Capacity Building:** LPAI is committed to enhancing the gender mainstreaming skills of its staff through targeted capacity-building initiatives which will equip employees with the knowledge and tools necessary to integrate gender considerations effectively into their work.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

### 7.1. LPAI HQ

The LPAI HQ shall be responsible for overseeing gender mainstreaming across all Land Ports and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To develop, update, and disseminate SOPs for gender mainstreaming applicable to all land ports;
- b) To provide strategic guidance and operational support to Land Ports for effective implementation of gender-responsive practices;

- c) Monitor, evaluate, and review the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming SOP through regular reporting, feedback mechanisms, and field assessments;
- d) Collaborate with central ministries, state agencies, border management forces, and development partners to ensure integrated and coordinated gender mainstreaming efforts;
- e) Review and approve gender budgeting plans proposed by Land Ports, and ensure alignment with national and organizational gender equity objectives.

## **7.2. Land Port Managers**

The land port manager shall represent LPAI at the respective land port and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To ensure the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming SOP at the land port in coordination with all relevant stakeholders;
- b) To conduct regular assessments to identify gender-related gaps in infrastructure, services, and institutional practices at the land port;
- c) To formulate and implement action plans to address the identified gaps in line with the SOP guidelines and organizational priorities;
- d) To submit periodic progress reports to LPAI HQ detailing implementation status, challenges faced, and resource needs;
- e) To allocate adequate human and financial resources to support the effective execution of gender mainstreaming initiatives;
- f) To monitor and supervise the performance of land port staff in relation to gender-sensitive service delivery and workplace practices;
- g) To collaborate with Customs, Bureau of Immigration, Border Security Forces, Animal and Plant Quarantine, State Government departments, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure inclusive and gender-responsive operations at the land port.

## **7.3. Stakeholders**

Apart from LPAI, several other agencies including Customs, Plant & Animal Quarantine, Immigration, Border Guarding Forces (BGF), and Trade Bodies play a key role in facilitating the smooth cross-border movement of goods, passengers, and vehicles through the Land Ports. The role and responsibilities of these stakeholders are elaborated as under;

### **(i) Customs**

The Customs authorities shall integrate gender-responsive practices into their trade facilitation and enforcement roles, ensuring an inclusive, safe and equitable environment for all stakeholders. Their key responsibilities are;

- a) To regulate the movement of goods by ensuring compliance with customs laws and procedures, while adopting gender-sensitive protocols that respect the dignity and privacy of all individuals, especially women traders, transporters, and passengers;

- b) To carry out inspections and clearances in a manner that is professional, non-discriminatory, and sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, including provision of female officers for physical verification and baggage checks involving women;
- c) To ensure timely and transparent processing of consignments to reduce dwell time, particularly for women-led enterprises and small traders, who may be disproportionately affected by delays and informal barriers;
- d) To provide clear, accessible information on customs procedures and documentation in formats and languages that are easy for women traders to understand, including through visual aids, helpdesks, and digital platforms.

## **(ii) Bureau of Immigration (BoI)**

The BoI shall ensure that all immigration procedures at land ports are conducted in a manner that is gender-sensitive, and responsive to the needs of women, children, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups. Their key responsibilities are;

- a) To manage and regulate the entry and exit of passengers across land borders, while ensuring safe, non-discriminatory, and gender-sensitive processing that recognizes the specific needs of women travellers and tourists;
- b) To verify travel documents and enforce immigration norms and national security protocols with professionalism, ensuring that interactions with women and vulnerable groups are conducted by trained personnel with sensitivity and privacy safeguards;
- c) To ensure dignified, lawful, and efficient passenger movement through land ports, by providing separate queues or counters for women where necessary;
- d) To deploy female immigration officers at critical points to interact with women travellers, especially during personal checks, interviews, or when handling cases involving victims of trafficking or distress.

## **(iii) Border Guarding Forces (BGF)**

The BGF shall integrate gender-responsive approaches in their border security operations to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all individuals crossing through land ports. Their key responsibilities are;

- a) To maintain a gender-sensitive posture in communication and conduct, reinforcing a culture of respect and professionalism in all interactions with the public at land ports.
- b) To ensure the security and surveillance of border areas adjoining land ports, with particular attention to preventing gender-based violence, trafficking, and harassment near border zones and transit areas;
- c) To control unauthorized entry and exit by enforcing border management protocols in a professional, non-discriminatory, and gender-sensitive manner, including respectful treatment of women during questioning and physical checks;
- d) To coordinate with other enforcement agencies—including immigration, customs, and local police—to ensure safe and orderly cross-border movement, with protocols that prioritize the protection of women travellers and traders.

#### **(iv) Plant and Animal Quarantine Authorities**

The Plant and Animal Quarantine Authorities shall ensure that inspection and clearance procedures are implemented in a gender-sensitive and inclusive manner. Their key responsibilities are;

- a) To inspect and clear plant and animal consignments in accordance with applicable national and international quarantine regulations, ensuring that women traders and transporters have equitable access to information and services;
- b) To prevent the entry of pests, diseases, or invasive species through scientifically sound and non-discriminatory procedures, while maintaining respectful and professional interactions with all stakeholders, especially women engaged in agri-trade;
- c) To coordinate with trade stakeholders—such as customs, freight forwarders, and logistics providers—to facilitate the safe and compliant movement of agro-based goods, including support for women traders through awareness sessions and transparent communication of procedures.

#### **(v) Banks and Financial Institutions**

Banks and Financial Institutions operating at land ports shall adopt gender-responsive financial service practices to ensure that travellers, women traders and entrepreneurs have equitable access to essential banking services. Their key responsibilities are;

- a) To ensure the availability of user-friendly infrastructure at bank counters or kiosks, including seating, privacy screens for transactions, and assistance from female staff wherever feasible;
- b) To ensure equal treatment and non-discriminatory practices in service delivery, avoiding gender bias in account opening, credit appraisal, or risk profiling;
- c) To provide foreign exchange, remittance, and general banking services in a safe, inclusive, and user-friendly manner that accommodates the needs of women cross-border traders, workers, and travellers;
- d) To maintain and report sex-disaggregated data on service utilization at land ports to inform evidence-based policy and program development in support of gender-inclusive trade and finance.

#### **(vi) Trade Bodies / Exporters / Importers**

Trade Bodies, Exporters, and Importers shall promote gender-inclusive practices across trade operations at land ports, enabling greater participation of women in cross-border trade and ensuring an equitable and supportive trading environment. Their key responsibilities are;

- a) To ensure adherence to trade compliance norms, documentation, and quality standards while facilitating women traders' understanding of procedures through simplified, accessible information and support;
- b) To actively engage with regulatory agencies (customs, quarantine, banks, etc.) to ensure smooth, transparent cargo movement, including addressing challenges faced by women-led enterprises and informal women traders;



- c) To maintain and share gender-disaggregated data on trade participation with port authorities and policymakers, to support evidence-based gender mainstreaming in border trade planning and policies.

## **8. Procedures**

The LPAI shall be responsible for the formulation and implementation of gender-responsive procedures at all Land Ports. These procedures shall be guided by the following components;

### **8.1. Information and Awareness**

The LPAI shall design a comprehensive strategy for disseminating information and raising awareness on gender equality and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To develop gender-sensitive action plan for each land port to implement the reform measures and to ensure accountability by assigning specific responsibilities and timelines for implementing improvements;
- b) To disseminate information on gender equality and benefits of gender mainstreaming through posters, brochures, social media, with LPAI HQ providing practical guidelines for effective implementation of the gender mainstreaming measures;
- c) To evaluate the implementation of gender-sensitive action plans at each land port using the LPAI-developed gender toolkit by the gender mainstreaming team at LPAI HQ, with monthly reviews by the competent authority.

### **8.2. Infrastructure and Facilities**

The LPAI shall ensure that land port infrastructure and facilities are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of all genders and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To establish on-site childcare and lactation room/creche to cater to the needs of women and children using the land ports;
- b) To provide medical services, including a medical room, doctor, and nurse for port users and their families;
- c) To design infrastructure with ramps, elevators, and clear signage to accommodate persons with disabilities and ensure accessibility;
- d) To install CCTV cameras, emergency panic buttons and public announcement system have been installed to deter harassment and provide a quick response to any incidents;
- e) To establish information and help desks with a staff with local language proficiency at land ports to provide personalized assistance and guidance;
- f) To train security personnel, including female security supervisor and officers at the land ports to handle gender-specific security issues and ensuring a safe environment for everyone.

### **8.3. Capacity Building and Training**

The LPAI shall build institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming through continuous training and awareness programs and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To conduct capacity building programs in every quarter to inform staff and stakeholders about basics of gender mainstreaming, legal frameworks, and practical applications;
- b) To design mandatory training program for all staff members that covers key concepts, policies, and practices related to gender mainstreaming. These trainings include practical exercises and case studies relevant to the port environment;
- c) To design training modules for security personnel, customer service staff, immigration officers and management to address specific gender-related issues pertinent to their responsibilities;
- d) LPAI HQ will conduct regular assessment of capacity building and training needs of the land ports and update modules accordingly.

### **8.4. Gender Friendly Workplace**

The LPAI shall promote gender equity and inclusivity within its organizational and operational structure and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To work towards achieving at least 30% representation of women across all staff levels, including decision-making roles;
- b) To collect sex-disaggregated data for passengers in the passenger terminal and stakeholders (CHAs, Exporters, Importers, Truck Drivers and other logistics providers) in the cargo terminal at land ports and conduct a comprehensive analysis to inform gender-responsive planning and service delivery;
- c) To develop strict anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies with clear definitions of unacceptable behaviour, detailed reporting procedures, and consequences for violations;
- d) To introduce gender budgeting to align financial planning with the diverse needs of different gender groups.

### **8.5. Public Amenities**

The LPAI shall provide safe, accessible, and gender-responsive public amenities at all land ports and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To provide adequate seating and shelter in waiting areas and other public spaces to accommodate users of all genders at the land ports. The seating arrangements will be designed to offer privacy and comfort, particularly for those who may require it, such as nursing mothers or individuals with disabilities;

- b) To maintain well-lit public areas, including parking lots, walkways and waiting spaces monitored by trained security personnel or surveillance systems;
- c) To clearly display information on available amenities, including the location of restrooms and other gender-specific facilities at land ports, to ensure all users are informed and can navigate the port easily.

## **8.6. Safety Measures**

The LPAI shall implement proactive safety and security systems with a strong gender focus and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To organize training programs for security personnel on gender sensitivity, anti-human trafficking, and zero-tolerance policies, equipping them to identify and respond effectively to gender-based violence, manage situations involving women and other vulnerable groups with empathy and care, and promote respectful, non-discriminatory interactions;
- b) To conduct regular safety audits to identify and address potential risks and vulnerabilities from a gender perspective. This includes evaluating physical infrastructure, security protocols, and incident response procedures to ensure they are gender-sensitive and effective.

## **9. Reporting and Referral Mechanism**

The Reporting and Referral Mechanism shall serve as a structured and confidential process for addressing gender-related grievances at land ports. In accordance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, this mechanism will ensure that all complaints of gender-based discrimination and harassment are addressed promptly, fairly, and sensitively. The mechanism is supported by the following provisions, which detail the establishment, composition, responsibilities, and procedures of the Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) to ensure effective reporting, referral, and resolution of gender-related grievances at all land ports;

- a) An ICC will be constituted at each land port, comprising a gender-balanced team, including at least one external member with experience in gender issues, in accordance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013;
- b) Each ICC will be responsible for addressing complaints related to gender discrimination, harassment, and other gender-based grievances, and for ensuring enforcement of this policy at the respective land port;
- c) Contact details of ICC members will be provided on the LPAI website and shall also be displayed in common areas of land ports. This information will be included in staff orientation materials and disseminated regularly through internal communication channels;
- d) All ICC members at LPAI HQ and land ports will undergo regular training to ensure awareness of relevant laws and to build capacity in handling complaints with sensitivity, empathy, and impartiality;

- e) Confidentiality of complainants will be maintained throughout the grievance redressal process. Complaint-related information will be accessible only to authorized personnel and all records will be securely maintained. Any breach of confidentiality protocols will result in disciplinary action;
- f) All ICCs will follow standardized protocols for acknowledging, investigating, and resolving complaints. An initial assessment will be completed within seven days of receiving a complaint, and the investigation will be concluded within 30 days. Complainants will be kept informed about progress and final outcomes;
- g) Strict action will be taken against any retaliation towards individuals who report gender-related concerns, reaffirming LPAI's commitment to a safe and inclusive workplace;
- h) All LPAI staff and stakeholders will be obligated to report gender-related grievances to the designated ICC. The ICC shall ensure appropriate and timely response in all such matters.

## **10. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms**

LPAI HQ shall be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming SOP at all land ports, and shall primarily be responsible for;

- a) Establish a robust framework to monitor the implementation and assess the impact of gender mainstreaming initiatives at land ports;
- b) Conduct monthly reviews and assessments to identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in its gender mainstreaming efforts;
- c) Carry out quarterly assessments of gender mainstreaming reform measures across all land ports, updating the scores and rankings accordingly;
- d) Conduct Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey once in quarter at land ports to establish mechanisms for obtaining feedback from employees and stakeholders including customs, bureau of immigration, passengers and traders on gender mainstreaming initiatives;
- e) Offer training and development opportunities to staff for enhancing their capacities in monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming through workshops and capacity-building programs.

## **11. Key Criteria for Land Ports**

The land ports shall ensure that the following key criteria are fulfilled to promote gender-friendly and inclusive infrastructure, services and institutional mechanisms;

### **(i) Infrastructure and Accessibility**

The land ports shall ensure that physical infrastructure and facilities are inclusive, safe, and cater to the specific needs of women and vulnerable groups, and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To ensure availability of separate, clean, and well-maintained women's toilets and rest areas, including designated spaces in drivers' resting rooms;

- b) To provide full accessibility for women, including those who are elderly, pregnant, or accompanied by young children;
- c) To Install appropriate safety and security measures such as adequate lighting, panic button, public announcement system, CCTV cameras, and trained security personnel.

## **(ii) Stakeholder Servicing and Facilitation**

The land ports shall ensure that services and facilitation mechanisms are responsive to the diverse needs of women users across all categories and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To ensure that stakeholder servicing and support are responsive to the needs of women users, including passengers, traders and staff;
- b) To provide facilitation services that are easily accessible, user-friendly and designed with women's needs in mind;
- c) To establish dedicated help desks and display gender-sensitive helpline numbers prominently across the land port premises to provide immediate assistance and ensure timely redressal of issues faced by women users.

## **(iii) Institutional Mechanisms**

The land ports shall mainstream gender into institutional structures, policies and governance processes and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To integrate gender mainstreaming measures into the institutional structure and operations of the land port authorities;
- b) To ensure 30% representation and active participation of women in the workforce and decision-making processes;
- c) To conduct regular assessment and incorporate feedback received from women users to improve operations and services.

## **(iv) Outreach and Capacity Building**

The Land Ports shall promote awareness, participation and capacity development for gender inclusion at all levels and shall primarily be responsible;

- a) To conduct capacity building and training programs for land port staff and relevant stakeholders on gender sensitivity and anti-human trafficking and zero tolerance;
- b) To undertake targeted outreach and awareness programs to promote and support women's participation in cross-border trade and tourism.

By fulfilling these criteria across infrastructure, services, institutional mechanisms, and capacity building, Land Ports can become more gender-friendly and inclusive environments that facilitate greater participation of women in cross-border economic activities.