

## GENDER ACTION PLAN

### A. Gender Context

1. **Despite progress on various development indicators, gender inequality persists in Bangladesh.** While Bangladesh has achieved positive developments in health and education, gender inequality in employment persists. While women's labor force participation has grown from 31% in 2011 to 35% in 2021, women's participation is limited to low-paying unskilled jobs.<sup>1</sup> Women also have lower access to vocational and technical skills. For example, large gender disparities exist in enrollments – only 28% of students enrolled in technical or vocational training were women.<sup>2</sup>

2. **Women's roles in the economic sphere.** Women are overrepresented in both the informal and rural sector. While there is some increase in numbers employed in the formal sectors, there is a larger percentage increase in the informal sector such as home-based work. There has also been significant recent growth in new areas of women's employment such as public sector employment (teachers or health workers), self-employment, and household enterprises. The textiles and garments sector revolution in Bangladesh presented new opportunities for women's employment, but failed to secure high skill jobs and a safe and secure workplace environment for them.<sup>3</sup> Though women continue to be in a small minority in decision-making roles, they are slowly entering into senior management roles. In 2016, ownership of 13% of the firms included women; 5% firms have women in top management and 25% women (compared to 33% men) had an account in a financial institution.<sup>4</sup>

### B. Envoy Textiles Limited

3. **Human resources policies and practices.** Envoy Textiles Limited (ETL) has an anti-harassment and abuse policy and a sexual harassment policy available in local language for the staff. The company has formed an anti-sexual harassment committee where two members are selected from outside the organization (such as social services) to oversee complaints. ETL continues to offer flexible work arrangements which were introduced after coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Extensive staff development programs exist however there is no specific training on gender equality.

4. **Staffing.** As of December 2021, ETL does not have any targeted recruitment or retention strategy to employ more women. (Confidential information deleted.). ETL factory staff work in multiple shifts covering both night and day. Local regulations permit night shifts for women only after annually obtaining their written consent. Women's need for approval of male household members, safety concerns, additional paperwork, restrictive cultural norms regarding women's movement, and dormitory-style accommodation for workers, are all factors hindering women's engagement in factory roles.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank. [World Development Indicators Database](#). (accessed 23 June 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Asian Development Bank. 2017. [Bangladesh: Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors](#). Manila.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kabir et al. 2018. [Vulnerabilities of Women Workers in the Readymade Garment Sector of Bangladesh: A Case Study of Rana Plaza](#). Journal of International Women's Studies, 19(6), 224–235.

<sup>4</sup> Asian Development Bank. 2017. [Bangladesh: Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors](#). Manila.

**Table 1:** (Confidential information deleted.)

5. **Suppliers.** Studies show that women-owned businesses secure less than one percent of corporate purchases.<sup>5</sup> In line with these global trends, ETL does not currently track the diversity dimensions of its suppliers and has no gender inclusive supplier practices.

### C. Gender Action Plan

6. The project is categorized as *effective gender mainstreaming*. The gender measures for the project are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Gender Action Plan**

Results Chain	Performance Indicators with Targets and Baselines
<b>Outputs</b>	By FY2024:
1. Energy efficient spinning production capacity of ETL expanded with gender equality enhanced	1d. Number of women in corporate management increased to 16 (2021 baseline: 14)  1e. One gender equality module included in the staff professional development training <sup>a</sup> by 2025 (2021 baseline: 0)  1f. One gender equality policy implemented to support hiring, retention, and advancement of female staff in ETL by 2025 (2021 baseline: 0) <sup>b</sup>
2. Gender equality in the local economy enhanced	2a. At least one supplier contracted by Envoy is a gender inclusive business <sup>c</sup> by 2025 (2021 baseline: 0)  2b. Proportion of paid interns that are women increased to at least 50% (2021 baseline: 25%; 1 woman of 4 total)

ETL = Envoy Textiles Limited, FY = fiscal year.

<sup>a</sup> The gender module may include awareness of company's gender policies and facilitated discussions on improving gender equality in the workplace.

<sup>b</sup> A gender equality policy is intended to create an enabling environment for gender equality in the company and support implementation of workplace practices that advance equality such as guidance to increase recruitment, retention and promotion of female staff.

<sup>c</sup> A gender inclusive business is at least 50% owned by women.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

<sup>5</sup> UN Women. 2017. [The Power of Procurement: How to Source from Women-Owned Businesses](#). New York.