

GREAT Women Project



Integrating Environmental Governance in Women's Economic Empowerment Initiatives

*Towards Environmentally-Sound
and Gender Sensitive Enterprises*



Philippine
Commission
on Women

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Most micro, small and medium enterprises, such as agri-based livelihoods, fisheries and handicrafts, are women-led and highly dependent on natural resources. Such resources are limited yet rapidly depleting and adversely affected by the radically changing climate. Aside from these, the use of natural resources for both productive and household activities; management of solid waste, air and water pollution; use and disposal of hazardous and toxic materials; governance over the utilization of land and other natural resources; and, the enforcement of environment laws and policies add to the environmental issues confronting women's enterprises as well as the local and national governments overseeing economic development.

These challenges are recognized by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), through the GREAT Women Project, making environmental governance as one of the cross-cutting themes in the pursuit of women's economic empowerment. In 2008, PCW forged partnerships with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and its attached bureaus, to integrate environmental management and sustainability in women's livelihood and enterprise development. Such shall be integrated mainly by promoting gender-responsive and environmentally sound regulation and policies for enterprise development, women's access to environmental education and participation in community resource management, and promotion of environment-friendly enterprises.

PCW-GREAT Women Project and the DENR prioritized the integration of a gender dimension in environmental laws, through the subproject activities of DENR-EMB. Integrating a gender dimension in environmental laws helps determine women's roles in implementing environmental laws and in promoting sound environmental practices. Through gender-aware environmental laws, women micro and small entrepreneurs, local government units and NGOs will have higher awareness on environmental laws and regulations for pollution prevention and environmental protection.

Three sub-projects under the GREAT Women Project were developed by DENR namely: Support to Micro and Small Enterprises on Natural Resources: Community Livelihood Assistance Programs with the Forest Management Bureau (FMB), Capability Building on Environmental Management System and Pollution Prevention with the Environment and Management Bureau (EMB), and the Development of a Gender-Responsive Eco-tourism Management Plan for Pamilacan Island with the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB).

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Specifically with EMB, the sub-project likewise aimed for the integration of gender in environmental laws to ensure women's roles in policy implementation, resulting to greater awareness on pollution prevention and environmental protection among women entrepreneurs, local governments and non-government organizations.

At the onset of project partnership, EMB underwent a series of capacity building activities on gender and women's economic empowerment. Select staff were trained to become technical advisers on women's economic empowerment, who then cascaded orientations to EMB Regional Offices.

In December 2008, the PCW-GREAT Women Project and EMB, together with the local governments of Metro Naga and its women microentrepreneurs, collectively analyzed the gender aspects and implications of select environmental laws on LGUs, women and small business establishments. The five main environmental laws that have been from a gender perspective are the following:

- (1) Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System
(based on Presidential Decrees 984 and 1586)
- (2) Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act 9003)
- (3) Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 (Republic Act 9275)
- (4) Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 (Republic Act (Republic Act 8749)
- (5) Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act
(Republic Act 6969)

Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System. The government issued Presidential Decree (PD) 984, the National Pollution Control Decree of 1976, and Presidential Decree (PD) 1586, establishing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) System of 1978. The establishment of the EIS, otherwise referred to as the Philippine Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) System, ensures that environmental concerns are given importance as early as the planning stage of every proposed project and in all undertakings of government agencies, including government and private corporations, firms and entities.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process of predicting the likely environmental consequences of implementing a project and designing appropriate preventive, mitigating and enhancement measures. It helps the government, decision makers, project proponent and affected communities decide whether the benefits of the project

Analyzing Gender Issues and Impacts of Select Environmental Laws That Affect Enterprise Development

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outweigh the negative consequences or risks on the environment. It is done prior to the issuance of an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC).

Using gender analysis, here are the entry points for gender mainstreaming for enterprises and local governments in applying the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) System and the four other laws supporting it:

- EIA assures women and men in the community of environmentally-sound projects, including a business operation. Through the EIS, women in business may help assure their community of better and socially-acceptable projects that encourage the use of cleaner technologies. It also helps women identify alternatives and measures that can minimize, alleviate and prevent adverse consequences of project and enterprise development. This occurs after when an EIA is required and recommendations to projects are issued. Projects required to secure either an environmental clearance or an ECC normally are enterprises that are located in an environmentally critical project and an environmentally critical area.
- Women can likewise participate in monitoring compliance to EIA by coordinating with their local Multi-partite Monitoring Team (MMT). This team encourages public participation and vigilance to protect the environment and natural resources, and provide appropriate check and balance mechanisms in business setting-up and operations. It is currently composed of representatives from DENR, the project or business proponent, LGUs, locally-accredited non-government organizations or people's organizations, and affected communities.

Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. This law provides the legal framework for the systematic, comprehensive ecological solid waste management (ESWM) program in the country to ensure protection of public health and the environment. ESWM refers to the systematic administration of activities which provide proper transportation, storage, transfer, processing treatment and disposal of solid waste which do not harm the environment. Solid waste refers to all discarded household and commercial waste, non-hazardous sweepings, construction debris, agricultural waste and other non-hazardous waste materials. Under this law, enterprises are encouraged to promote and propagate effective SWM practices and manufacture environment-friendly products.

Fact on the Environment:

In 2007, solid waste projection is at 12.45 million tons. This 2012, waste projection is pegged at 13.8 million tons.

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Using gender analysis, here are the entry points to gender mainstreaming in applying the ESWM on enterprises and local governments:

- Enterprises are required to segregate wastes at the source. Women-led enterprises should maintain a safe environment by reducing or avoiding wastes in business operations, reusing and recycling wastes. It should provide for designated areas and containers for recyclable and non-recyclable solid wastes to be collected by the municipality or private center. Solid waste will have to be placed in separate containers which shall be properly marked or identified as "compostable," "non-recyclable," "recyclable" or "special waste." Use of open dumps to discard solid waste is prohibited.
- Enterprises, including women-led enterprises, are prohibited to manufacture, distribute or use non-environmentally acceptable (NEA) products and packaging materials. Importing consumer products packaged in NEA materials is likewise prohibited for enterprises.
- At the local government level, each barangay or a cluster of barangays shall allocate a parcel of land where a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) can be established. The MRF shall receive mixed waste for final sorting, segregation, composting and recycling. With this, the LGU is required to divert at least 25% of all solid waste from waste disposal facilities through re-use, recycling and composting activities and other resource recovery activities. Barangay leaders should consider the active involvement of women residents in the establishment and management of the MRF, in particular, and in the SWM Program of the barangay, in general.

Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004. The Philippine Clean Water Act aims to protect the country's water bodies from land-based sources of pollution such as industries and commercial establishments, agriculture and community/household activities. It provides for a comprehensive and integrated strategy to prevent and minimize pollution through a multi-sectoral and participatory approach involving all the stakeholders.

Fact on the Environment:

About 48% of water pollution is caused by household waste, compounded by the lack of an adequate sewerage system.

Using gender analysis, here are the entry points to gender mainstreaming in applying the Clean Water Act to enterprises and local governments:

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- Enterprises that discharge wastewater are encouraged to adopt wastewater minimization and waste treatment. It is likewise required to put up an environmental guarantee fund as part of their environmental management plan.
- Enterprises that discharge regulated effluents into regulated bodies of water are required to obtain discharge permits from DENR. Discharge permits are valid anywhere from one to five years, with a possibility of renewal.
- Enterprises that cause direct pollution to bodies of water should conduct clean-up operations and shoulder clean-up expenses. Aside from these, it shall likewise incur penalties if they dump waste into water bodies and if they fail to conduct clean-up operations.
- Barangays should involve and consult women when making barangay ordinances pertaining to Water Quality Management. The DENR and the LGUs, on the other hand, in consultation with business and industries, shall formulate appropriate incentives to preserve and protect water bodies.

Philippine Clean Air Act. The Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 is a holistic national program of air pollution that primarily focuses on pollution prevention and provides for a comprehensive management program on air pollution. It is essential in governing highly urbanized cities where industries are commonly located and possible contributing to air pollution.

Using gender analysis, here are the entry points to gender mainstreaming in applying the Clean Air Act on enterprises and local governments:

- Local government officials to take necessary and appropriate action to abate or control air pollution to protect and safeguard all female and male workers against dangers to their health. Women may file legal action due to illness, physical injury or damage to property as a result of air pollution.
- Women engaged in business may refer to the EMB for more information on air quality management. As they are mostly involved in the daily preparation of food - whether in the household or in their business operations, women should

Fact on the Environment:

Total Suspended Particulates (TSP) Levels During Ambient Air Quality Monitoring now exceed standards. Adverse health impacts are foreseen in worsening air pollution.

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know that there is a specified allowable content of additives in all types of fuels and fuel-related products.

- Barangays should involve and consult women when making barangay ordinances pertaining to Air Quality Management.

Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act. Under this Act, importation, manufacture, processing, handling, sale, storage, distribution, use and disposal of all unregulated chemical substances and mixtures in the country, as well as the entry, even in transit, or storage and disposal of hazardous and nuclear wastes are regulated. Toxic substances are natural, manufactured or synthetic chemicals capable of causing injury to life and the environment. Hazardous wastes are substances that are without any safe commercial, industrial, agricultural, or economic usage.

This law further stipulates that chemicals and its wastes are to be managed to ensure the safety of both women and men who are especially exposed to such substances in their household, occupation and businesses. It also aims to prevent injury in general and adverse impacts on the environment, such as endangering viability of species, disrupting the diversity of habitats, and degrading the quality of the environment. It likewise concerns the regulation of importation, manufacturing, processing, handling, sales, storage, distribution, use and disposal of all unregulated chemical substance and mixture within the country.

Using gender analysis, here are the entry points to gender mainstreaming in applying this law on enterprises and local governments:

- Women who are exposed daily to household hazardous chemicals as well as the generators of such hazardous wastes and chemicals should be aware that the generators of such chemicals and wastes have the responsibility to properly manage and dispose of these wastes. Generators are accountable for the cost of proper storage, treatment, and disposal of such wastes.
- Women who think they may be exposed to chemicals and hazardous wastes may refer to the EMB through the Environmental Education and Information Division (EEID) for more information, procedures and guidelines on the law on haz-

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Interventions Promoting Environment and Enterprise in GREAT Women Project sites

ardous wastes. It is the responsibility of the bureau to facilitate the dissemination of information on chemical substances that have potential harmful effects on humans.

- Both women and men shall have access to chemical inventory and to priority chemical list prepared by the DENR. Women who are more exposed to unsafe environment should be aware that generators of chemical substances, especially those in the Priority Chemical List, are subject to fines and penalties. The Priority Chemical List is a list of strictly regulated chemicals that are determined to pose significant or risk to human health and the environment.

As a result of the gender analysis, EMB developed fact sheets about these select environmental laws and its effects on women and enterprises; these fact sheets were translated in Filipino and dialects for dissemination to LGUs and its stakeholders. Fact sheets conveyed and strengthened messages on 'WMEs being responsible to reduce, reuse and recycle wastes in their households and businesses' and 'women, as managers of natural resources, should explore use of cleaner technologies and produce environment-friendly products.' These fact sheets also advise business operators to secure necessary environmental permits and clearances, and are reminded of their accountability for proper storage, treatment, and disposal of wastes they generate.

The EMB Technical Working Group also realized that, given the gender analysis of environmental laws, it needs to further advocate and secure commitment from the entire department. Partnership later took on a closer convergence by DENR Central Office and EMB technical working groups. Additionally, DENR-EMB planned to draft a white policy/position paper on gender-analyzed environmental laws that will be endorsed by the GREAT Women Project Component 2 technical working group.

In the same year, EMB started conducting, "*Pagnenegosyo at Pangangalaga sa Kapaligiran Pwede Bang Pagsabayin.*" This seminar-forum was cascaded to all eight partner provinces of the GREAT Women Project, targeting women's enterprises and representatives from local governments as participants, providing them with information on proper environmental safeguards for solid waste management, maintenance of clean air and water, and safe management of hazardous wastes in enterprises. This resulted to participants' better awareness on environmental laws and its effects on enterprises. LGUs and WME groups then formulated environment action

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plans for advocating environmental awareness while doing business.

Local governments are responding well with EMB's interventions through ordinances and initiatives to promote environmental sustainability of enterprises.

Select LGUs such as the municipalities of Real, Infanta and Gen. Nakar in Quezon pursued the adoption of a 'no-plastic' policy and 'no styrofoam' use in their market places. Restaurant owners in these towns are discouraged to use styrofoam materials and use biodegradable materials instead. Gen. Nakar, in particular, prioritized the strengthening of its local Solid Waste Management Program by teaching and inculcating to its constituents the importance of waste segregation and conversion of biodegradable materials to organic fertilizers.

In Bohol, the women-led Pavia Entrepreneurs Multi-purpose Cooperative (PEMPC) further strengthened its Eco-Savers Bank Project, resulting to an increased number of residents depositing recyclable materials and earning points that convertible to cash or in kind as well as minimized solid waste problems in the municipality. To further support of the recycling project of the cooperative, Pavia LGU put up a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) which is managed by the cooperative's women members. In Leyte, on the other hand, the recyclable waste materials from the offices of the Municipal Government of Baybay are collected and converted to fashion accessories.

Later on, EMB and PCW developed a gender analysis tool for environmental policies, which has yet to be finalized. This tool complements the PCW-developed Environment and Social Management Guidelines. Such endeavor increased top-level support to gender, environment and enterprise advocacy within the bureau. Hence, in 2012, EMB passed an Administrative Order requiring all GAD Focal Points across all regions to provide proactive technical assistance for women microentrepreneurs on environmental management.

As entry points for mainstreaming gender in environmental laws were already undertaken, EMB pointed out three key factors to raise the commitment of women microentrepreneurs to the environment:

- Strengthening of women's organizations' involvement on environmental management and sustainability at the local level
- Provision of technical assistance to women microentrepreneurs on environment and enterprise

*Challenges
in Applying
Environmental
Laws in Women's
Enterprises*

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- Monitoring of environment action plans especially in the project areas

Additionally, an emerging challenge for environment and enterprises is to introduce gender-responsiveness in available climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. PCW has been active in inter-agency councils on climate change, asserting that climate change is not gender-neutral as it makes the conditions of the majority who live in poverty, especially women, more adverse. Hence, there is an urgent need to ensure that climate change policies and plans are likewise gender-responsive.

About The Project

The Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women (GREAT Women) Project is a governance and capacity development project that aims to promote and support a gender-responsive enabling environment for women's economic empowerment, particularly those in microenterprises.

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the national machinery for the advancement of women in the Philippines, is the lead executing agency for the Project.

The Commission forged partnership with key national government agencies involved in micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprise (MSME) development and select local government units to create a gender-responsive enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. This project receives technical and financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

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