



GENDER ROADMAP

2020–2030

DEPARTMENT OF
INSPECTION FOR FACTORIES
AND ESTABLISHMENTS

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Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Editing and report design: Ruya Leghari, ILO Consultant

GENDER ROADMAP

FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTION FOR
FACTORIES AND ESTABLISHMENTS

2020–2030

With the support of:



Canada



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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Foreword

The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) is an entity Ministry of Labour and Employment. It is the national labour inspectorate of Bangladesh. Its vision is to create a better working environment for workers by ensuring safe and healthy workplaces, to protect the welfare of workers and to encourage cooperation that will contribute to national development.

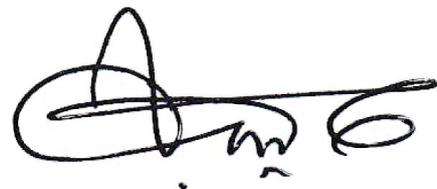
DIFE performs its tasks as defined by the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006 (and its subsequent amendments), the Bangladesh Labour Rules (2015), and in line with the International Labour Standards outlined by the International Labour Organization (ILO). In addition to conducting labour inspections, DIFE's areas of responsibility include providing legal information and advice to employers and workers.

I am happy to see that this Gender Roadmap is ready for DIFE to implement. It has been developed to facilitate the department's progress towards greater gender-responsiveness. It identifies key issues and proposes strategic directions for DIFE's gender mainstreaming work in the short-, medium- and long-term (2020–2030).

Women represent a significant number of the total workforce in Bangladesh in both the formal and informal sectors, especially in the ready-made garment sector (60.5 per cent). DIFE considers gender equality in its work as it is committed to implementing national and international frameworks that include rights and provisions for women workers. Moreover, DIFE believes in integrating a comprehensive gender dimension in its organizational structure, culture and operational management. We have been glad to see changes made in the area of gender equality in DIFE's inspection services and at the institutional level since the institution's promotion to a department in 2014. Nevertheless, DIFE needs to work more in order to achieve gender equality in factories and establishments, as well as at its own institutional level.

I would like to thank the Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-Made Garment Sector Programme Phase II (RMGP II) of the ILO for facilitating the development of this Gender Roadmap for DIFE.

We hope that the Gender Roadmap will be a useful tool to understand the current gender dimensions of the labour inspectorate, and that its implementation will contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the Bangladesh Government by 2030.



Shib Nath Roy, Inspector General

Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments
Government of Bangladesh

Acknowledgements

The Gender Roadmap for the Department of Factories and Establishments (DIFE) was developed with the support of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-Made Garment Sector Programme, Phase II (RMGP II), with funding from the Government of the Netherlands, the Government of Canada, and the Government of the United Kingdom. It is based on data collected between March and July 2019.

DIFE conveys its gratitude to Mr Shib Nath Roy, Inspector General of DIFE, for his support and approval of the Gender Roadmap; Mr Tuomo Poutiainen, Country Director of ILO Bangladesh, for championing the gender equality agenda; and Mr George Faller, Chief Technical Advisor of the RMGP II, ILO, for his overall support.

DIFE expresses its appreciation to Dr Sadika Akhter, Associate Scientist of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) for conducting the research in 2019, as well as to Ms Shammin Sultana, Programme Officer Gender Mainstreaming, RMGP II, ILO, for her overall technical inputs and collaboration with DIFE that led the approval of the Gender Roadmap on 5 July 2020. The Department thanks Mr Matiur Rahman, Deputy Inspector General of DIFE for his technical input, support and continuous collaboration with the RMGP II programme to finalize this Gender Roadmap.

The following ILO colleagues also deserve acknowledgement for their technical support in finalizing DIFE's Gender Roadmap: Ms Belinda Chanda, Operations and Programme Support Specialist, RMGP II; Ms Aya Matsuura, Gender Specialist, ILO Decent Work Team, Delhi Office; Mr Borhan Uddin, Knowledge Management Officer, RMGP II; Ms Syeda Munira Sultana, former Programme Officer, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health, RMGP II; and Ms Sohana Samrin Chowdhury, former Programme Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation, RMGP II.

DIFE also extends its gratitude to the respective officials of the Government of Bangladesh from the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the DIFE, representatives of the Bangladesh Garments Exporters and Manufacturers Association (BGMEA), the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), the Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF), trade unions, and the United Nations (UN).

Abbreviations and acronyms

BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BKMEA	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufactures and Exporters Association
BLA	Bangladesh Labour Act
BLR	Bangladesh Labour Rules
DIFE	Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments
GBV	Gender-based violence
GFP	Gender Focal Point
IEC	Information, education and communications
ILO	International Labour Organization
LIMA	Labour Inspection Management Application
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MIS	Management information system
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
OSH	Occupational safety and health
RCC	Remediation Coordination Cell
RMG	Ready-made garment
SBCC	Social and behaviour change communications
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAW	Violence against women

Executive summary

The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) is an entity of the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) of the Government of Bangladesh. It is the key authority responsible for ensuring the welfare, safety and health of workers in key sectors that contribute to national development. As such, the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006¹ (BLA) (revised in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013 and 2018) and the Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015 (BLR) are the key legal instruments for the department's work. By becoming more gender-responsive, DIFE will be better placed to support the Government's goals on gender equality and the Decent Work agenda.

This DIFE Gender Roadmap has been developed to facilitate the department's progress towards greater gender-responsiveness. It identifies key issues and proposes strategic directions for DIFE's gender mainstreaming work in the short, medium and long-term (2020–2030).

Gender equality issues are embedded in the functions of the DIFE, in line with the legal framework that guides its work. This includes addressing and enforcing key gender-related provisions of the Bangladesh Labour Act and Labour Rules during inspections of factories and establishments across the industry, including:

- the payment of equal wages for equal work (BLA clause 345);
- women workers' right to maternity benefits and employers' liability for their payment (BLA clause 46);
- procedures for the payment, and amounts, of maternity benefits (BLA clauses 47 and 48);
- separate toilets for men and women workers (BLA clause 59, and BLR rule 51), as well as their maintenance, ventilation and cleanliness (BLA clauses 91, 91.2, and BLR rules 45 and 46);
- restrictions on the employment of pregnant women immediately before and after delivery, and restrictions on their engagement in hazardous or risky work (BLA clause 87);
- separate dining and rest rooms for men and women workers (BLA clause 93, 93.3);
- the prohibition of sexual harassment of women workers (BLA clause 332); and
- the provision of childcare rooms for children under six years old (BLA clause 94, and BLR rule 94), among others.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has also developed an Operational Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence and Gender Discrimination in the Workplace to guide its departments, including DIFE, in their efforts to end violence, harassment and discrimination in workplaces.

¹ Bangladesh's key legislative labour frameworks are available on the Ministry of Employment and Labour's website, https://mole.gov.bd/site/view/legislative_information/Acts-%E2%80%8D&-Rules

Progress on engendering DIFE

DIFE has made significant progress related to gender equality, both through its work and through positive changes within the organization, such as:

- the appointment of 62 female Labour Inspectors (as of December 2018);
- promoting experienced, deserving women officials to senior management positions;
- forming a Complaint Committee to address sexual harassment;
- integrating gender and social inclusion in the Labour Inspection Checklist;
- launching a Complaint Helpline to directly receive complaints from workers; and
- introducing the Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA) that facilitates the development of sex-disaggregated labour inspection reports.

DIFE's human resource capacity

The department has significantly increased its human resource capacity and women's representation among its staff and officials – from 314 officials and staff in 2014, as of July 2020, the department had 639 occupied positions, 119 of which are held by women (18.62 per cent). Despite progress towards greater gender parity, there remains a need to expand on achievements to bridge gender gaps, especially in high level and management positions. Women occupy 18.75 per cent of Class I positions in DIFE, compared to 48.8 per cent of Class II positions, 30.48 per cent of Class III and 16.12 per cent of Class IV.² These figures speak to the importance of recruiting more women in decision-making positions. In tandem, it is important to address specific gender-related challenges that women staff members face, such as a lack of appropriate vehicles and security concerns during Labour Inspectors' factory visits in situations of unrest or at night.

Capacity building is key both for improving gender balance, and for equipping all of DIFE's staff members and officials with the skills to make their work more gender-responsive. At present, the department offers three types of training to its officials and staff:

- (i) internal/national training;
- (ii) overseas/international; and
- (iii) in-house training, with a strong focus on technical and general management skills, such as training on chemical safety, construction safety, machine safety, project appraisal, and environmental impact assessments, as described in DIFE's draft Annual Report 2016–2017.

DIFE's 40-day foundational training course for new recruits includes a module on gender. Expanding this module from a few hours, to at least a few days – and ideally adding specific training on gender equality – would be an immense asset for DIFE's gender-responsiveness. In tandem, there is a need for sustained awareness raising and knowledge development on gender issues among DIFE's staff and officials.

² Among the four categories of positions in government services, Class I is associated with the highest status, salaries and benefits, followed by Classes II, III and IV in descending order.

Upholding labour rights and addressing gender-based violence in the world of work

DIFE's inspections focus on enforcing the rights of workers – including women workers – and ensuring employers' compliance with legal provisions in a range of sectors, particularly ready-made garments. Workers' rights run the gamut from maternity benefits to a decent working environment, healthcare and protection from violence and harassment. On average, DIFE's Labour Inspectors make more than 45 visits to factories, shops and establishments each month.

Tools to support workers' rights include DIFE's Complaint Helpline. By calling 16357, workers can submit complaints directly and free of charge. While complaints can be lodged on any work-related matter, they tend to concern legal benefits (e.g. due wages, overtime and dismissal, as well as maternity benefits). Instances of sexual harassment or gender-based violence and discrimination do not feature among complaints lodged to date, potentially due to fear and stigma. This indicates the importance of raising awareness of the helpline, and highlighting it as an avenue for reporting cases of violence and harassment, alongside benefit-related concerns.

Another key tool developed by DIFE is the Labour Inspection Checklist, which pays attention to gender with regard to sexual harassment and violence against women in workplaces. However, gender is not yet among the 10 mandatory sections of the checklist, indicating a need to prioritize this section by making it compulsory. This would advance DIFE's efforts to tackle gender-based violence, in line with the Ministry of Labour and Employment's operational strategy on GBV. The operational strategy specifies DIFE's role and responsibilities – including in terms of capacity building – to prevent and respond to violence. Further budgetary allocations, particularly to increase 'women's share' in DIFE's budget, would enable the department to combat GBV more effectively, strengthen staff capacities, and promote women's participation and representation. A 'gender budget' would also facilitate DIFE's efforts to ensure that its office infrastructure is women-friendly and disability-friendly, in line with the operation strategy, and to develop an action plan for the strategy's implementation.

Sex-disaggregated data

DIFE collects a considerable amount of data, including on gender-related issues. To date, however, the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data has proven challenging, particularly due to a lack of capacity and training, coupled with heavy workloads and multiple priorities. For example, labour inspections reports do not indicate how many pregnant women work in factories, or how many children are enrolled in establishments' day care centres, etc. To uphold the Labour Inspection Strategy 2016³ – which calls for information systems to collect, store, analyse and use data to improve planning and programming – developing a management information system would be highly beneficial for DIFE. Alongside capacity building, improvements in the collection of sex-disaggregated data can be adapted into the Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA), launched in 2018 to strengthen operational efficiency.⁴

³ Government of Bangladesh, *National Labour Inspection Strategy*, 2016.

Defining a Gender Roadmap for DIFE

The DIFE Gender Roadmap is applicable for all the sectors and industries of Bangladesh's economy covered by DIFE through its labour administration processes. It aims to strengthen the department's institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming, in order to support DIFE to effectively implement the Bangladesh Labour Act and other national and international frameworks, including:

- the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 and its subsequent amendments⁵;
- the Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015⁶;
- the National Women's Development Policy 2011⁷;
- the Labour Inspection Convention 1947 (No. 81) concerning labour inspection in industry and commerce⁸;
- the Equal Remuneration Convention 1951 (No. 100)⁹;
- the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958 (No. 111)¹⁰;
- the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention 1981 (No. 156)¹¹;
- the Maternity Protection Convention 2000 (No. 183)¹²; and
- other relevant international frameworks on gender equality and workers' rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)¹³ and the Beijing Platform for Action¹⁴, among others.

The Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No. 190)¹⁵, and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206)¹⁶, are also a useful reference point for DIFE's work, especially as the Government of Bangladesh supported the Convention's adoption at the International Labour Conference in June 2019.

⁴ The Labour Inspection Management Application is a knowledge management system that brings together all the key information needs of DIFE, helping it to operate more effectively. LIMA also enhances data accessibility and transparency by making information available to other users, such as employers and workers, while allowing them to carry out day-to-day tasks, such as applying for factory licences or submitting complaints to DIFE through a specific application. More information is available on the LIMA website, <http://www.lima.dife.gov.bd>

⁵ Government of Bangladesh, *Bangladesh Labour Act*, 2006.

⁶ Government of Bangladesh, *Bangladesh Labour Rules*, 2015.

⁷ Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, *National Women Development Policy*, 2011.

⁸ ILO, *Labour Inspection Convention (No. 81)*, 1947.

⁹ ILO, *Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100)*, 1951.

¹⁰ ILO, *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111)*, 1958.

¹¹ ILO, *Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156)*, 1981.

¹² ILO, *Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183)*, 2000.

¹³ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, 1979.

¹⁴ UN, Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

¹⁵ ILO, *Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190)*, 2019.

¹⁶ ILO, *Violence and Harassment Recommendation (No. 206)*, 2019.

Strategic directions of the DIFE Gender Roadmap

To support DIFE to become more gender-responsive, the Roadmap proposes a focus on three broad levels:

(i) the institutional and policy level, entailing:

- the development of a gender balanced and gender-responsive human resources structure;
- a gender budget;
- changes in recruitment practices that promote the equal participation of women and men;
- a focus on the retention and promotion of women staff and officials;
- the prevention of sexual harassment and redressing cases of harassment;
- the application of gender audits with due importance and duration;
- gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation, and research;
- infrastructural support to make office premises women- and disability-friendly, including through the provision of childcare/day care facilities; and
- the engagement of all men and women staff to promote equitable gender outcomes in DIFE's operations;

(ii) collaboration and partnerships, involving:

- commitment to gender-responsiveness at all levels, led by DIFE's management; and
- integrated approaches to gender equality, and gender and social inclusion, in project design and approval; and

(iii) operational management, encompassing an output-oriented action plan alongside:

- the inclusion of gender indicators in the performance management of staff and officials;
- Ensuring the safety and security of inspectors in the field; and
- according greater importance to gender in the Labour Inspection Checklist.

The Gender Roadmap proposes eight strategic directions for DIFE to achieve greater gender-responsiveness (see the Gender Roadmap matrix for details on recommended activities):

- 1 DIFE's human resources structure strengthened to achieve gender parity
- 2 Gender-responsive approach to remediation, labour inspection and operational safety and health (OSH) promoted in all sectors at the factory level
- 3 Gender-responsive budgeting in DIFE developed and reinforced
- 4 Gender-responsive planning and programming introduced and strengthened within DIFE
- 5 Gender and disability-friendly logistical and infrastructural support ensured for DIFE staff and officials
- 6 DIFE mechanism to respond to gender-based violence and harassment established
- 7 Gender mainstreamed in all of DIFE's digitization, knowledge management, research, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes
- 8 Gender mainstreamed in DIFE's communications and advocacy processes

SECTION 1.

Gender Roadmap of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments

This Gender Roadmap sets out the strategic directions through which Bangladesh's Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) can become more gender-responsive. It is aligned with relevant national and international legal frameworks and standards, including International Labour Organization (ILO) standards to which the Government of Bangladesh is committed, and the 2019 Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). It is also in line with the Operational Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence and Gender Discrimination in the Workplace, developed by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the entity within which DIFE is located.

Rationale of the DIFE Gender Roadmap

Gender equality is an important cross-cutting issue. As the key government authority responsible for ensuring the welfare, safety and health of workers in Bangladesh, DIFE has a strong mandate to uphold gender equality. A commitment to equality between women and men is enshrined in the frameworks that guide DIFE's work, including the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 (BLA), the Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015 (BLR) and relevant ILO Conventions. Therefore, DIFE has devised this Gender Roadmap – applicable to all of its areas of work – to articulate its institutional agenda and gender equality goals, with a view to implementing labour frameworks more effectively.

Objective of the DIFE Gender Roadmap

To strengthen DIFE's institutional gender capacity for the effective implementation of labour laws in Bangladesh's factories and establishments.

Guiding principles of the DIFE Gender Roadmap



1. Gender-responsiveness of DIFE as an organization

DIFE is committed to increasing its focus on gender equality as a key part of inclusive growth and sustainable development.



2. Alignment with national and international policy frameworks

This Gender Roadmap is aligned to the national and international frameworks that DIFE is responsible for implementing, as noted above.



3. Commitment of resources

Adequate resources should be allocated to enact this Roadmap, in line with the commitments of DIFE, the Government and development partners to advancing gender equality in the labour sector.



4. Capacity development

Further capacity building is needed to build on DIFE's extensive experience and address new challenges to promoting gender equality in Bangladesh's labour sector.



5. Coordination, collaboration and partnerships

DIFE will pursue coordinate, collaborate and partners with other government entities and development partners to secure the support it needs to advance gender equality.



6. Research, innovation, learning and knowledge management

There is growing consensus that innovation maximizes the reach and results of development initiatives. By increasing its focus on innovation, spearheading new research and learning, and fine-tuning knowledge management, DIFE will strive to scale up the impact of its gender equality efforts.

Strategic directions of the DIFE Gender Roadmap

The Gender Roadmap proposes eight strategic directions for DIFE to achieve greater gender-responsiveness:

- 1 DIFE's human resources structure strengthened to achieve gender parity
- 2 Gender-responsive approach to remediation, labour inspection and operational safety and health (OSH) promoted in all sectors at the factory level
- 3 Gender-responsive budgeting in DIFE developed and reinforced
- 4 Gender-responsive planning and programming introduced and strengthened within DIFE
- 5 Gender and disability-friendly logistical and infrastructural support ensured for DIFE staff and officials
- 6 DIFE mechanism to respond to gender-based violence and harassment established
- 7 Gender mainstreamed in all of DIFE's digitization, knowledge management, research, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes
- 8 Gender mainstreamed in DIFE's communications and advocacy processes

Structure of this document

Following this introduction to the DIFE Gender Roadmap, the document turns to an analytical examination of the department's relationship with, and actions on, gender equality. Section 2 presents a situation analysis of gender mainstreaming in DIFE, while section 3 highlights initiatives to advance gender equality jointly spearheaded by DIFE and key development partners. Section 4 sheds light on the department's existing good practices on gender equality. Section 5 presents a detailed Gender Roadmap matrix of recommended activities under the eight strategic directions proposed to make DIFE more gender-responsive.

SECTION 2.

Situation analysis of gender mainstreaming in DIFE

2.1 Introduction to DIFE

The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) is an entity within the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) of the Government of Bangladesh. As noted above, it is the key authority responsible for ensuring the welfare, safety and health of workers in important sectors that contribute to national development. Thus, one of the department's main responsibilities is ensuring the implementation of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 (and its subsequent amendments of 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013 and 2018) and the Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015 in factories and establishments. Its gender equality efforts are primarily guided by relevant provisions in these frameworks, for example, its work on 'maternity welfare' for women workers. Other national and international frameworks, as discussed, guide the department's work. These include ILO Conventions ratified by Bangladesh, especially the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), among others.

BOX 1. DIFE'S VISION AND MISSION

Vision: To create a better working environment for workers by ensuring safe and healthy workplaces, to protect the welfare of workers and to encourage cooperation.

Mission:

- To implement labour laws and regulations
- To eliminate child labour
- To enhance the productivity of factories by creating a better working environment
- To ensure workplace safety, including fire safety and the welfare of workers
- To implement minimum wages declared in different sectors

The department collaborates with various government bodies, private sector entities and international organizations, particularly the ILO, to facilitate policy, planning, measures and directions that enhance occupational safety and health (OSH). These efforts on better OSH conditions for all workers focus on improving working conditions and the working environment.

2.2 Key areas of work

In line with the provisions of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, DIFE's key functions are:

- Ensuring safety in workplaces, particularly factories, by protecting workers' health, welfare, wages, working hours and leave.
- Inspecting factories, shops, industries and commercial establishments, especially high risk firms, to establish terms of employment, safety and health, and labour welfare under the Labour Act and Labour Rules 2015. DIFE is also responsible for legal case management and prosecuting violations through labour courts.
- Examining and verifying certificates issued by relevant authorities on the safe operation of gears, derrick winches and other parts of ports and ships. This includes the inspection of ships in national ports, and the enforcement of relevant legal provisions.
- Participating in the formulation and review of labour laws and policies, as well as in developing strategies for enforcing these frameworks.
- Investigating complaints by workers about their labour rights and working environments.
- Raising awareness on labour laws, rules and regulations among relevant stakeholders – such as workers and employers – by sharing knowledge, experiences and advice on compliance. This also involves promotional programmes to raise awareness of labour inspection, and occupational safety and health.
- Approving factories' machine layout plans, as well as modification and expansion plans.
- Issuing registration certificates to factories and establishments, and renewing their licenses.
- Communicating and bargaining with government organizations, employers' associations, workers' organizations, trade unions and development partners to ensure that labour laws are properly implemented.
- Reporting on labour inspection, wage administration, conditions of work and occupational health and safety.

2.3 Organizational structure

DIFE's headquarters are based in Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka. The department is comprised of four sections or wings:

- (i) Administration and Development;
- (ii) Safety;
- (iii) Health; and
- (iv) General Section.

DIFE also has 23 district Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Offices located in 23 districts. These cover all 64 of the districts in Bangladesh.

2.3.1 Administration and Development

DIFE's Administration and Development Section is responsible for the deployment and transfer of staff, capacity building, budget formulation, information management, and legal procedures – such as cases in labour courts and issuing factory licenses. The section contains five sub-units:

- (i) Law;
- (ii) Research and Statistics;
- (iii) Information and Mass Communications;
- (iv) Accounts; and
- (v) Library.

2.3.2 Safety

The Safety Section is responsible for the safety of factories and establishments across Bangladesh. These include garment, textile, tobacco, automobile, tea, and chemical factories, as well as tanneries, jute mills and engineering workshops, among others. The section's activities include: ensuring the safety factory buildings or establishments' premises and related infrastructure, collecting and reviewing establishments' compliance reports, and managing the National Initiative – the Government's safety compliance regime for factories. It is also responsible for the creation of a Safety Committee in each factory, monitoring these committees' activities, managing the functions of the Remediation Coordination Cell (RCC), and implementing the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for ready-made garment factories.

2.3.3 Health

Workers' health is a key focus of DIFE's work. The department's Health Section is responsible for ensuring healthy workplaces, especially in factories, alongside preventive measures to curb occupational diseases and workplace accidents. The section also deals with maternity benefits and childcare or day care in workplaces.

2.3.4 General

DIFE's General Section formulates plans for field visits, approves the Labour Inspectors' field visits and undertakes monitoring. It also addresses labour complaints and issues related to workers' wages.

2.4 DIFE's gender equality and links with national laws, policies and directives

Several legislative and policy frameworks of the Government of Bangladesh offer DIFE an opportunity to progress on gender mainstreaming. As part of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, it is mandated to implement relevant aspects of the National Action Plan for the National Women Development Policy 2011.¹⁷ Other frameworks that are highly relevant to DIFE's work and gender equality include (in chronological order):

- the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 and its subsequent amendments¹⁸;
- the High Court verdict on the 'protection and prevention of sexual harassment offences against women and girls at educational institutions and workplaces' of 2009¹⁹;

¹⁷ Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, *National Women Development Policy*, 2011.

¹⁸ Government of Bangladesh, *Bangladesh Labour Act*, 2006.

¹⁹ Supreme Court of Bangladesh, High Court Division (Special Original Jurisdiction), *Writ Petition No. 5916 of 2008*, 14 May 2009.

- the Bangladesh Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010²⁰;
- the National Skills Development Policy 2010 –2015²¹;
- the National Health Policy 2011²²;
- the National Labour Policy 2012²³;
- the National Occupational Health and Safety Policy 2013²⁴; and
- the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2015.²⁵

BOX 2. GENDER EQUALITY AND DIFE

DIFE considers gender equality in its work as it is committed to implementing national and international frameworks that include clauses on workers' rights, including of women workers. As departmental policy documents reveal, the term 'gender' tends to be equated with 'women' and attention to gender tends to be confined to issues of maternity benefits or women workers' welfare through paid maternity leave, breastfeeding rooms and childcare in factories.

To strengthen gender mainstreaming, it would be useful for DIFE to integrate a comprehensive gender dimension in its organizational structure, culture and operational management. A dedicated unit or section on gender equality would serve DIFE well. To this end, DIFE has appointed a Project Director to oversee its Gender Programme with UNFPA. The same official has been appointed Gender Focal Point (GFP) for Phase II of the Ready-Made Garment Sector Programme (RMGP II).

As box 3 below demonstrates, several issues relevant for gender equality are directly linked to the policies that DIFE is responsible for implementing. These include:

- enforcing labour legislation to create a decent working environment for both women and men;
- ensuring necessary training and health services for women workers in all factories and establishments;
- safeguarding gender-related rights and benefits, such as maternity leave and child rooms in factories; and
- ensuring occupational safety and health, with specific provisions for pregnant women.

²⁰ Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Labour and Employment, *National Child Labour Elimination Policy*, 2010.

²¹ Government of Bangladesh, *National Skills Development Policy 2010 -2015*, 2012.

²² Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, *National Women Development Policy*, 2011.

²³ Government of Bangladesh, *National Labour Policy*, 2012.

²⁴ Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, *National Health Policy*, 2011.

²⁵ Government of Bangladesh, *Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy*, 2015.

BOX 3.
POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS
FOR CREATING AN ENABLING WORK ENVIRONMENT

The Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, and its 2013 and 2018 amendments, include specific provisions to safeguard the rights of women workers. For example, the act guarantees maternity benefits, stating that: “every woman employed in an establishment shall be entitled to and her employer shall be liable for, the payment of maternity benefit in respect of the period of eight weeks preceding the expected day of her delivery and eight weeks immediately following the day of her delivery.”

Bangladesh’s National Labour Policy 2012 explicitly aims to ensure a working environment free from discrimination and exploitation, and which is decent, safe and healthy. The policy also focuses on workers’ rights, including ending discrimination between women and men in workplaces.

The National Occupational Health and Safety Policy 2013 aims to improve occupational safety and health to reduce risks and cases of death, injury, disease and hazards at workplaces. It applies to both formal and informal industries, factories and establishments, including businesses and agricultural farms. In line with the policy, DIFE has issued two key provisions related to gender equality. First, it stipulates that a pregnant woman must inform her employer at least 10 weeks before her baby is due. Second, it specifies that pregnant women must not be made to perform heavy lifting, be exposed to chemicals, or stand for an extended period as these factors may affect her health.

The Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015 outline different aspects of labour management in detail. In terms of gender equality, the focus is on ‘maternity welfare’ – described as different types of benefits, as well as the ‘welfare’ of mothers or pregnant worker. As part of ensuring women workers’ welfare, the rules prescribe the creation of Participation Committees and child rooms in factories.

2.5 Strategic directions to ensure gender equality at the organizational level

Guided by the National Action Plan for the National Women Development Policy 2011, the Ministry of Labour and Employment prioritizes several areas and actions to facilitate gender mainstreaming within the ministry and its departments, including DIFE. These include:

- reducing all forms of violence against women, including sexual harassment;
- ensuring equal opportunities and reducing gender-based discrimination in the workplace;
- establishing accommodation, rest rooms, toilets and childcare or day care centres in workplaces that employ women workers;

- effectively implementing gender-responsive budgets and continuing the gender-responsive budgeting initiative for women's development;
- collecting, analysing and regularly publishing sex-disaggregated data;
- recruiting more women in administrative, policy-making and constitutional positions; and reforming relevant laws, policies and rules to foster an enabling working environment for women.

In January 2019, the Ministry put in place its Operational Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Gender Discrimination in the Workplace, which also applies to DIFE. The strategy is aligned to key national and international legal frameworks, including:

- Bangladesh's Seventh Five Year Plan²⁶, which emphasizes short-term and long-term access to decent, harassment-free employment;
- the High Court Directive on Sexual Harassment in educational institutions and workplaces of 2009²⁷, which directs all authorities to take effective measures to prevent sexual harassment, including the formation of five-member Harassment Complaint Committees, headed by women, in every workplace and organization;
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), especially CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35²⁸ on gender-based violence;
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)²⁹;
- the 33 ILO Conventions³⁰ that Bangladesh has ratified, including seven fundamental conventions – within which addressing violence and harassment is a key component, such as in the Forced Labour Convention 1930 (No. 29)³¹ and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 1957 (No. 105)³² – as well as the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958 (No. 111), and the recent Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No. 190) and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation 2019 (No. 206).

The Operational Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Gender Discrimination in the Workplace sets two principal goals:

- (i) to promote a workplace which prevents gender-based violence and reduces discrimination; and
- (ii) to improve services for victims/survivors of gender-based violence in the workplace.

It also states that DIFE's work and functions, alongside those of its sections and units, should integrate a focus on preventing and eliminating gender-based violence in routine responsibilities.

²⁶ Government of Bangladesh, Planning Commission, General Economics Division, *Seventh Five Year Plan FY2016-FY2020*, 2015.

²⁷ Supreme Court of Bangladesh, High Court Division (Special Original Jurisdiction), *Writ Petition No. 5916 of 2008*, 14 May 2009.

²⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, *General Recommendation No. 35 on Gender-based Violence Against Women, Updating General Recommendation No. 19*, CEDAW/C/GC/35, 2017.

²⁹ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1990.

³⁰ A full list of ILO Conventions is available on the organization's website, <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/?p=1000:12000:::NO::>

³¹ ILO, *Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)*, 1930.

³² ILO, *Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105)*, 1957.

The Ministry's operational strategy can be used to respond to key gender-related questions to promote, facilitate and strengthen DIFE's gender equality agenda. These questions include:

?

- Why is it important to ensure a gender-focused human resources structure within DIFE?
- Why is gender-responsive budgeting an important way to advance gender equality?
- Why is gender parity important for DIFE and the workplaces which it oversees?
- Why is it important to ensure the retention and promotion of women staff and officials?
- Why is it important to have 'zero tolerance' for sexual harassment and to ensure that cases of harassment are addressed?
- Why are gender audits, gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation, and gender-responsive research necessary?
- Why is infrastructure support, including childcare or day care facilities, important for gender equality?

BOX 4.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND ADDRESSING GBV IN DIFE'S STRUCTURES AND ARRANGEMENTS

In order to implement the Operational Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Gender Discrimination in the Workplace, DIFE should ensure that:

- The job descriptions of staff reflect responsibilities related to gender equality and gender-based violence. The qualifications and skills required for staff should include a basic understanding of gender and GBV. Similarly, the Terms of Reference for Labour Inspectors should reflect their responsibilities to inspect GBV issues.
- Responsibilities for gender and GBV-related work are clearly localized by creating a two to three-person Gender Focal Team. This will ensure a dedicated group responsible for following up on concerns, ensuring that GBV issues are addressed, and coordinating across the department to seek technical inputs.
- Staff capacity and skills to address gender and GBV as part of their responsibilities is strengthened. A basic orientation for all staff should be provided, followed by technical training on GBV prevention and response delivered by the team with responsibility for overseeing GBV-related efforts.
- Staff performance assessments include criteria to capture staff members' efforts to address GBV and their attitudes and behaviours related to these issues. This will ensure that staff efforts on GBV are reviewed, appreciated and encouraged.

Source: Adapted from MoLE GBV Prevention and response Strategy 2019.

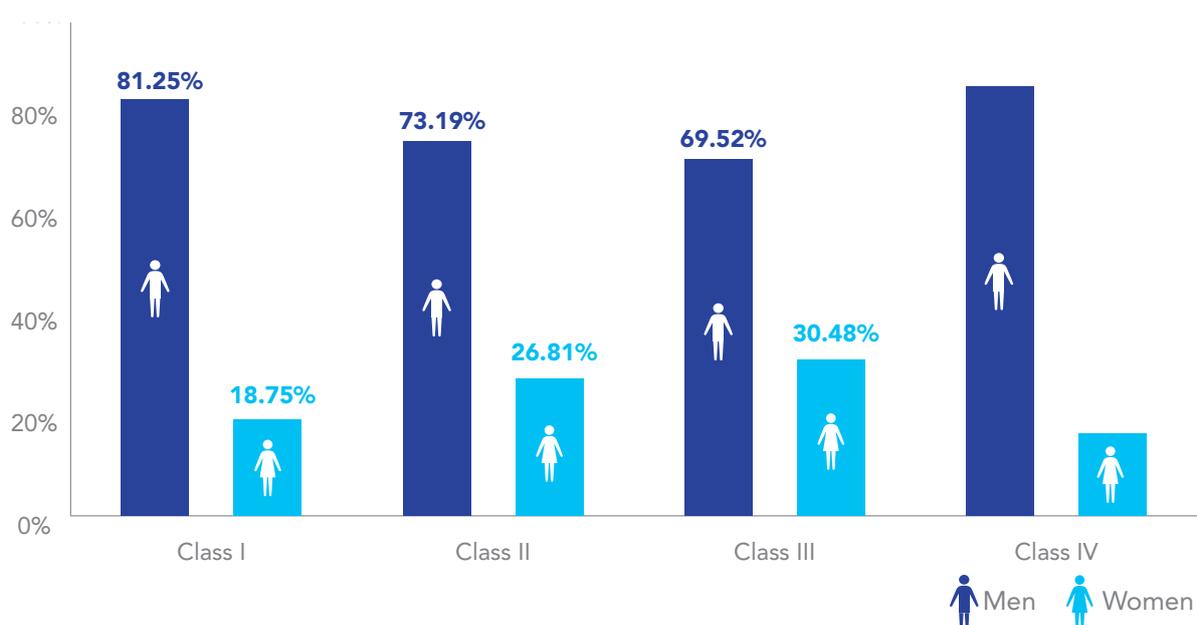
2.6 Human resources and gender equality

2.6.1 Human resources and the positions of women staff

As of July 2020, DIFE has a total of 993 sanctioned positions. Of these, 639 positions are currently occupied, 520 by men and 119 by women. While 87 officials hold 'first class' positions (73 men and 14 women), 338 are in third and fourth class positions (280 men and 58 women). There are 61 women Labour Inspectors among inspector who hold first and second class positions. In December 2019, DIFE's management submitted a proposal to its higher authority to increase its number of staff and officials to 3,380 – including 2,016 Labour Inspectors and 45 Deputy Inspector General Offices. These offices include five new offices in the Export Processing Zone, and nine Divisional Offices.

DIFE is headed by an Inspector General (IG), supported by an Additional Inspector General (Add. IG) and four Joint Inspectors General (JIGs), and four Deputy Inspector General (DIGs) all of whom are based in DIFE's Head Office. As noted above, DIFE also currently has 23 Deputy Inspector General Offices, including an office in Dhaka, separate from DIFE's headquarters. Each office is headed by a Deputy Inspector General (DIG) at the district level, and staffed by an Assistant Inspector General (AIG) and Labour Inspectors (LIs). Class I workers have a rank of Assistant Inspector General or higher, while Labour Inspectors belong to Class II, and clerks, statisticians and office assistants to Classes III and IV. Classes I and II comprise DIFE officials, while Classes III and IV comprise DIFE staff. There are fewer women than men among DIFE's staff and officials, particularly in higher ranking positions. Fifteen women (18.75 per cent) and 80 men hold Class I positions – from Assistant Inspector General to Inspector General. This pattern is also apparent among other classes. Four women hold the position of Deputy Inspector General and 11 of Assistant Inspector General.

FIGURE 1. SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA OF DIFE STAFF BY CLASS



Source: Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2019.

2.6.2 Gender Focal Points

As noted above, DIFE has appointed a Gender Focal Point for Phase II of the Ready-Made Garment Sector Programme. The same official is also the Project Director of the Gender Programme with UNFPA, which is managed by DIFE's Health Section. As part of its remit to address labour complaints, the department's General Section addresses gender-related complaints.

While DIFE performs a great deal of work related to gender equality and women's empowerment, it would benefit a clear set up and human resource structure to manage gender-related issues in a dedicated manner, in order to strengthen and mainstream gender equality throughout the department.

2.6.3 Senior management commitment to gender equality and mainstreaming

To achieve gender equality, the commitment of senior management is crucial, as is translating commitments into action. The Ministry of Labour and Employment's operational strategy on GBV is a strong entry point for cementing DIFE's senior management's commitments to gender equality, particularly in light of its clear guidance on DIFE's role in preventing and responding to GBV.

Another useful entry point is the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs' (MoWCA) National Action Plan for the National Women Development Policy 2011³³, which advised the Ministry of Labour and Employment to recruit more women officials in administrative and policy-making positions.

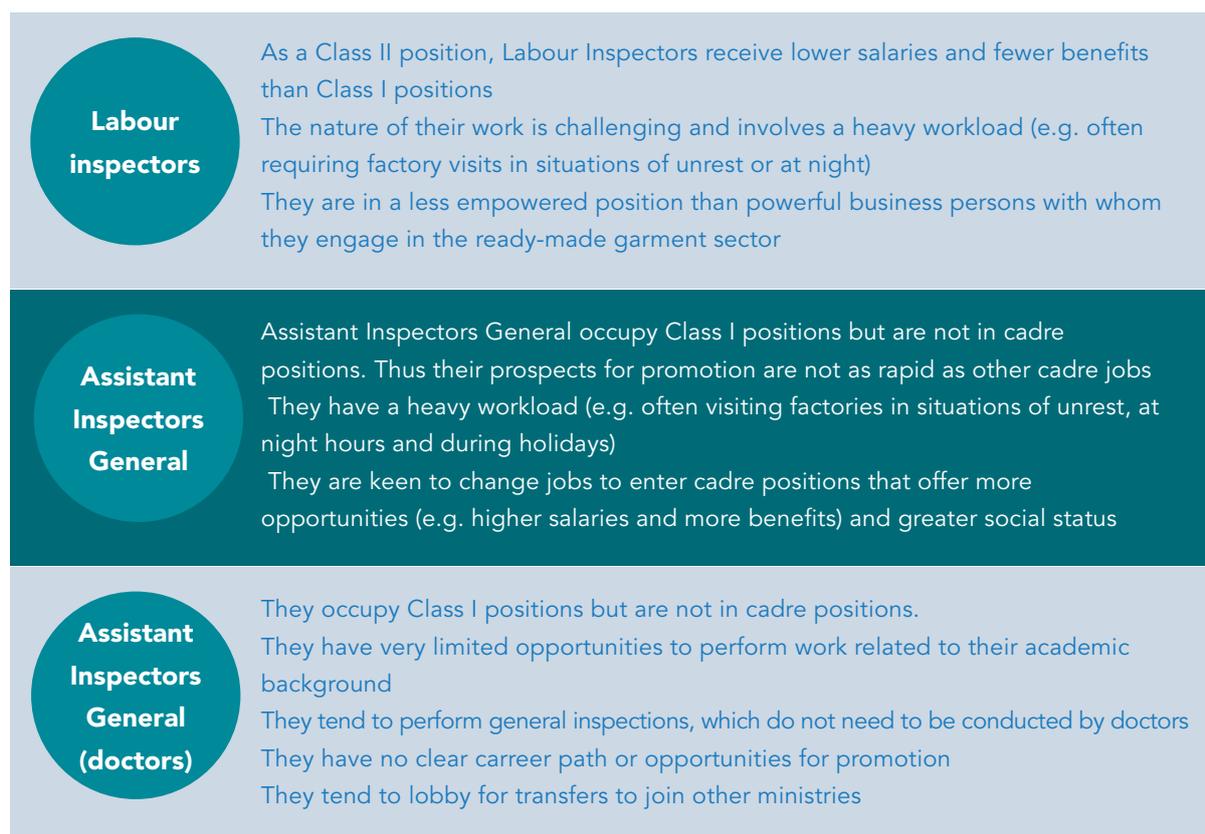
2.6.4 Recruitment, drop outs and the promotion of women staff and officials

DIFE has successfully recruited women as Labour Inspectors (48 women vs 178 men) and Assistant Inspectors General (11 women vs 48 men), as well as promoting women to the rank of Deputy Inspector General (four women vs 23 men). However, the retention of women officials – particularly of Labour Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors General – has proven challenging. Over the years, 60 officials – both men and women – have dropped out of the department. Overall, their work is comparatively more challenging than the work of officials of similar grades in other government departments. The figure below highlights reasons given by DIFE staff for dropping out.

While DIFE staff and officials perform a great deal of work on gender-related issues, especially by using the Labour Inspection Checklist, an official's gender is not considered per se in terms of their promotion or receipt of an award. At present, there is no Code of Conduct on gender issues for DIFE headquarters or district offices.

³³ Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, *National Women Development Policy*, 2011.

FIGURE 2. REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT AMONG DIFE STAFF (BOTH WOMEN AND MEN)



2.6.5 Women officials in senior management

As discussed, few women occupy senior management positions in DIFE (figure 1). There are no women officials in the department's top three decision-making positions – Inspector General, Additional Inspector General and Joint Inspector General – although four women hold the rank of Deputy Inspector General.

2.7 Capacity building of DIFE staff and officials

2.7.1 Training for DIFE staff and officials

Ensuring gender parity in DIFE is as important as ensuring that its staff and officials have the capacities to make the department more gender-responsive. As such, capacity development and training are extremely important for advancing gender equality. At present, DIFE offers three categories of training for its staff and officials:

- (i) internal/national training;
- (ii) overseas/international training; and
- (iii) in-house training.

Both women and men officials and staff members have equal opportunities to participate in internal and in-house training sessions. International trainings are usually attended by senior officials (i.e. from the ranks of Deputy Inspector General to Inspector General), according to their seniority and designation.

As DIFE's draft Annual Report 2016–17 notes, the department offered 43 internal training courses for 794 officials and staff members during this period. These trainings aimed to build staff skills as part of human resource development. Although no training was exclusively dedicated to gender issues, 21 in-house trainings built the skills of 614 officials and staff on ethics and good practices, services, the Labour Inspection Checklist, the Labour Inspection Strategy, e-filing, the Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA), and Bangladesh's Labour Act and Labour Rules.³⁴ The table below, adapted from DIFE's Annual Report, specifies the number of training sessions and participants, but does not include information on the titles of sessions or the gender of trainees.



"It is necessary to conduct a training need assessment for DIFE's staff. Second class officers do not get opportunity to attend overseas training. In some cases, the right person doesn't get the right training."

– DIFE official

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF TRAINING AND PARTICIPANTS BY TYPE OF SUPPORT

	Training supported by	Numbers of training courses	Number of participants
1	ILO	18	484
2	GIZ	1	15
3	Miscellaneous partners	21	176
4	Overseas partners	8	22
5	Foundation(s)	2	80
	Total	50	777

Source: DIFE, *Annual Labour Inspection Report 2016-2017*.



"We learnt about gender during our foundation training. But [...] it was maybe one- or two-hour session. We learnt very basic [information on] gender through this training."

– DIFE official

"Seven days were allocated to teach us about the labour act in the foundational training. It was very exclusive and detailed. We want training on gender issues to be included in the foundational training module, at least two/three days, so that we can gain knowledge on this issue in-depth."

– DIFE official

³⁴ While DIFE preserves a list of training sessions, it was not possible to gather and analyse data on the sex of participants. See annex I for a comprehensive list of training sessions offered during the 2016–17 period.

2.7.2 Foundational training and gender training

DIFE offers a comprehensive 40-day foundation training course for officials on laws, policies, provisions and relevant guidelines related to labour inspection. This foundational course includes a module on gender, which was introduced during the first phase of the Ready-made Garment Sector Programme (RMGP I). Staff and officials indicate that this gender module could be expanded – ideally over several days to afford them a more comprehensive understanding of gender and labour rights.

2.8 Childcare facilities for DIFE staff

According to the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 every establishment that employs 40 or more workers should provide and maintain a suitable room, or rooms, for workers' children under six years old. It specifies that these rooms should provide adequate accommodation, adequate lighting and ventilation, and clean, sanitary conditions. Each room should be under the charge of a woman trained or experienced in caring for children and infants.

In line with these provisions, DIFE has established 22 childcare rooms in its offices, including at headquarters. Its Dhaka district office is the only DIFE office without a childcare room, due to a shortage of space. The department's new office premises within 'Sromo Bhubon' will have a dedicated childcare centre. DIFE will seek support to secure the resources required for a day care centre within its premises. As some district offices only have one or two women staff members, one official suggested establishing a single childcare facility to address the needs of all DIFE officials and staff members in a district.



"District office[s] could have a big day care centre where all government officials from different offices could keep their children. All logistics such as staff, proper training for staff to manage day care, space and other equipment will be managed centrally."

– DIFE official

2.9 Maternity and paternity leave

Both the Bangladesh Labour Act and Labour Rules specify mandatory maternity benefits for women workers. Clause 46 of the Labour Act specifies that all women workers are entitled to maternity benefits – paid by their employers – for 10 weeks preceding their child's birth and eight weeks immediately after delivery. Clause 45 prohibits the employment of women during the eight weeks immediately after delivery. The Bangladesh Labour Rules (37 (ka)) include a provision to ensure that pregnant women can lodge complaints against misconduct.



"Currently, there is provision of maternity leave but no provision for paternity leave. The provision of having paternity leave at least for one week should be included for the public servant."

– DIFE official

The Labour Act (clauses 46, 47 and 48) and Labour Rules (38 and 39) specify the amounts, forms and time limits for the provision of maternity benefits. Clause 47 of the Labour Act outlines procedures for the payment of maternity benefits, while rule 37(gha) of the Labour Rules specifies that pregnant women should be given priority in the use of elevators.

DIFE's organizational culture and attitudes towards pregnant officials are positive. When a woman official or staff member is pregnant, they are not required to perform factory inspection-related work. Their male colleagues are considerate of their situation and offer pregnant women significant support. It would be a great leap forward for gender equality if such practices were officially included in DIFE service rules. For instance, these could relieve pregnant women Labour Inspectors of field work or factory inspections and confine their responsibilities to office work during the first and last trimesters of their pregnancy. Similarly, factory managers should not involve women workers in risky work during pregnancy. Providing 15 days of paternity leave for men would also be beneficial – enabling DIFE's staff members and officials to spend time with their newborns, take on joint responsibility for childcare and begin to break free of gender stereotypes.

2.10 Addressing sexual harassment

In line with the 2009 verdict of the High Court of Bangladesh, discussed above, DIFE formed a five-member Complaint Committee in January 2019 to address sexual harassment. A woman Deputy Inspector General leads the committee, and two of its members are from civil society organizations. Since its creation, the committee has received two complaints. DIFE is working internally to establish procedures to support the committee's work – including a reporting mechanism and corrective action – and is working to inform its staff and concerned institutions, including the Ministry of Labour and Employment, about the committee. According to the Ministry's Gender Focal Point, the Ministry plans to reform its Complaint Committee to include a representative from outside the organization, in line with the High Court's verdict.



"We formed an anti-sexual harassment committee at DIFE recently. Now we need to develop leaflet, posters and other communication materials so that all staff of DIFE know about the existence of the committee. If the staff does not know about the existence of the committee, they cannot complain if any incident happens."

– DIFE official

"It is important to make aware the lower level support staff about the existence of the committee. They may suffer the most from harassment as they are recruited by the third party [... but it is] the responsibility of DIFE to ensure [a] safe work environment for them. Now, DIFE needs to have orientation session [... and] hang posters at all DIFE's offices."

– DIFE official

2.11 Road safety and security

Labour Inspectors' work is challenging for a number of reasons, including road safety and security concerns. To inspect factories and establishments in distant locations, they are required to travel using official motorcycles or scooters for women inspectors (known in Bangladesh as 'Scooty'). Most women Labour Inspectors report that they are unable to use an official Scooty due to the risk of road traffic accidents, for fear of social stigma, or a lack of functional vehicles³⁵, among other concerns (see table 2).

Security issues also pose a challenge for Labour Inspectors, with particular implications for women. Factories may need to be visited at night (e.g. during the recent Churihatta fire in old Dhaka) or during situations of unrest, which have resulted in injuries to inspectors. Almost all Labour Inspectors recommend further efforts to ensure their security, alongside appropriate logistics and well-maintained vehicles for inspections.

To create an enabling environment for women Labour Inspectors, DIFE aims to ensure:

- appropriate and secure transport for field visits;
- strong protection and security arrangements to tackle labour unrest and fire incidents;
- the allocation of separate toilets for women employees;
- separate rest/prayer rooms for women staff, especially during pregnancy;
- good quality childcare facilities for staff;
- flexible inspection rules for women Labour Inspectors during pregnancy; and
- paternity leave for men, both staff members and officials.

TABLE 2. BARRIERS TO WOMEN LABOUR INSPECTORS' USE OF 'SCOOTY' (ACCORDING TO BOTH MEN AND WOMEN INSPECTORS)

Barrier	Details
Family/social pressure	Patriarchal attitudes – particularly among husbands and elderly family members – disapprove of women's use of Scooties.
Geographical location	In many remote areas, river crossings are required to conduct inspections. However, it is often difficult for women inspectors to lift and carry their Scooty onto a boat to cross a river.
Physical conditions	Pregnancy – particularly the first and last trimester of pregnancy – prevent women staff from safely using Scooties, especially as one woman Labour Inspector suffered a miscarriage attributed to this form of transport.
Road safety	Women staff members do not feel safe enough to ride Scooties on highways, especially the busy highway that Dhaka district staff must use to travel to Savar.
Maintenance costs	Staff may feel that the maintenance costs of Scooty are high, particularly as these tend to be personally paid by Labour Inspectors. As budgets for fuel tend to be spent on larger vehicles, staff on Scooties usually pay for fuel themselves. Allocations for fuel costs in Dhaka are not sufficient to support staff's use of Scooties.
Licenses	Many women Labour Inspectors do not possess licenses to ride a Scooty.

³⁵ DIFE's records indicate that there are 165 motorcycles, including 15 Scooty, available for officials across Bangladesh provided by the Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-made Garment Sector Programme, implemented by the ILO, to enable effective inspections. However, in April 2019, 85 of these vehicles were out-of-order.

2.12 Budget allocation for gender-related work

DIFE has two sources of funds to manage its work – a government source (revenue) and funding from development partners (projects). In line with the Government’s provisions and direction on gender-responsive budgeting, the Ministry of Labour and Employment has defined priority areas to support women’s advancement and allocated part of its budget to this end. These areas include, for example, implementing labour welfare and compliance in industries, and developing skilled human resources. The Ministry receives its ‘ministry’ budget for affiliated departments, including DIFE, from the Government’s national budget. A part of this budget is spent on ‘women’s benefits’, including salaries and benefits for women employees; building infrastructure, such as separate toilets for women; and capacity building (training) of women staff and officials. These amounts are identified as the ministry’s ‘gender budget’. The table below clearly shows a ‘women’s share’ in the Ministry’s overall budget.

TABLE 3. BUDGET OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT, 2017–2018³⁶

Description	Revised budget 2017–2018, BDT crore (ten million)			Budget 2017–2018, BDT crore (ten million)		
	Revised	Women’s share	Percentage	Budget	Women’s share	Percentage
Total budget	371,495	86,169	23.2	400,266	112,019	27.99
Budget of the ministry	193	59	30.76	263	167	63.50
Development budget	100	17	17.32	168	157	93.45
Revenue budget	93	42	45.29	95	10	10.53

Source: Government of Bangladesh, available online, https://mof.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mof.portal.gov.bd/page/5e31763f_f5b2_4ecb_bf9a_edc8609d2f3f/G-2_02_31_Labour_English.pdf

2.13 Knowledge management, management information systems, inspections and complaints

In January 2019, the Ministry of Labour and Employment set a clear strategic direction for its affiliated departments, instructing them to collect sex-disaggregated data to generate evidence and track progress on gender mainstreaming. To date, data collection concentrates on women workers, employees, managers and owners; different forms of gender-based violence in factories and establishments; childcare facilities; anti-sexual harassment policies and actions; equal wages; and referral mechanisms for health problems.

DIFE collects a high volume of data, with a focus on violations of the Bangladesh Labour Act and Labour Rules, through the application of a Labour Inspection Checklist. This is the key instrument used to inspect factories by DIFE staff and officials, particularly its Labour Inspectors. The checklist, has incorporated a number of issues related to gender in line with the Labour Act (see box 5). Further analysis of DIFE’s data, particularly data on gender-related issues, would be useful. To date, data analysis has proven challenging due to high workloads and the need for more human resources.

³⁶ DIFE’s total revised budget for 2018–19 was BDT 187.48 million.

Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA)

The Labour Inspection Strategy 2016 calls for management information systems (MIS) to collect, store, analyse and use data to improve planning. DIFE is working to improve its data management and reporting system on gender-related issues, in line with the Bangladesh Labour Act – including data on how many pregnant women work in factories, how many children are enrolled in a day care centre, etc. This data can be gradually expanded to cover issues beyond the ready-made garment sector.

In 2018, DIFE launched a Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA).³⁷ By drawing together DIFE's key information needs, the application helps the department to operate more effectively. It enhances the accessibility and transparency of data by making information available to other users, such as employers and workers. In tandem, it facilitates users' day-to-day tasks, such as applying for factory licences or submitting complaints to DIFE through the application.

After its launch, the LIMA was rolled out to all 23 Deputy Inspector General Offices across the country. In January 2019, DIFE issued an order instructing these offices to adopt the application as part of standard departmental business processes. As a result, the number of digitally-conducted inspections increased manifold compared to 2018. In 2019, 277 participants (51 women and 266 men) received refresher trainings on the LIMA and have reviewed the system for further enhancements.

DIFE formed a four-member LIMA Support Team, dedicated to monitoring the application's use and providing technical support, as needed. A Facebook group established to support LIMA users is especially active. Acting as community of practice among labour inspectors, the group enables faster responses to users' queries. Inspectors' use of the application has also increased after a series of LIMA trainings and refresher courses for officials at Deputy Inspector General Offices.

Sectoral checklists have been uploaded to the LIMA, including the Ready-Made Garment Checklist. Through these checklists, all gender-related data can be collected and extracted through the application (see box 6).

A technical session on checklist configuration in 2019 produced a range of tools and configured checklists within the LIMA, easing DIFE's data collection and reporting. The session yielded:

- the development of a Proactive Checklist Management Matrix to guide the future changes of checklists within the application;
- the configuration of five new checklists within the LIMA – on small- and medium-sized factories, shops, shipbuilding and breaking, establishments, and factories – to enable inspectors to inspect these types of enterprises through the application;
- the configuration of three reactive checklists within the application – on inspections related to the approval of layout plans, license applications, and the investigation of complaints; and
- the mapping of existing sectors to new checklists.

The enhancements to LIMA have improved its utility across all Deputy Inspector General Offices.

³⁷ More information is available on the LIMA website, <http://lima.dife.gov.bd>

Inspections and data collection

For DIFE, 50 per cent of all inspections focus on the ready-made garment sector and 50 per cent on small and medium-sized factories and establishments in an area. Labour Inspectors inspect individually and jointly in two-member teams. Each team inspects approximately 45 factories every month, 14 of which are inspected jointly, while 15 small- and medium-sized enterprises and 15 shops are inspected individually, on average. Labour inspections are based on a Yearly Inspection Plan, prepared and approved by a District Inspector General. To supervise and follow up on Labour Inspectors' work, each Deputy Inspector General inspects an average of 10 factories per month. A monitoring team at DIFE's headquarters that includes high level officials monitors all of the department's work. However, it does not produce reports.

As part of factory inspections, DIFE inspectors use specific formats to collect data and report on inspections. The 'Report on Inspection Assessment' format is used by Labour Inspectors to produce a monthly report with information on types of violations of the Bangladesh Labour Act and Labour Rules (column 10) in different sectors (column 5). Another reporting template is used for 'Monthly Reports' on the 'Complaint Mitigation Mechanism', which provides a significant amount of district level data each month. Information is recorded on the number of complaints (column 4) and mitigation measures.

Further analysis of such information would help to reflect the 'bigger picture' of DIFE's work. For instance, it would be useful to include information on gender-based situations or complaints by women and men. Analysis can also be undertaken on why few or no 'complaints' have been recorded on sexual harassment or gender-based violence at the workplace. As the lead agency responsible for implementing the country's Labour Act and Labour Rules, monitoring and reporting on their implementation from a gender equality perspective will strengthen DIFE's gender-responsiveness.

BOX 5.

GENDER ISSUES IN THE LABOUR INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Conduct towards women (clause 332)

Equal wages for women and persons with disabilities (clause 345)

Maternity welfare benefits (clause 46, 47, 48; rules 45, 46)

Provision of separate toilets (clause 59; rule 51).

Provision of a childcare room or crèche for women workers (clause 94 (2); rule 94 (5)(6)

BOX 6. CHECKLIST QUESTIONS ON VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Labour Inspection Checklists, specially the Ready-Made Garment Checklist, has been uploaded to the LIMA application. It addresses sexual harassment and issues of workplace violence, referring to Section 332 of the Bangladesh Labour Act, the Bangladesh Labour Rules and the High Court directive of 2009.

Section 11 of the Ready-Made Garment Checklist encompasses questions on workplace harassment, as follows:

- Section 11: Regarding Workplace Violence
- Question 11.1: Is there any effective mechanism to lodge a complaint on physical, psychological and sexual harassment in the factory?
- Question 11.2: Are women workers aware of their rights and complaint procedures on discrimination and harassment?
- Question 11.3: Is there any barrier to submitting complaints on violence and harassment?

2.13.1 Violence against women and reporting

DIFE has mechanisms in place to collect information on violence against women workers in factories. For example, inspectors collect data on violence through the Labour Inspection Checklist. DIFE has also initiated discussions with factory owners on creating five-member Complaint Committees – including two members from other organizations – to address sexual harassment, in line with the High Court's 2009 verdict. The department is encouraging these committees' formation in the ready-made garment sector, as well as in other sectors.

In 2015, DIFE launched a Complaint Helpline in 2015 to directly receive general complaints from workers, alongside written complaints submitted by letter or online. By calling this five-digit number (16357), workers in any factory can submit complaints free of cost. A third party operates the helpline on DIFE's behalf, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To ensure privacy, the helpline only collects personal information that is absolutely necessary to provide workers with the information or services they need. 'Personal information' is any information related to an identified or identifiable individual, such as their name, address, and factory name or phone number. Once complaints are received by the helpline, they are submitted to DIFE for further action. If an individual requests that her/his personal details should not be revealed, the helpline submits their complaint to DIFE without personal details.

As the helpline aims to address general grievances, it does not include a specific mechanism to redress gender-based violence or harassment. According to the helpline, most complaints are about legal benefits, such as due wages, overtime and dismissal, and do not usually concern gender-based discrimination, violence against women or sexual harassment.

Figure 3 below highlights various stakeholders' views on violence at work, particularly in the ready-made garment sector. Issues of violence and sexual harassment have yet to be reported in the checklist-driven inspection initiative. To this end, it will be important to tackle the culture of fear and stigma highlighted by officials. Based on monthly data on DIFE's Complaint Helpline in February 2019 (see figure 4), most complaints concerned workers' legal benefits (122) and due wages (97). Far fewer complaints concerned maternity welfare (9) and security (1). DIFE has also enabled the submission of complaints online, although fewer complaints are submitted online than through written letters (figure 5).

FIGURE 3. REFLECTIONS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, AND REPORTING ON VAW

"We heard about the incident of violence in ready-made garments from newspapers [and] research, but we rarely receive complaints about violence in this sector." – Former Inspector General, DIFE

"We have different systems to lodge a complaint about violence against women, such as helpline. But we did not receive any complaints about violence within last year through our helpline."
– Assistant Inspector General, DIFE

"Violence against women exists at the factory [level], but it is severely under reported. Women do not make complaints due to fear of losing [their] job and stigma." – Labour Inspector, DIFE

"The work environment of the ready-made garment sector [has] improved over the last two decades. We never receive any complaints on violence against women." – Secretary, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association

"The help line number has limitations to make complaints about violence. It has total [of] nine options, but there is no particular option about violence to lodge complaints through this number. Moreover, many workers do not know about this number as it is not well circulated among the workers."

– Labour Inspector (man) and Focus Group Discussion participant

"When we do factory inspection through the Inspection Checklist, there are 10 issues under three stars. We try to ensure collection of data on those important issues first. There is no star [asterisk] mark in the Inspection Checklist about clause 332. It is under reported because less attention may be paid during factory visits to 332."

– Labour Inspector (woman) and Focus Group Discussion participant

BOX 7.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE LABOUR INSPECTION CHECKLIST

DIFE's Labour Inspection Checklist incorporates the issue of violence against women, in line with clause 332 of the Bangladesh Labour Act. To ensure compliance, factories must report on 10 issues in the checklist. However, as violence against women is not one of these mandatory issues, it tends to be accorded less priority than other concerns. Therefore, while both women and men workers can report on gender-based violence, incidents are largely unreported. To address cases more effectively, stakeholders suggest adding violence against women as a compulsory issue in the checklist.

FIGURE 4. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY DIFE'S HELPLINE, FEBRUARY 2019

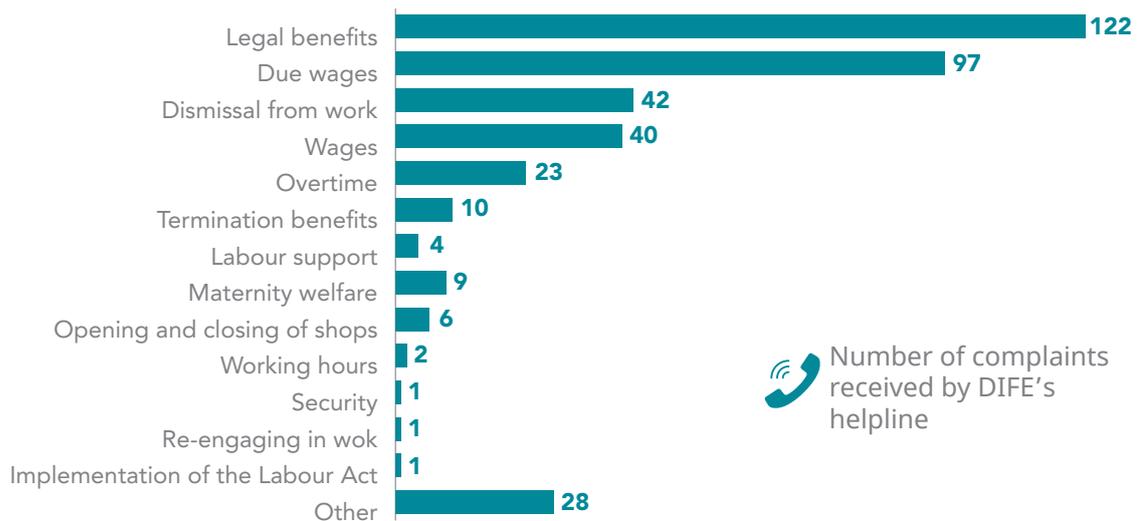
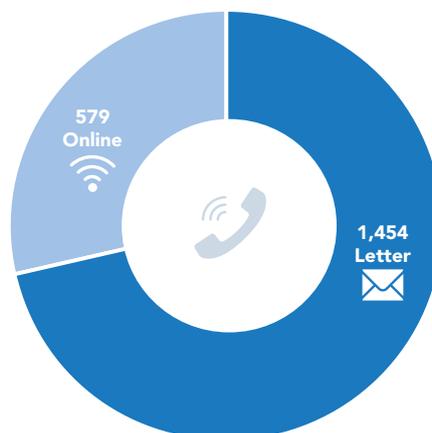


FIGURE 5. NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS BY TYPE OF SUBMISSION, 2018–2019 (UP TO MARCH 2019)





“Most of the complaints lodge[d] through this number [are] on wages, overtime and maternity benefit. There is a limitation about the format to lodge complaints [...] There are 10-12 options where you can lodge complaints but there is no mention of [an] option about sexual harassment or physical violence [...] It may go under the option ‘Other’.”

– DIFE official

2.13.2 Equal wages for women and persons with disabilities

There is a need to collect sex-disaggregated data on gender pay gaps between men and women workers in sectors such as construction, fisheries (shrimp), bakeries, tanneries and rice mills. It is also important to generate data on wages and infrastructural facilities for workers with disabilities. To this end, the Ministry of Labour and Employment has suggested that DIFE conduct a needs assessment on workers with disabilities. Suggestions also include focusing more on disability-friendly infrastructure, toilet facilities and the recruitment of persons with disabilities within DIFE.



“It doesn’t need huge money to establish a disability-friendly toilet at the factory for a worker with disability. The problem is that we are not aware of their rights. The public transport is not also friendly for the people with disability. It is difficult for them to travel to the factory to work. Almost every factory has some workers with disability, but we do not know their needs to ensure minimum facility for them.”

– Key Informant Interview,
Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association

2.13.3 Maternity welfare benefits

Close supervision by DIFE has improved the realization of women’s right to paid maternity leave in the ready-made garment sector and other heavy industries. However, it is more challenging to collect data on other sectors’ compliance with maternity benefit provisions, particularly small industries and SMEs, as well as to collect data on pregnant workers in general. As the third most common complaint received from women workers through the DIFE Complaint Helpline concerns maternity benefits – such as maternity leave, payments during the leave period, and related issues – it is important to strengthen the inspection monitoring system to ensure that maternity benefits are provided across all sectors.



“If we want to mainstream gender at workplace, we need to ensure maternity benefit, need to re-establish good quality childcare centre and violence free work environment. The Gender Roadmap should reflect on these issues.”

– Key Informant Interview, high-level official, Ministry of Labour and Employment

“The most frequent complaints we receive from women workers is on maternity benefit. The best quality compliance factories pay the full maternity benefit, but others do not [...] Another issue is that our inspection is heavily focused to ensure maternity benefit for ready-made garments, but we do not know much about other industry sectors.”

– Focus Group Discussion with Labour Inspectors

“A large number of female workers work in the rice mills, where many women do not receive maternity benefit, but they never say whether they received maternity benefit or not because of fear.”

– Key Informant Interview, Labour Inspector

2.13.4 Provision of separate toilets

Ensuring occupational safety and health (OSH) in workplaces has become a key priority for Bangladesh after the industrial accident in Rana Plaza. To create safer and healthier workplaces, greater attention is being placed on the recommendation that separate toilets should be provided for men and women workers in the ready-made garment sector. DIFE is committed to ensuring separate toilets for women workers, in line with clause 59 of the Bangladesh Labour Act and rule 51 of the Labour Rules. As such, separate toilets are included in the Labour Inspection Checklist.

In the ready-made garment sector, the provision of toilets for women workers has improved significantly since 2014. Alongside the existence of toilet facilities, DIFE is working to strengthen the monitoring of their quality, cleanliness and the availability of supplies, such as soap for handwashing and waste disposal items for menstrual hygiene management.



“All efforts were paid to establish and ensure toilet facility for female workers in the RMG sector but a significant number of workers work in these sectors. We do not have much information about the toilet facilities of other sectors where many women work.”

– Key Informant Interview, former DIFE Inspector General

“This situation has changed considerably with measures such as mandatory inclusion of toilets for male and female workers, but quality remains a question. It would be good if a toilet facility survey is conducted to ensure the basic need for workers at workplace.”

– Key Informant Interview

There is a need for factory owners to put in place monitoring and quality assurance systems for the proper management of toilet facilities. A survey would help to identify workers' sanitation needs. It is also important to improve the provision of separate toilets in other sectors – including tanneries, fisheries (shrimp), bakeries, rice mills and tea gardens.

2.13.5 Provision of childcare centres/rooms

As noted above, the Bangladesh Labour Act (section 94) requires workplaces with more than 40 women workers to provide childcare facilities for children up to six years old. These should be near or in the workplace and have adequate lighting, ventilation and space. It also specifies that older children should be provided with a safe space to play outdoors. In line with the Act, DIFE established 512 day care centres in ready-made garment factories in 2018–2019. As compliance with legislation and the functionality of childcare centres remains challenging, it is important to focus on enhancing childcare services and collecting data on the number of caregivers engaged in these centres, as well as the number of children enrolled in them. Figure 6 highlights suggestions by stakeholders on how to improve childcare centres.

FIGURE 6. OPINIONS ON CHILDCARE/DAY CARE CENTRES

"We do not have information about the quality and situation of the day care centres. I will request through you [that] ILO conducts a survey to know about the situation of the day care centres immediately to make it functional."

– Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour of Employment

"It is mentioned in the Bangladesh Labour Rules that the factory will provide almost one litre [of] milk per day per child [...] in the factory- based day care centre. It is difficult to motivate the factory owner to make them willing to invest in establishing a good quality day care centre which will provide foods to the children too."

– Deputy Inspector General, Health Section, DIFE

"It is important to make the day care centre more functional. The quality of day care centres is not good. There is no dedicated space [or] human resources to run the day care centres. It is also important to think how the women will carry their children to factory when we do not have good public transport system."

– Staff member, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association

"We do not have information about the quality and situation of the day care centres. I will request through you [that] ILO conducts a survey to know about the situation of the day care centres immediately to make it functional."

– Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour of Employment

2.14 Key issues and challenges related to OSH

The Government of Bangladesh celebrates National Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Day on April 28th. It was first celebrated in 2016 with the support of the first phase of the ILO's Ready-Made Garment Sector Programme (2013–2017). In 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Employment introduced the 'OSH Good Practice Award' to encourage factory owners to look after the well-being of their workers. While the awards were initially for the ready-made garment sector, they were extended to all industries in 2019. In that year, the Government presented OSH Good Practice Awards to 24 companies across different sectors, including apparel, finished leather products, jute, pharmaceuticals and the tea sector. Recipient factories were awarded for maintaining consistently high standards of safety and health standards. Gender will be incorporated as an indicator for factories' nomination for future OSH awards.

DIFE plans to increase its capacity on OSH by providing specialized training to its doctors on monitoring and reporting on OSH, as well as expanding the scope for them to use their medical knowledge in their work. DIFE also aims to collect and make sex-desegregated data available to track OSH and gender-related problems among workers across Bangladesh.

To further improve OSH, there is a need to create a strong referral mechanism that ensures health services for workers through the health centres of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), government hospitals and private clinics. Issuing workers with priority health cards would help them receive timely treatment in public hospitals. The existing OSH policy incorporates a focus on occupational health – a highly positive step to ensure safeguard workers' health and safety in a gender-responsive manner. To support DIFE to broaden its efforts on OSH, and facilitate gender-responsiveness, collaboration is needed between the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

2.14.1 Gender-responsive communications materials

DIFE plans to increase its capacity on OSH by providing specialized training to its doctors on monitoring and reporting on OSH, as well as expanding the scope for them to use their medical knowledge in their work. DIFE also aims to collect and make sex-desegregated data available to track OSH and gender-related problems among workers across Bangladesh. To further improve OSH, there is a need to create a strong referral mechanism that ensures health services for workers through the health centres of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), government hospitals and private clinics. Issuing workers with priority health cards would help them receive timely treatment in public hospitals.

The existing OSH policy incorporates a focus on occupational health – a highly positive step to ensure safeguard workers' health and safety in a gender-responsive manner. To support DIFE to broaden its efforts on OSH, and facilitate gender-responsiveness, collaboration is needed between the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.



“After the incident of Rana Plaza, we focused on building safety including fire safety, we ensured labour inspection. But one of the areas where we need to put more emphasis is to address the issue of occupational safety and health. We do not have sex-disaggregated data to track the health problems of the workers.”

– Key Informant Interview, Ministry of Labour and Employment

“DIFE has a total of 12 doctors [...who] carry out the general inspection like other general inspector. They do not have technical knowledge, expertise, training and equipment to measure the occupational health-related problems.”

– Key Informant Interview, DIFE

“We do not have much scope to use our medical knowledge in the current system of factory inspection. If we want to assess the occupational health-related problems, we need specialized training.” – Key Informant Interview, Labour Inspector (doctor)

“BGMEA has 12 medical centres (10 in Dhaka and 2 in Chittagong) [...] and most of the health service recipients are female workers. There is a need to conduct a research to know the situation and capacity of these health centres.”

– Key Informant Interview, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association

“We have total printed material of 20,000 about the helpline which is not enough. Though when we visit factory we talk about the helpline, we also broadcasted about the helpline through television channel but still we couldn't reach thousands of workers to inform them about the helpline. The most important thing to me is to reach all workers from all industrial sectors to let them know about the complaint mechanism, we mostly receive complaints from RMG sector, not from other sector.”

– Labour Inspector

SECTION 3.

DIFE initiatives with development partners on gender equality

Two DIFE projects with the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) address gender equality issues in Bangladesh's factories and establishments. The department has three Implementing Agreements (IA) in place under these two projects.

3.1 Collaboration with the ILO

The ILO is a key development partner of DIFE. Both partners collaborate on 'Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-made Garment Sector Programme Phase II' (RMGP II) (2017–2023) to ensure safe and decent working conditions that contribute to improved competitiveness in Bangladesh's garment and all other sectors that DIFE works on. This is a continuation of phase I of the programme, launched in 2013 after the tragic Tazreen fire and Rana Plaza collapse. DIFE is one of the programme's key partners, within the framework of broader collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Designed as an emergency response to the Rana Plaza disaster, the first phase of the Ready-made Garment Sector Programme did not place a significant direct emphasis on gender. However, as women represent the majority of workers in the sector (60.5 per cent), it became clear that gender must be fully addressed. For this reason, a Gender Strategy and a Gender Action Plan were developed to direct the effective mainstreaming of gender during the programme's second phase.

Key elements of the Ready-made Garment Sector Programme, Phase II (2017– 2023)

In designing the second phase of the programme, gender was considered as a key cross-cutting element within the programme's four strategic areas and five outcomes:

- **Strategic area 1: Ensuring factory safety through remediation**
 - **Outcome 1:** By the end of 2020, all active factories of the target 1500 National Initiative (NI) are remediated
- **Strategic area 2: Governance**
 - **Outcome 2:** The Government effectively regulates industrial safety
 - **Outcome 3:** Effective and equitable labour inspection system in place based on robust performance management, accountability and a sound gender equality culture
- **Strategic area 3: Occupational safety and health**
 - **Outcome 4:** OSH Improved in policy and practice in a gender inclusive manner.
- **Strategic area 4: Better Work Bangladesh (BWB)**
 - **Outcome 5: 'Better Work' factories serve as a model for compliance**

Gender-related actions in Phase I of the Ready-made Garment Sector Programme (2013–2017)

- The Government of Bangladesh recruited over 200 new Labour Inspectors, 51 of whom were women.
- Capacity building for Labour Inspectors targeted men and women alike. Overall, 31 women Labour Inspectors received foundational training supported by the programme and two of DIFE's women staff members completed fellowships awarded by the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO) in Turin, Italy.
- A Labour Inspection Checklist was developed to enhance DIFE's inspection capacity. The new checklist incorporates specific gender issues, including sexual harassment and violence against women.
- Efforts were made to include women in training sessions that aimed to create a body of OSH master trainers. Overall, 71 women from DIFE, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), the Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF) and trade unions were trained as master trainers and are passing on skills to others.
- The DIFE's foundational training course incorporated a module on gender.
- Labour inspectors were provided with transport aides – 'Scooties' for women and motorcycles for men – to ease their mobility and facilitate inspections.

3.2 Collaboration with UNFPA

DIFE is partnering with UNFPA on the 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at the Workplace' project, that runs from July 2017 to December 2020. The project is in line with the Ministry of Labour and Employment's operational strategy to address gender-based violence. The exclusively concerns the ready-made garment sector, the leather sector and tea gardens, and centres on providing capacity building support to both workers and Labour Inspectors. Involving stakeholders from DIFE, the Department of Labour (DoL), the Industrial Police, and the Industrial Relations Institute (IRI), the project focuses on:

- (i) addressing gender-based violence;
- (ii) ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); and
- (iii) promoting social and behaviour change communication.

TABLE 4. LIST AND BUDGETS OF DIFE'S PROJECTS INVOLVING GENDER-SPECIFIC AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING INTERVENTIONS, 2018–2019

Project	Source of funds		Total funds	Duration	Funding organization
	Revenue ³⁷	Development partner			
Gender Equality and women's Empowerment at workplace	BDT 6,043,000 (equivalent to US\$71,177)	BDT 48,844,000 (equivalent to US\$575,312)	BDT 54,887,000 (equivalent to US\$646,490)	July' 2017 to December' 2020	UNFPA and Government of Bangladesh
Strengthen Labour Inspection System of Bangladesh Including gender, communication, knowledge management and OSH	-	BDT 85,885,755 (equivalent to US\$1,011,610)	BDT 85,885,755 (equivalent to US\$1,011,610)	December 2018 to December 2020	ILO
Support to the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) to setting up and to operate a Remediation Coordination Cell (RCC) to oversee the remediation activities of the RMG factories	-	BDT 54,771,028 (equivalent to US\$645,124)	BDT 54,771,028 (equivalent to US\$645,124)	July 2017 to 05 August 2020	ILO
Implementation of the CAP of factories under Remediation Coordination Cell	BDT 88,450,000 (equivalent to US\$1,041,814)	-	88,450,000 (equivalent to US\$1,041,814)	July' 2018 to 30 June' 2019	Government of Bangladesh
National Occupational Health and Safety Training & Research Institute (NOHSTRI)	BDT 1,652,833,000 (equivalent to US\$19,467,997)	-	1,652,833,000 (equivalent to US\$19,467,997)	September' 2018 to 30 June' 2021	Government of Bangladesh
Grand total			1,936,826,783 (equivalent to US\$ 22,813,036)		

SECTION 4.

DIFE's good practices on gender

4.1 Good practice 1: From gender-blind to gender-balanced

Changing misconceptions about labour inspection as a 'men only' job

In the past, educated women in Bangladesh were rarely encouraged to pursue careers in labour inspection, despite their presence in a range of government and non-government jobs. This is largely because the nature of DIFE's work was regarded as 'unsuitable' for women. Labour inspectors must travel frequently, regularly visit factories and establishments, meet and bargain with employers and factory owners to implement labour laws, and file cases in labour courts when necessary. They may be on the spot in a situation of unrest, and may be called on to inspect premises at virtually any time, day or night. As such, men were heavily concentrated in DIFE's staffing structure and labour inspection was considered a 'men only' profession.

However, momentum for change has grown in recent years, both in terms of encouraging women to join DIFE and reforming the ready-made garment sector. Although DIFE's focus on the sector harkens back to 2006, changes gained pace after the devastating Tazreen fire in 2012 and the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013 that caused 1,136 deaths – largely of garment workers, most of whom were women. These catastrophes highlighted the urgent need for sectoral reform, leading to a range of initiatives to strengthen DIFE's technical and human resource capacities for implementing labour laws in Bangladesh's factories and establishments.

ILO interventions as gateways of change

To support changes in DIFE and the world of work in Bangladesh, the ILO stepped forward as a key development partner. As discussed above, the 'Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-made Garment Sector Programme' was launched in 2013 in response to the Rana Plaza tragedy. To improve working conditions in the sector, the programme spearheaded building and fire safety assessments, labour inspection reform, occupational safety and health, and rehabilitation and skills training.



"The work environment was not so unfriendly at DIFE when I started my career here in 2010 [...] The number of female Labour Inspectors were also very low, only two [...] at that time this institute was dominated by male staff. I and another female colleague joined almost 10 years back, our male colleagues and our relatives levelled us as 'greedy' for joining to work in this sector. This situation has changed and now many women are working in this institute."

– Deputy Inspector General, DIFE

It also facilitated the implementation of Corrective Action Plans, the creation of a Remediation Coordination Cell, and the revitalization of the Participation Committee and Safety Committee. Although initial interventions did not specifically focus on gender or women workers, the programme was a gateway to a greater focus on gender equality, both in the ready-made garment sector and within DIFE.

Changes in DIFE's human resource structure

To strengthen its capacities, DIFE hired more staff and worked to build their capacities to manage the department's new volume of work. Before 2014, DIFE's status was equivalent to that of a Directorate headed by a Director. After organizational changes in 2014, it was raised to the status of a department headed by an Inspector General. From a total of 314 officials and staff in 2014, it grew to have 993 positions by March 2019. Although many posts were vacant at the time of writing, an increased number of staff bodes well for DIFE's capacity to undertake its growing volume of work.

Women stepping forward and breaking gender stereotypes

With time, ever more women have joined DIFE's ranks. Although labour inspection is a challenging career field in Bangladesh, DIFE's women staff and officials have gone above and beyond to excel at their duties. Alongside their dedication, women have benefitted from capacity development – with training fine-tuning their skills and confidence, while preparing them to hold high level positions. They have also been supported by the examples of pioneering women leaders and an increasingly enabling work environment, achieved with men's support.

Capacity development and leadership

Four women hold high level decision-making positions in DIFE as Deputy Inspectors General. Their examples are helping to overcome gender stereotypes, changing perceptions about women's strengths, skills, confidence, capacity and performance. By surpassing expectations of what women can achieve in a 'hazardous' sector, DIFE's women officials are strong examples for other public and private sector entities, demonstrating that women and men can both excel equally in 'non-traditional' roles.

An enabling work environment

Interviews and focus groups conducted for this Gender Roadmap shed light on the important role that DIFE's male staff members have played in supporting their women colleagues, especially during factory visits in difficult situations – such as cases of unrest or inspections undertaken at night. Although these practices remain informal, they are important and culturally appropriate in contexts where women are at greater risk of harassment and violence. As discussed above, men have also demonstrated significant support to pregnant women colleagues, thus contributing further to an enabling work environment for women's empowerment.



"Our male colleagues always accompany us [as] we work to mitigate any unrest the ready-made garment sector. As we do not have vehicle, we have difficulty to ride Scooty, our male colleagues also accompany us at night if necessary. "

– Labour Inspector (woman)

"The posting of female DIGs was given according to their chosen district so that they can manage their work and family life."

– Deputy Inspector General (woman)

4.2 Good practice 2: Gender and social inclusion in the Labour Inspection Checklist and foundational training

DIFE's National Labour Inspection Strategy seeks to ensure workers' labour rights and end all forms of exploitation and discrimination, including child labour. In line with the strategy, the department introduced its Labour Inspection Checklist in 2014 to guide the inspection of factories and establishments. It is an extremely important instrument for inspecting enterprises and assessing performance using three categories: (i) full compliance (ii) broad compliance, and (iii) limited or no compliance.

The checklist was devised with the ILO's support, following the Government's commitment to improve working conditions after the Tazreen fire and Rana Plaza collapse. Alongside technical aspects – such as buildings' integrity and fire safety – the checklist considers gender and disability as key determinants of an inclusive work environment. Thus, the ILO-DIFE partnership was a gateway to move forward and the ILO/RMGP II brought about gender concerns to mainstream gender in the labour sector including the RMG. This has opportunity to portrait a bigger gender picture in labour sector in future.

The Labour Inspection Checklist is aligned with relevant ILO Conventions and guided by the Bangladesh Labour Act and Labour Rules. As such it incorporates key gender-related issues within the Labour Act and Rules, particularly violence against women (clause 332). Other issues include maternity welfare benefits (clauses 46, 47, 48 and rules 45, 46), the provision of separate toilets (clause 59 and rule 51), the provision of childcare for women staff (clause 94 (2) and rule 94 (5)(6)), and equal wages for women and persons with disabilities (clause 345), among others (see table 5).

Overall, the Labour Inspection Checklist provides an opportunity for DIFE and the Government of Bangladesh to promote a more gender-responsive, inclusive work environment in factories and establishments. Applying this Gender Roadmap will help to accelerate the checklist's effective implementation, as would the development of a concrete gender strategy.

TABLE 5. POINTS OF INQUIRY IN THE LABOUR INSPECTION CHECKLIST

	Points of inquiry	Consistent with/relevant to	
		Bangladesh Labour Act	Bangladesh Labour Rules
Points of inquiry on maternity benefits	Compliance with legal provisions on the employment of women workers during the 10 weeks immediately before, and eight weeks after, delivery	Clauses 45, 46	
	Complaints on misconduct experienced by pregnant women		Rule 37(1)
	Compliance with maternity benefits, including provisions on the calculation and payment of the correct amount, in the correct form, and within the required time limit	Clauses 46, 47, 48	Rules 38, 39
	Maternity leave granted to women in line with legal requirements	Clause 47	
	Giving priority use of lifts/elevators to pregnant women		Rule 37(gha)

Points of inquiry		Consistent with/relevant to	
		Bangladesh Labour Act	Bangladesh Labour Rules
Points of inquiry on safety, health and hygiene	Arrangements for safe drinking water on each floor of a factory or establishment	Clause 58	Rule 50
	Separate toilets for men and women workers	Clause 59	Rule 51
	Separate cleaned washrooms for men and women workers	Clause 91	Rule 86
	Health services to treat anaemia and protect the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of adolescents and women workers	Clause 89(6)	Rules 77(8), 78(1)
	Health services provided for pregnant women, before and after delivery, in the factory health centre		Rule 78(1) (gha)
	Standard health room/centre in a factory with 300 or more workers, with necessary equipment and nursing staff supervised by a registered doctor	Clause 89(5) (6)	Rules 77, 78
	Woman doctor/health service provider available		Rule 78(ka)(E)
Points of inquiry on welfare	Existence of a Welfare Officer in any factory with 500 or more workers	Clause 89(8)	Rule 79
	Welfare Officer services' for women to address violence and SRH needs	Clause 79(2)	
	Women's representation in a factory's Canteen Management Committee		Rule 90
	Separate rest/dining rooms for men and women in factories with 50 or more workers	Clause 93	Rule 93
	Childcare room/centre for children under-six in factories with 40 or more workers	Clause 94	Rule 94
	Women staff member(s) engaged to provide childcare	Clause 94(2)	Rule 94(5)(6)
Points of inquiry on working hours	Written consent of women workers for night work, with the option to withdraw consent	Clause 109	Rule 103(1)(3)
	Adequate security provided for women workers during night hours	Clause 109	Rule 103(1)
Points of inquiry on wages	Equal wages for all workers – men, women and workers with disabilities	Clause 345	
Points of inquiry on discrimination	Compliance with restrictions on using workers with disabilities in risky/hazardous work	Clause 44	
	Priority of accommodation facilities for workers with physical disabilities	Clause 94(ka)	Rule 351(3)
	Women's representation in committees and their positions in committees (also consistent with ILO Convention No. 135)		Rule 351(3)
	Special training on women workers' security (also consistent with ILO Convention No. 135)		Rule 351(3)
	Discrimination against pregnant women workers in terms of promotion, training etc. (also consistent with ILO Convention No. 156)	Clause 50	Rule 351(3)
Points of inquiry on violence against women	Women workers' knowledge of different forms of violence against women	Clause 332	
	Probes into incidents of (verbal, psychological and physical) violence against women workers	Clause 332	
	Mechanism (e.g. Harassment Prevention Committee) to submit complaints of violence or sexual harassment against a woman worker	Clause 332	
	Women workers' knowledge of their rights and violence-related complaint procedures	Clause 332	
	Barriers to women workers submitting complaints on violence and harassment	Clause 332	

SECTION 5.

Recommendations and Gender Roadmap matrix

DIFE has made significant progress on strengthening labour inspection to improve working conditions in Bangladesh's factories and establishments. As the sections above demonstrate, major achievements include, but are not limited to: the appointment of more women Labour Inspectors within DIFE, promoting women officials to senior management positions, mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in the Labour Inspection Checklist, introducing a Helpline to receive complaints directly from workers, introducing the Labour Inspection Management Application, and forming a Complaint Committee to address sexual harassment. DIFE has also made headway on supporting compliance with maternity welfare benefits, the provision of separate toilets and childcare facilities, equal wages for men, women and workers with disabilities, and addressing violence against women and sexual harassment.

Based on its analysis, this Gender Roadmap identifies areas that can be strengthened to make DIFE more gender-responsive. In line with DIFE's mandate to implement the Bangladesh Labour Act and Labour Rules, alongside the Ministry of Labour and Employment's Operational Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence and Gender Discrimination in the Workplace, this Gender Roadmap draws attention to three levels:

- (i) the institutional and policy level;
- (ii) collaboration and partnerships; and
- (iii) operational management.

Within these levels, the Roadmap recommends:

- strengthening DIFE's human resources structure for advancing gender equality;
- promoting a gender-responsive approach to labour inspection and operational safety and health in all sectors;
- developing and reinforcing gender-responsive budgeting within DIFE;
- strengthening gender-responsive planning and programming within DIFE;
- ensuring gender and disability-friendly infrastructural and logistical support for DIFE staff and officials;
- establishing a mechanism to prevent and respond to violence and harassment;
- mainstreaming gender in all digitization, knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, and research processes, as well as in DIFE's communications and advocacy initiatives.

In addition to the specific actions and targets recommended by the Gender Roadmap matrix below, the following measures are recommended for mainstreaming gender across DIFE:

- reviewing the Labour Inspection Checklist from a gender perspective, and ensuring that DIFE's data tracking and reporting mechanism mainstreams gender;
- increasing the representation of women officials at all levels through proactive measures by DIFE and the Ministry of Labour and Employment;
- increasing capacity building and training on gender equality, gender-based violence, sexual harassment and related issues;
- ensuring that DIFE's new office premises has a childcare/day care centre and women-friendly facilities;
- incorporating sexual harassment issues as a specific topic for complaints through DIFE's Complaint Helpline;
- collecting sex-disaggregated data through the Labour Inspection Management Application, using a gender perspective;
- building awareness among DIFE staff and officials of the existence of its Complaint Committee to address sexual harassment; and
- creating large day care centres in DIFE's district offices to cater to the children of all government officials in the district, and centrally managing the logistics of these centres (staff, management training, space and equipment).

DIFE has ample scope to step forward as a leader on gender equality, as the government entity responsible for creating safe, healthy and decent working environments in factories and establishments. This is especially true given Bangladesh's commitment to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – including SDG 5 ('achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls') and SDG 8 ('promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all'). DIFE can best help to achieve these goals, and to support Bangladesh's journey towards becoming a middle-income country, by becoming more gender-responsive and, thereby, more well-placed to ensure inclusive and decent work for all. To assist DIFE on this journey, the following Gender Roadmap matrix outlines recommended measures and activities under eight proposed strategic directions for the organization.

TABLE 6. DIFE GENDER ROADMAP MATRIX

Strategic direction 1. DIFE's human resources structure strengthened to achieve gender parity																					
Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone															
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)										
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030					
1. Implement recommendations of the Gender Roadmap vis-à-vis DIFE's human resources structure, policies and processes	No Gender Equality Section in DIFE No direction for affirmative action to promote women officials	DIFE annual reports ILO RMGP II report	DIFE	ILO	Government of Bangladesh (GoB) Development partners (DPs)																
2. Develop a long-term training strategy through DIFE's training unit and design training courses for the OSH Institute	No long-term training strategy available Officials (including doctors) do not have enough technical capacity or opportunity to identify and mitigate OSH-related health problems	DIFE annual reports Training manuals DIFE Progress report 2014–2019	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs																
3. Conduct a gender-related training needs assessment of DIFE staff and officials	DIFE's foundational training does not offer extensive scope for inspectors to learn about gender (e.g. only 2 hours are allocated to gender-related issues. As a result, some inspectors are not able to recall the information shared on gender) Doctors do not have sufficient technical capacity to address OSH-related issues	DIFE annual reports Training manuals on gender and OSH DIFE Progress Report 2014–2019	DIFE	ILO	GoB ILO UNFPA GIZ																
4. Design and deliver a series of comprehensive gender training/ capacity building courses for DIFE staff and officials, informed by the training needs assessment	Of 43 internal trainings, none focused on gender, according to DIFE's Annual Report 2016–17	Training manual on gender for DIFE staff and officials	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs																
5. Engage with MoLE to review existing job descriptions from a gender perspective	The MoLE Operational Strategy indicates that job descriptions of DIFE staff and officials should reflect their gender and GBV-related responsibilities	Government memos Job descriptions of DIFE staff and officials	DIFE MoLE	ILO DPs	GoB DPs																
6. Introduce a dedicated Gender Section in DIFE and formalize Gender Focal Points (one woman and one man) across DIFE sections	No Gender section within DIFE	DIFE annual reports	DIFE MoLE	GoB	GoB																

Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone														
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)									
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
7. Introduce gender indicators in performance management	Gender identity is not a factor, nor is any gender indicator used, to inform an official's promotion or awards, according to DIFE Labour Inspectors The MoLE GBV Operational Strategy 2019 specifies that the job descriptions of DIFE staff and officials should reflect gender and GBV-related	Government memos Job descriptions of DIFE staff and officials	DIFE	GoB	GoB															
8. Disseminate the Model factory design guidelines of ready-made garment factories	Guided by the National Action Plan for the National Women Development Policy 2011, MoLE has prioritized the establishment of accommodation, rest rooms, toilets and childcare/day care centres in workplaces with a high proportion of women employees	DIFE annual reports ILO RMGP II report BGMEA Report	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															
9. Incorporate gender perspective in the existing Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) for both proactive and reactive labour inspections	SoP factory inspections are not reviewed from a gender perspective	DIFE annual reports ILO RMGP II report SoPs	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															

Strategic direction 2. Gender-responsive approach to remediation, labour inspection and operational safety and health (OSH) promoted in all sectors at the factory level

1. Review sector-specific inspection checklists through tripartite consultations that apply a gender perspective (as and when required basis)	Bangladesh has a total of 55 sectors – while DIFE focuses heavily on the critical ready-made garment sector, small industries tend not to be inspected Existing Labour Inspection Checklists are not reviewed from a gender perspective	DIFE annual reports Sector-specific Labour Inspection Checklists	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															
2. Review labour inspection guidelines for new checklists that integrate a gender perspective (as and when required basis)	Inspection checklists have not been developed for all sectors and guidelines for inspection from a gender perspective do not yet exist	DIFE annual reports Guidelines for sector-specific labour inspection checklists	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															

Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone															
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)										
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030					
3. Mainstream and expand gender module in foundational training for newly-recruited inspectors	DIFE's foundational training does not offer extensive scope for inspectors to learn about gender (e.g. only 2 hours are allocated to gender-related issues. As a result, some inspectors are not able to recall the information shared on gender)	DIFE annual reports Foundational training manuals	DIFE	ILO	MoLE ILO GIZ																
4. Update and produce tools to support Labour Inspectors (e.g. on gender, inspectors' role, effective communication, labour laws guidelines, information management, etc.)	Yet to produce gender-responsive Guidelines/ Tools/ instruction materials for Labour Inspectors	DIFE annual reports Updated and gender-responsive tools and guidelines for labour inspectors	DIFE MoLE	GoB ILO	GoB ILO																
5. Review and update the Labour Inspection Reform Roadmap from a gender perspective	DIFE's Labour Inspection Reform Roadmap has not been reviewed from a gender perspective	DIFE annual reports Gender-responsive Labour Inspection Reform Roadmap	DIFE MoLE	GoB ILO	GoB ILO																
6. Review and integrate gender into the OSH profile, the National Plan of Action on OSH, safety guidelines, the OSH kit, Safety Committee materials, etc.	The OSH profile, safety guidelines, OSH kit and SC materials have not yet been reviewed from a gender perspective	DIFE annual reports Gender-responsive OSH profile, National Plan of Action on OSH, safety guidelines, OSH kit, SC materials, etc.	DIFE	GoB ILO	GoB ILO																
7. Develop, adopt and disseminate safety guidelines for selected sectors that integrate gender aspects	Gender-responsive safety guidelines do not exist for selected sectors	DIFE annual reports Gender-responsive safety guidelines	DIFE	GoB ILO	GoB ILO																
8. Document lessons learned on gender from the enterprise level OSH management system	Documentation is unavailable on gender from the enterprise level OSH management system While DIFE has a monthly reporting format to report on OSH-related diseases, there is a major information gap in OSH reporting due to a lack of capacity/expertise	DIFE annual reports Gender-responsive lesson learned reports	DIFE	GoB ILO	GoB ILO																

Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone															
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)										
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030					
10. Develop a mechanism for DIFE's OSH unit to monitor the functioning of Safety Committees	A mechanism is not available in DIFE to monitor the functioning of Safety Committees	DIFE annual reports Monitoring tools and guidelines	DIFE	ILO	GoB ILO																
11. Introduce gender-related criteria in OSH awards	National OSH awards in 2018 and 2019 did not have any gender-related criteria for the selection of nominees or winners	Gender-responsive criteria for OSH awards	DIFE	ILO	GoB ILO																
12. Ensure and monitor the formation of the complaint committee to all factories and establishments as per the HC verdict	Although some mechanisms are in place, DIFE does not receive complaints on violence against women or sexual harassment. Most complaints concern legal benefits (due wages, overtime and dismissal, etc.) No protocols or resolution mechanism are available to address cases of violence and harassment in factories HC verdict, BGMEA report on SH committee Baseline data from DIFE (no/yes?)	DIFE annual reports protocols/guidelines/mechanism ILO RMGP II report BGMEA annual report	DIFE	ILO	GoB ILO																
13. Mainstream gender into complaint management campaigns	DIFE does not have a gender-responsive complaint management procedure	Gender-responsive complaint management system DIFE annual reports ILO RMGP II report BGMEA annual report	DIFE	ILO	GoB ILO																
14. Analyse DIFE's budget from a gender perspective	DIFE's overall budget document has yet to clearly show a 'women's share' (the percentage of the budget planned and spent for women staff and officials) An analysis of DIFE's budget from a gender perspective is not available	DIFE annual reports DIFE gender budget	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs																
15. Undertake a training needs assessments on gender-responsive budgeting	DIFE's focuses on technical and general management issues, but no emphasis is placed on gender issues, including gender-responsive budgeting	Training needs assessment report on gender budgeting Training manuals on gender-responsive budgeting DIFE annual reports	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs																

Strategic direction 3. Gender-responsive budgeting in DIFE developed and reinforced

Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone														
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)									
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
1. Develop and roll out trainings on gender budgeting for DIFE staff	DIFE's focuses on technical and general management issues, but no emphasis is placed on gender issues, including gender-responsive budgeting	Training manuals on gender-responsive budgeting DIFE annual reports	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															
2. Take stock of existing gender-related interventions within DIFE (government and DPs)	Gender Roadmap for DIFE UNFPA programme	Gender Roadmap for DIFE DIFE annual reports Documentation of gender-related interventions within DIFE (GoB and DPs)	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															
3. Review existing programming and planning processes within DIFE	DIFE has yet to establish a review mechanism for gender-related planning and programming	DIFE review report on gender-responsive planning and programming	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															
4. Develop a gender mainstreaming strategy for programming and planning in DIFE	There is no gender mainstreaming strategy in place for DIFE's planning and programming processes	Gender mainstreaming strategy for DIFE's planning and programming	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															
5. Review the impact of gender-related programmes supported by development partners (e. g. ILO, UNFPA, etc.)	No documents are available on the concrete impacts of DIFE's gender-related programmes supported by DPs	Gender Roadmap for DIFE Impact assessment report of DIFE's DP-supported gender programmes	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															

Strategic direction 4. Gender-responsive planning and programming introduced and strengthened within DIFE

1. Implement gender-specific programme/projects within DIFE and enhance its functional capacity	The Gender Roadmap's situation analysis found that only two projects were gender-specific	DIFE annual reports	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															
2. Introduce gender criteria for new projects	The MoLE Operational Strategy 2019 indicates that the business/functions of DIFE and its sections/units should reflect their responsibility to integrate GBV in routine responsibilities	DIFE annual reports Guidelines on gender criteria for new DIFE projects	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															

Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone														
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)									
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
3.Undertake a gender gap analysis for all programming and planning processes in DIFE	No documents are available on a gender gap analysis for DIFE's programming and planning processes	DIFE annual reports Gender gap analysis report on all of DIFE's programming and planning processes	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															
4.Introduce a scoring system to annually award the 'best gender-responsive project'	DIFE has yet to introduce a procedure or system for the assessment-based scoring of gender-responsive projects	DIFE annual reports Score card Celebration report	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															
5.Take stock of the gender composition of all sectors to improve the gender-responsiveness of labour inspection and OSH	No documents are available on the gender composition of all sectors to improve the gender-responsiveness of labour inspection and OSH	DIFE annual reports Review report	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															
6.Review and implement the needs assessment on workers with disabilities done by MoLE (i. e. challenges they face and their needs in relation to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and awareness of their needs	MoLE conducted a needs assessment to identify the needs of workers with disabilities, awareness of these needs, and the challenges they face in factories and establishments	Needs assessment report on disabilities DIFE annual reports	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															
7.Arrange/modify appropriate infrastructure for persons with disabilities (ramps, toilets, etc.)	DIFE does not have data on the availability of toilet facilities in workplaces for persons with disabilities, and DIFE premises' do not have disability-friendly infrastructure	DIFE annual reports Structural plans	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															
8.Create a child crèche with breastfeeding corners in all DIFE offices	Childcare rooms are not functional in all (23) DIFE offices across the country	DIFE annual reports	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															
9.Mainstream disability considerations into DIFE's labour inspection and OSH tools and approaches	Many factories employ some workers with disabilities, but DIFE and employers do not know enough about their needs to ensure minimum facilities. There is limited awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities Public transport is not accessible, making it difficult for persons with disabilities to travel to work. MoLE's Operational Strategy 2019 has guidance on how DIFE can make its office infrastructure women-friendly and disability-friendly	DIFE annual reports	DIFE	DPs	GoB DPs															

Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone														
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)									
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
10. Develop standard Terms of Reference (ToR) for DIFE's Complaint Committee to address sexual harassment, guided by HC Verdict	DIFE has yet to introduce a standard ToR/SoW for the Complaint Committee to address sexual harassment within DIFE	DIFE annual reports	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs															

Strategic direction 5. Gender and disability-friendly logistical and infrastructural support ensured for DIFE staff and officials

1. Develop a protocol for complaints and the resolution of cases of violence and harassment within DIFE	Although DIFE has some mechanisms in place, it does not have protocols or a resolution system for cases of violence and harassment within DIFE	DIFE annual reports Procedural guidelines	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs														
2. Conduct a training needs assessment on violence and harassment among DIFE's staff and officials	In January 2019, DIFE formed a five-member Complaint Committee to address sexual harassment within the department. However, many staff members and officials are not aware of the committee's existence	DIFE annual reports Training needs assessment report on violence and harassment	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs														
3. Review DIFE's existing curriculum and materials on violence and harassment (if any)	In January 2019, DIFE formed a five-member complaint committee to address sexual harassment within the department Communication materials (leaflets, posters, etc.) have yet to be developed to raise awareness of the committee	Review report on DIFE's curriculum and materials on violence and harassment	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs														
4. Incorporate SH/GBV into the APA in-house training sexual harassment for DIFE staff	In January 2019, DIFE formed a five-member Complaint Committee to address sexual harassment within the department. However, many staff members and officials are not aware of the committee's existence	DIFE annual reports Training manual on addressing sexual harassment	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs														

Strategic direction 6. DIFE mechanism to respond to gender-based violence and harassment established

1. Develop procedural guidelines for the submission of complaints (same as the protocol)	DIFE has yet to develop procedural guidelines for the submission of complaints on sexual harassment	DIFE procedural guidelines on reporting sexual harassment in the workplace	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs														
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Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone														
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)									
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
2. Develop a sexual Harassment policy, Zero Tolerance Protocol (ZTP) and confidentiality guidelines for DIFE	In January 2019, DIFE formed a five-member complaint committee to address sexual harassment within the department A policy has yet to be developed on combatting sexual harassment.	HC verdict	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs															
3. Integrate gender and gender-based violence issues in DIFE's Complaint Helpline	DIFE's Complaint Helpline directly receives complaints, which can also be submitted by letter or online. However, the helpline does not tend to receive complaints on violence against women. Most complaints concern legal benefits (e.g. due wages, overtime, dismissal, etc.)	DIFE Sexual Harassment Elimination Policy and Procedure (SHEPP)	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs															
4. Publish DIFE's violence and harassment policy online	DIFE yet to develop a policy on sexual harassment	DIFE website DIFE annual reports	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs															
5. Publish DIFE's violence and harassment policy online	DIFE yet to develop a policy on sexual harassment	DIFE website DIFE annual reports	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs															
6. Identify and award 'gender champions' (i.e. staff and officials who work to support gender equality) in DIFE	Progress on gender equality and women's empowerment is afoot in DIFE. Men are supportive of women colleagues, especially during factory visits in situations of unrest or at night The promotion of four women to the rank of Deputy Inspector General offers a positive example to dispel stereotypes by demonstrating that women are as capable as men, even in 'hazardous' sectors	DIFE annual reports Gender champion profiles in DIFE	DIFE	ILO UNFPA	GoB DPs															
7. Update DIFE website with gender-related statistics and reports	Sex-disaggregated data is not available There is a need to strengthen DIFE's management information system/ data generation and reporting on gender issues	DIFE website	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															

Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone														
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)									
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
8. Review the level of sex-disaggregated data in terms of labour inspection and OSH	Sex-disaggregated data is not available There is a need to strengthen DIFE's management information system/ data generation and reporting on gender issues	Gender Roadmap for DIFE DIFE management information system and annual reports	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															
9. Identify staff training needs to build their capacities on generating and analysing sex-disaggregated data	MoLE's Operational Strategy 2019 sets a clear strategic direction for DIFE to gather sex-disaggregated data to generate evidence and track progress on gender mainstreaming DIFE's Labour Inspection Strategy 2016 calls for the development of a management information system (MIS) to collect, store, analyse and use data for better planning While DIFE collects a considerable amount of data, including on gender-related issues, this is not analysed or used for various reasons, including a lack of staff capacity	Training needs assessment report DIFE annual reports DIFE management information system LIMA	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															
10. Train staff on collecting, analysing and reporting sex-disaggregated data	While DIFE collects a considerable amount of data, including on gender-related issues, this is not analysed or specifically used for various reasons, including a lack of staff capacity	DIFE annual report Training manual DIFE management information system LIMA	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															
Strategic direction 7. Gender mainstreamed in all of DIFE's digitization, information and knowledge management, research, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes																				
1. Incorporate the sex-disaggregated data collection issue into the LIMA trainings and collection of sex-disaggregated data for all labour inspection processes	While DIFE collects a considerable amount of data, including on gender-related issues, this is not analysed or used for various reasons, including a lack of staff capacity	DIFE annual reports DIFE management information system Research reports	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															

Major outputs	Baseline (Source of data)	Means of verification	Responsibility (lead)	Partners	Resources	Milestone														
						Short-term (2020-2021)		Medium-term (2022-2024)			Long-term (2025-2030)									
						2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
1. (continued)	No tools/protocols/guidelines on sex-disaggregated data in labour inspection processes are available in DIFE	LIMA Labour Inspection Checklists																		
2. Conduct regular gender-responsive research and produce reports	While DIFE collects a considerable amount of data, including on gender-related issues, this is not analysed or specifically used for various reasons, including a lack of staff capacity	DIFE annual reports Research reports	DIFE	ILO/DPs	GoB DPs															
3. Capture and share learning and insights on gender mainstreaming initiatives	DIFE does not currently have any mechanisms to capture and share learning and insights on its gender equality work	Reports on learning sharing workshops Case studies DIFE annual report	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															

Strategic direction 8. Gender mainstreamed in DIFE's communications and advocacy processes

1. Develop/mainstream gender into DIFE's communication plan/strategy	In line with the Bangladesh Labour Act and Labour Rules, DIFE is mandated to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for workers in factories and establishments. Its activities include delivering messages to factory workers to support them to exercise their rights. However, DIFE has not yet developed a gender-responsive communication plan/strategy to guide its communications work	DIFE communication plan/strategy	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															
2. Develop awareness raising campaigns and other advocacy activities on gender and disability issues at the factory level through social and behaviour change communications (SBCC)	DIFE has strong information, education and communication (IEC) materials that are displayed in offices. However, a shortage of printed and other SBCC materials is a challenge. There is a need to produce and disseminate more materials to reach thousands of workers in different sectors (e.g. to inform them about the Complaint Helpline). SBCC materials do not focus on gender and disability issues.	Gender-responsive SBCC/IEC materials Photographs	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															
3. Externally share learning and good practices from DIFE's gender mainstreaming activities	DIFE does not currently have any mechanisms to capture and share learning and insights on its gender mainstreaming work. As such, it cannot convey the 'big picture' of its interventions' gender equality results	Report on learning sharing workshops on DIFE's gender equality work	DIFE	ILO	GoB DPs															

COVID-19 response and DIFE's Gender Roadmap

COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020. Since its onset, it has caused unprecedented disruptions in economic sectors worldwide. The Government of Bangladesh is determined to take all actions necessary to address the COVID-19 situation in the country. In response to the health crisis, the Government instituted lockdown measures. To mitigate potential economic shocks, it issued a stimulus package of BDT 72,750 crore (BDT 72,750,000,000 equivalent to US\$856.9 million) for all industrial and agricultural sectors. It also promoted COVID-19 mitigation measures for factories, establishments and workplaces using a tailored risk assessment.

COVID-19 is affecting most of the population in varying degrees, but women, girls and gender-diverse persons are disproportionately at risk and affected. UN Women's Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) (March–April 2020) highlights several issues that are relevant for the DIFE Gender Roadmap. It identifies critical areas where pre-existing inequalities are making women, children and other gender groups more vulnerable to COVID-19's impact. These include limited access to basic services, such as health care, nutritional services, maternal health care, and support for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV); a lack of protection against GBV; a large-scale loss of livelihoods; women's unequal burden of unpaid and care work; a dearth of access to information, leading to stigmatization; and low levels of participation in decision-making processes within the COVID-19 response.

Examples of the gendered impacts of COVID-19 were explored in a webinar report by UN Women (May 19, 2020). For instance, men and women are impacted very differently in the world of work. While jobs have been lost overall, the situation is worse for women as they were already disadvantaged by a low labour force participation rate, a large gender gap in labour force participation, and women's concentration in the informal sector.

Bangladesh's Labour Force Survey 2016–17 found that 93.3 per cent of women in rural areas are in informal employment, as are 87.3 per cent of urban women. UN Women's Rapid Gender Assessment highlights that their earnings are highly at risk due to the countrywide lockdown. Its findings show that many women have lost their jobs, or had their working hours reduced (83 per cent of formal employees and 49 per cent of informal employees). Workers in the ready-made garment sector – 65 per cent of whom are women (around 3 million workers) – who are among the hardest hit by COVID-19. As a result of the initial closure of 1,904 factories in March 2020 as ordered by the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, a significant number of ready-made garment worker lost their jobs.

To address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Women's Rapid Gender Assessment proposes the following recommendations for the Government, workers and other key stakeholders:

- Promote digital access for women, including by working with the private sector to put mobile phones and smartphones in the hands of women so that they are not left behind.
- The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs should work closely with the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Youth and Sports on an initiative to support short-term employment opportunities, including the provision of skills training for women.
- Build awareness on the online General Diary (GD) service for receiving legal help.
- Ease the Government's national identity card process, given the need to have a card to receive cash assistance from the Government and non-government entities.
- Provide women in the informal sector with easy loan opportunities to get back to business. To this end, advocate with the SME Foundation to introduce special measures to support the most disadvantaged women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh.

DIFE's engendered COVID-19 response

To respond to the immediate health and safety needs of workers in the formal economy, DIFE has developed a set of Occupational Safety and Health Guidelines. These were approved by the National OSH Council in June 2020 to prevent and mitigate COVID-19's spread in workplaces. The guidelines also urge all employers, owners of factory and establishments to comply with the measures it identifies to protect workers, while safeguarding their industries and keeping the economy running.

DIFE acknowledges the gender dynamics of the COVID-19 crisis. As such, its COVID-19 response employs a gender perspective, reflected through specific measures that will be implemented under the Gender Roadmap:

- All guidelines and related documents must consider gender inclusion.
- Monitor job protection for women, especially pregnant women workers, and take necessary actions to safeguard and ensure their protection.
- Advocate with employers to provide nutritional support for workers (both women and men) to boost their immune systems.
- Continue working on the sexual harassment prevention activities, in line with the High Court Division's 2009 verdict.
- Revitalize the helpline system so that workers can also call for help on sexual harassment, as well as other violence and harassment issues.
- Incorporate information services for pregnant workers in newly-adopted telemedicine services.
- Develop and disseminate communications materials on COVID-19.
- Incorporate gender issues in special inspections related to COVID-19.
- Ensure the collection of sex-disaggregated on any information related to COVID-19.
- Incorporate COVID-19 and gender issues in the planned 'Gender Training Needs Assessment' (TNA) and 'GBV, Violence and Harassment' training module.
- All advocacy and campaigns must include a gender perspective on COVID-19 (i.e. activities on the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, International Women's Day, and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Day, among others).

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Annexes

Annex I. Glossary of terms

Complaint Committee A five-member committee formed to address sexual harassment in the workplace, in line with the 2009 verdict of Bangladesh’s High Court.

Decent working environment Productive work environment in terms of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

Gender Gender refers to the socially constructed differences and relations between males and females. These vary widely among societies and cultures and change over time. The term ‘gender’ is not interchangeable with the term “sex”, which refers exclusively to the biological differences between men and women, which are universal. Statistical data are disaggregated according to sex, whereas gender characterizes the differing roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and needs of females and males in all areas and in any given social context.

Gender analysis A tool to assess the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. This tool is used to diagnose the differences between women and men regarding their specific activities, conditions, needs, access to and control over resources, and their access to development benefits and decision-making. It involves: (i) collecting sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive information about the population being addressed; (ii) identifying the sexual division of labour, and access to and control over resources and benefits by men and women respectively; (iii) understanding girls’, boys’, women’s and men’s needs, constraints and opportunities; (iv) identifying constraints and opportunities in the larger context; and (v) reviewing the capacities of relevant organizations to promote gender equality.

Gender and social inclusion An approach to integrate the needs of persons of all genders, and of persons who are socially marginalized, into development practices.

Gender-based discrimination Systematic and structural differences among different sexes in a society; also refers to relative advantages and disadvantages because of one’s sex identity.

Gender-based violence (GBV)	A pervasive form of violence and harassment rooted in unequal power relations among different sexes in a society; also refers any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences among different sexes.
Gender blindness	Ignorance of the different roles and needs of women and men in social, cultural, economic and political contexts.
Gender budgeting	The application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. A gender-responsive budget is not a separate budget for women, but rather is a tool to incorporate a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. Gender budgeting examines how budgetary allocations affect the social and economic opportunities of men and women. Reallocations in revenue and expenditure and restructuring of the budgetary process may be necessary to promote equality. It also refers to analysing the gender-differentiated impact of revenue-raising policies and the allocation of financial resources.
Gender equality	A condition of equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities, participation, decision-making, access to and control over resources, self-autonomy, skills, and confidence, etc. between men and women.
Gender indicator	Criteria used to assess gender-related change in a condition and to measure progress over time toward gender equality. These indicators can be quantitative (data, facts, numbers) and qualitative (opinions, feelings, perceptions, experiences).
Gender mainstreaming	A strategy to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment so that both women and men can influence, participate in, and benefit equally from the development process. It involves taking into account the interests and concerns of different sexes in any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. Such a strategy in the world of work focuses on structural barriers so that transformation results in more equal power relations including shared decision-making and women's equal access to and control over productive resources and benefits. Gender mainstreaming and specific interventions to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in labour markets are complementary strategies to help ensure that inequality is not perpetuated or exacerbated.
Gender needs	Diverse needs and interests of different sexes in policy and programme contexts.

Gender parity	A numerical concept concerning relative equality in terms of the numbers and proportions of men and women, girls and boys, or people of other gender identities.
Gender perspective	An approach that looks into gender-based differences in policy and programme contexts.
Gender-responsive organization	An organization that values the diverse needs and interests of its staff members of different sexes, and which designs and implements appropriate policies and programmes considering their diverse needs and interests.
Gender-responsive planning and programming	An intervention that aims to address gender-based structural constraints through policy and programme design and implementation.
Sex-disaggregated data	A data set cross-classified by sex – i.e. which presents information separately for men and women – and which is necessary for the effective gender analysis of an intervention.
Sexual harassment	Any unwanted or unwelcome behaviour or conduct by a person, which is sexual in nature – either physical or verbal.
Violence against women	A violent act primarily or intentionally committed against women and girls. It has different forms, including physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, and economic violence.

Annex II. List of internal training courses DIFE offered in the 2018–19 fiscal year

Title	Number of training courses	Total participants
TOT on Machinery Safety (under Danish project)	02	14
TOT Chemical Safety (under Danish project)	01	08
TOT on Accident Prevention (under Danish project)	02	18
TOT on Ergonomics (under Danish project)	01	11
Basic in-house training on “Bangladesh service rules”	01	37
Training on e-filing system	02	44
Training on “Innovation idea”	01	15
Management workshop on “Occupational Safety & Health”	01	09
Training on “Grievance Redress System (GRS) software version-2”	01	30
Training on “Training Methodology”	01	17
Training on “Personal Management Information System (PMIS)”	01	25
Training on “SOP on Human Trafficking, Forced Labour & Modern Slavery”	02	40
Training on “Boiler Safety”	01	08
Training on “Annual Performance Agreement (APA)”	01	23
Training on “National Integrity Strategy”	04	23
TOT on apprenticeship	02	70
ToT on GBV and SRHR (under UNFPA Programme)	01	15
Training on GBV and SRHR (under UNFPA Programme)	02	80
Refresher Training on LIMA	11	277
Total	38	764

Annex III. Template of the 'Report on Inspection Assessment' used by Labour Inspectors

ANNEX III. FIGURE 1.

TEMPLATE OF THE 'REPORT ON INSPECTION ASSESSMENT' USED BY LABOUR INSPECTORS

Sl. No.	Name of inspector and designation	Type of inspection		Sector	Name of establishment and address	Date of inspection		Measures taken	Violation of law	Date of filing case and clauses, and factory/shop name	Comments
		Individual	Joint			Date of first inspection	Date of re-inspection				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1				e.g. textiles				e.g. notice issued	e.g. clauses 5.9 9(1), 326		
2											
3											

Note: Adopted from a Bengali version.

ANNEX III FIGURE 2.

TEMPLATE OF THE 'MONTHLY REPORT ON THE COMPLAINT MITIGATION MECHANISM'

Sl. No.	Name of district	Monthly numbers of unmitigated complaints 2016-18/ 2018-19	Number of complaints received in current month			Complaints mitigated in the current month			Number of unmitigated complaints			Summary of complaints mitigated
			Letter	Online	Total	Complaints received in the current month	Previous month's number of unmitigated complaints 2016-18/2018-19	Total	Received in current month	Monthly number of unmitigated complaints 2016-18/2018-19	Total	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	July/18	e.g. 70	e.g. 166	e.g. 39	e.g. 205	e.g. 116	e.g. 40	e.g. 156	e.g. 89	e.g. 30	e.g. 119	e.g. 0
2	Aug/18											
3	Sep/18											
4	Oct/18											
5	Nov/18											
6	Dec/18											
7	Jan/19											
8	Feb/19											
9	Mar/19											
10	Apr/19											
11	May/19											
12	Jun/19											
Total												

Note: Adopted from a Bengali version.

Annex IV. Number of respondents interviewed

Key Informant Interviews	Organization	Number
Inspector General	Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE)	1
Former Inspector General	DIFE	1
Joint Inspector General, Safety Section	DIFE	1
Joint Inspector General, Health Section	DIFE	1
Deputy Inspector General, General Section	DIFE	1
Deputy Inspector General, Health Section (responsible for UNFPA's project on gender-based violence)	DIFE	1
Deputy Inspector General, DIFE (Head of the Complaint Committee to address sexual harassment)	DIFE	1
Deputy Inspector General, Administration and Development Section	DIFE	1
Additional Secretary	Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE)	1
Joint Secretary (gender and budget focal person)	MoLE	1
Gender Focal Point	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA)	1
Vice President	Trade union	1
Secretary	Trade union	1
Joint Secretary	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufactures and Exporters Association (BKMEA)	1
Director	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)	1
Secretary-General	Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF)	1
Ready-made Garment Sector Programme (RMGP II) Project Official	International Labour Organization (ILO)	1
Other development partner	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	1
Total		18

Focus Group Discussion	Organization	Gender of participants	Number of participants
Labour Inspector	DIFE	Women	4
Labour Inspector	DIFE	Men	4
Labour Inspector	DIFE	Women and men	6
Total			14

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