



## **CIRUM Gender Policy**

### **Context**

Cultural Identity and Resource Use Management (CIRUM) works at grassroots level to assist the development of community based organisations, develop models of sustainable forest management and land use and rights, provide services to forest peoples to build their capacity to lobby and advocate on their own behalf, and to assist communes and districts in land allocation programmes. CIRUM's work targets forest living and forest-margin living ethnic minority people in mountainous areas of Vietnam, who are the most deprived and excluded people in Vietnamese society.

The increasing pressures on forest lands and forest conflicts are a continuous source of challenge to minority groups to sustain their livelihoods, stability and identity. Therefore, all of CIRUM's interventions aim to solve forest and land conflicts, and secure ethnic minority people's rights to access, control and benefit from their forest and land resources in a way that is sustainable and in line with their own values, needs, knowledge and customs.

CIRUM believes that all people have inherently equal dignity and rights. Therefore CIRUM seeks to affirm and promote the equal rights, opportunities and status of men and women. CIRUM acknowledges that in order to do this, studies to understand the roles, tasks and responsibilities of women and men have to be conducted, with results integrated into their programs.

The organisation Towards Ethnic Women (TEW) was established in 1991 when it was identified that ethnic minority women required assistance in regards to land rights and forest use and management. Three organisations have evolved from TEW; CIRUM, SPERI and CODE, and all work towards supporting ethnic minority groups in land rights and forest use and management. These three organisations now work as an alliance under the Livelihood Sovereignty (LISO) Alliance. This alliance allows the organisations to share resources to enhance each other's programs.

This gender policy builds on the practical experience of TEW, CIRUM and the LISO alliance and creates opportunities for the organisation and alliance to continue to work with both women and men to promote gender equality within the organisation, the alliance and their programs.

### **Policy Statement**

In order to fulfil CIRUM's commitment to gender equality throughout the organisation and in programs:

- CIRUM will work to create an organisational culture that benefits both men and women.

- CIRUM will work with ethnic minority groups to promote gender equality and empowerment for both women and men, while respecting and understanding local ethnic minority culture and customs.
- CIRUM will work with LISO alliance members to ensure all joint programming is gender aware and supports the principle of gender equality.
- CIRUM will work with co-implementing partners to deliver programs that are gender aware and support these partners with further training and awareness of gender integration where required.

## Definitions

**Sex:** The biological difference between men and women.

**Gender:** The socially defined difference between men and women. Specific societies define certain behaviours and qualities as being masculine or feminine and identify certain activities as being appropriate for men or women.

**Gender Equality:** The equal valuing by society of both the similarities and the differences between women and men, and the varying roles they play.

**Gender Roles:** Gender roles are the roles women and men are expected to play in society. Society has allocated different roles, responsibilities and activities to women and men according to what is considered appropriate.

**Gender Division of Labour:** Refers to the different work that men and women generally do within the community, at the workplace or inside the family.

## Goals & Objectives

### *Organisational Culture*

CIRUM will ensure that the work environment continues to foster equality, openness and the ability for both men and women to work effectively together.

CIRUM will ensure that there are appropriate Human Resource policies and procedures that promote merit based non-discriminatory workplace standards.

CIRUM will integrate gender considerations into all planning exercises including organisational planning, strategic program planning, including work with the LISO alliance and co-implementing partners, and staff training, and will allocate adequate resources to support relevant initiatives.

### *Programming*

CIRUM and the LISO alliance programs will empower both men and women in ethnic minority communities to work together to contribute to their community in a meaningful, sustainable way.

CIRUM will ensure that there is a good and shared understanding of gender roles and responsibilities in each ethnic minority group to be able to implement programs that are appropriate, sustainable and beneficial for both women and men.

CIRUM will analyse gender relations during program preparation and in any research, including opportunities and constraints to equal opportunities for both women and men within the relevant cultural context. These gender analyses will be used to design and implement programs that maximise positive impacts on gender equity and minimise potential negative consequences.

CIRUM will monitor and evaluate all programs in order to measure their relative impact on women and men, and use these lessons in ongoing design and management.

### **Implementation and Accountability**

CIRUM recognises that there are key issues affecting the implementation of this policy including:

- The need for awareness raising amongst staff and communities in which CIRUM works;
- Resource limitations (both financial and human);
- The promotion and implementation of gender equity will progress at different rates and by different means throughout the organisation and programs.

However, CIRUM is committed to achieving progress toward a situation where women and men enjoy equal opportunities, rights and access to power and resources, in their organisation, programs and programs with the alliance. Similarly, all staff are accountable for promoting a positive work environment for women and men.

In order to move forward with implementation of this policy, some key actions will need to take place:

- Development and training of gender sensitive processes and procedures for programs and organisational use;
- Mechanisms created to share lessons learnt with stakeholders such as communities, alliance members and donors;
- Continued discussion on best practice approaches, lessons learnt and improvement in both programming and organisation.