



## **Gender Equality Policy**

## Purpose

Species Saviour Initiative (SSI) is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable environment that strengthens conservation outcomes in Somalia. We recognize that empowering women, youth, and gender non-conforming individuals is not only a matter of rights, but also essential to achieving lasting biodiversity protection, sustainable natural resource management, and community resilience.

The purpose of this Gender Equality Policy is to clearly outline SSI's commitments to addressing gender-based disparities, discrimination, and biases both within our organization and across our programs. This policy complements SSI's Equal Opportunity and Safeguards Policies and reinforces our accountability to uphold human rights in all conservation efforts.

## Scope

This policy applies to all of SSI's work, including:

- On-the-ground conservation projects,
- Partnerships with communities, civil society, and government,
- Policy advocacy and communications,
- Institutional operations and governance.

It applies to all SSI employees, interns, volunteers, fellows, and representatives (collectively "SSI Staff"), as well as SSI partners, contractors, suppliers, consultants, and community custodians ("SSI Partners").

## Our Principles

SSI's gender approach is grounded in Somali cultural realities while aligned with international human rights standards. It is underpinned by the following principles:

- 1. Equality as a Right**  
Gender equality is a fundamental human right and central to SSI's mission. Internally, this means ensuring our HR policies and practices promote fairness. Externally, this means addressing gender gaps in conservation, particularly in communities that depend on forests, frankincense trees, rangelands, and biodiversity.
- 2. Inclusivity**  
We recognize that gender is diverse, and that cultural norms around gender are evolving. Our work seeks to respect and include people of all genders and social identities.
- 3. Intersectionality**  
Gender inequality often intersects with age, clan identity, disability, literacy, and economic status. SSI acknowledges these multiple layers of marginalization in order to design fair and responsive programs.
- 4. Allyship**  
Promoting gender equality requires collective responsibility. All SSI Staff and Partners are expected to challenge discriminatory norms and practices, support equal

participation, and ensure women and marginalized groups have a meaningful voice in conservation decisions.

#### **5. Transparency and Accountability**

Success depends on commitment at all levels. SSI will make this policy publicly available, provide reporting mechanisms, and integrate gender accountability into program monitoring.

Reports of discrimination, harassment, sexual exploitation, or abuse can be raised confidentially through SSI's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism.

## **Our Actions**

SSI integrates gender equality across all areas of our work. This includes:

### **Internal Operations**

- Tracking gender representation in staffing, recruitment, and leadership.
- Reviewing pay equity and career development opportunities.
- Offering fair and inclusive benefits where legally and culturally possible.
- Providing training on gender equality, anti-discrimination, safeguarding, and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH).

### **Programmatic Work**

- Conducting gender analyses in conservation projects to identify gaps, risks, and opportunities.
- Developing gender action plans with clear activities, responsibilities, and resources.
- Supporting women's participation in natural resource governance and leadership roles.
- Promoting equitable access to conservation-related livelihoods and economic opportunities.
- Designing responses to gender-related risks, including SEAH and unequal impacts of environmental stress (such as drought or land degradation).
- Applying a project "gender tag" to classify each project's ambition (empower, benefit, reach, none).

### **Key Gender Outcomes**

SSI commits to contributing to the following results:

1. Generating equitable and meaningful socio-economic benefits for women and marginalized groups.
2. Enhancing women's leadership and decision-making in conservation governance.
3. Increasing equitable access to, and control over, land, water, forests, and other natural resources.

## **Consequences of Violations**

Violations of this Gender Equality Policy will not be tolerated. SSI will take immediate and appropriate action in response to any breach, which may include:

### **For SSI Staff**

- Formal disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.
- Mandatory participation in remedial training or counseling.
- Removal from positions of responsibility or authority.

### **For SSI Partners (contractors, suppliers, grantees, community custodians, and consultants)**

- Written warnings or corrective action requirements.
- Suspension or termination of contracts, grants, or partnerships.
- Reporting to relevant government authorities if violations involve breaches of Somali law (such as harassment, assault, or discrimination).

### **Reporting and Protection**

- All Staff and Partners are encouraged and required to report violations through SSI's **Accountability and Grievance Mechanism**.
- Reports may be submitted confidentially and will be investigated promptly and fairly.
- SSI prohibits retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports a concern or participates in an investigation.