

## Policy on Workforce Diversity

### Ensuring equitable development for women and men

“In both activities and our approaches, in partner countries as well as in Switzerland we seek to promote gender equality in development”.

### Fostering understanding between cultures

“We respect the cultural diversity of our partners, while remaining aware of our own values; we seek to promote mutual understanding between cultures”.

- Guiding Principles SDC

The SDC Swiss Cooperation Office Nepal (Coof) strongly believes in workforce diversity and defines it as an inclusive workforce made up of people with different human qualities from the perspective of gender, caste/ ethnicity, age, culture, religion, and race. The Coof identifies cultural differences as essential and natural. To capitalize on the strengths of diversity, it makes conscious efforts towards inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds in its staff composition.

The findings of the baseline survey on staff composition conducted by the Coof with its own staff and that of SDC funded projects and partners in March 2005 clearly concluded that men from Brahmin/Chhettri/Thakuri (B/C/T)<sup>1</sup> and non-discriminated Newar<sup>2</sup> castes are already highly represented (48% B/C/T and 20% Newar) in the total staff composition. In this context, the Swiss Cooperation Office Nepal realizes that it needs to work not only with its own attitudes and assumptions about diversity but also with its projects and partners to promote a more pluralistic organizational culture.

Taking into consideration both the national and organizational context of SDC in Nepal, the Coof considers social and gender discrimination perspective to define “**discriminated groups**”:

Discrimination Perspective	Criteria	
Discriminated groups	Social	Dalit <sup>3</sup> , Janajati <sup>4</sup> , Madhesi/Terai caste/ethnic groups <sup>5</sup> , and other ethnic minorities <sup>6</sup> Discriminated Newar castes <sup>7</sup> : Khadgi (Kasai), Kapali (Kusle), Dyahla /Pode (sweeper), Chyame/Chamkhalah (sweeper), Rajaka (Dhobi), Charmakar (Sarki), Jugi (musician)
	Gender	Women
Non-discriminated groups	Social	Brahmin/Chhettri/Thakuri/Newar
	Gender	Men

<sup>1</sup> B/C/T – Brahmin/Chhettri/Thakuri: so called high caste Hindus of Caucasoid race who speak Indo-Aryan language on which modern Nepali is based [*Unequal Citizens Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal, DFID and the WB*]

<sup>2</sup> Newar: Indigenous nationality that is categorised, along with Thakali, under “Advance Groups” (Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, NEFEN)

<sup>3</sup> Dalit : Hindu occupational groups of Caucasoid race who speak Indo-Aryan language and considered “impure” and “untouchable” by Hindu caste system. [*Unequal Citizens Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal, DFID and the WB*]

<sup>4</sup> Janajati (Matwali): Indigenous groups positioned in the middle rank by Hindu Caste Sytem generally of Mongoloid racial stock , speak Tibeto-Burman languages, follow Buddhism or various shamanist/animist religions. [*Unequal Citizens Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal, DFID and the WB*]

<sup>5</sup> Madheshi: People of Madhesh / Terai region of Nepal that comprise Indo-Aryan, Indigenous and other ethnic minorities. Details in Annex 2 ).

<sup>6</sup> SDC identifies religious minorities e.g. Muslim under “ethnic minorities” from the social discrimination perspective.

<sup>7</sup> SDC chooses to consider these Newar castes under discriminated group considering that they face various forms of discriminatory practices (e.g. untouchability, less participation in decision making both in social and political aspects)

The Coof respects equal employment opportunity but aspires, in a context where a large populace is excluded and marginalized on the basis of gender, caste/ethnicity, culture, and religion, to apply positive discrimination to promote discriminated groups at least until their representation in various staff categories, committees and working teams is ensured and reflects their proportional representation at the level of Nepal's national census (Annex 2).

As a first step towards promotion of proportional representation of discriminated groups, the Coof introduces affirmative action and aligns its recruitment policy and procedures towards social inclusion and promotion of gender equality.

### **Affirmative Action**

- q Effective from January 2006, the Coof, SDC funded projects, and SDC funded components of partner organizations in Nepal will consider **gender** and **caste/ethnicity** as one of the selection criteria for recruitment process and establishes following priorities:

**1st priority:** Dalit woman  
Dalit man

Woman from Janajati, Madhesi/Terai caste/ethnicity, Ethnic minorities  
Woman/man from discriminated Newar castes

**2nd priority:** Woman from B/C/T and Newar caste

Man from Janajati, Madhesi/Terai caste/ethnicity, Ethnic minorities  
with poor economic backgrounds

**3rd priority:** Man from Janajati, Madhesi/Terai caste/ethnicity, Ethnic minorities

- q For district-based positions, the Affirmative Action respects the demographic context of districts and regions while applying the above-mentioned priorities.
- q In reference to the Nepal Census 2001, majority of the Madhesi / Terai population fall under Hindu caste system. In this context, **within Madhesi / Terai group** the Affirmative Action applies the same social and gender discrimination perspective used for the Newar caste.
- q The Coof promotes reservation for “women and Dalits only” for future professional positions at middle (Officer level) and senior levels (Programme Officer, District Coordinator, Project Manager/Team Leader plus deputy positions of these categories) until the Coof staff composition reaches a benchmark of 30% women and 10% Dalits at these positions.
- q In case of any deviation from clearly established gender and caste/ethnicity priorities, one must justify in writing and get approval from the SDC Country Director.

However:

- q In case of confirmed proportional represented staff composition in terms of gender and caste/ethnicity, one may recruit a candidate from discriminated or non-discriminated groups ensuring that the new recruitment does not cause any inappropriate imbalance in the overall staff composition.
- q If the Coof, project or SDC funded component of a partner organization is compelled, for competency or any other reasons, to recruit/hire a candidate from non-discriminated group or a group that is already highly represented in its staff composition then it must provide an internship/apprenticeship to a candidate that falls under the SDC's “1st Priority” group.

To support Affirmative Action, the Swiss Cooperation Office Nepal establishes following (a) core values, and (b) best practices with respect to its recruitment policy and procedures:

### **SDC Nepal's core values**

#### ***SDC recognises that workforce diversity is a management responsibility***

All SDC employees actively promote concerns of social inclusion and gender equality at all levels. The principal responsibility of promotion and implementation of workforce diversity lies with the head of office. She/he holds the responsibility to communicate and reinforce equity, fairness and inclusion through words and action.

Similarly, the line managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Policy on Workforce Diversity through advocating, advising and monitoring at programme and project level. The Personnel Manager supports concerned authority to coordinate the recruitment and selection process in line with the SDC policy and its core values.

#### ***SDC commits to ensure equitable access of Information to wider populace especially to the Discriminated Groups***

The SDC Cooperation Office, its projects and SDC funded components of partner organizations announce vacancies both in *English* and *Nepalese* languages for all district-based positions as well as Kathmandu-based *Assistant* and *Support Staff* positions.

For Kathmandu based *Officer* and *Manager* level positions, the office may choose to make vacancy announcements in *English* as well as in *Nepalese* language.

#### ***SDC commits to ensure participation of Discriminated Groups***

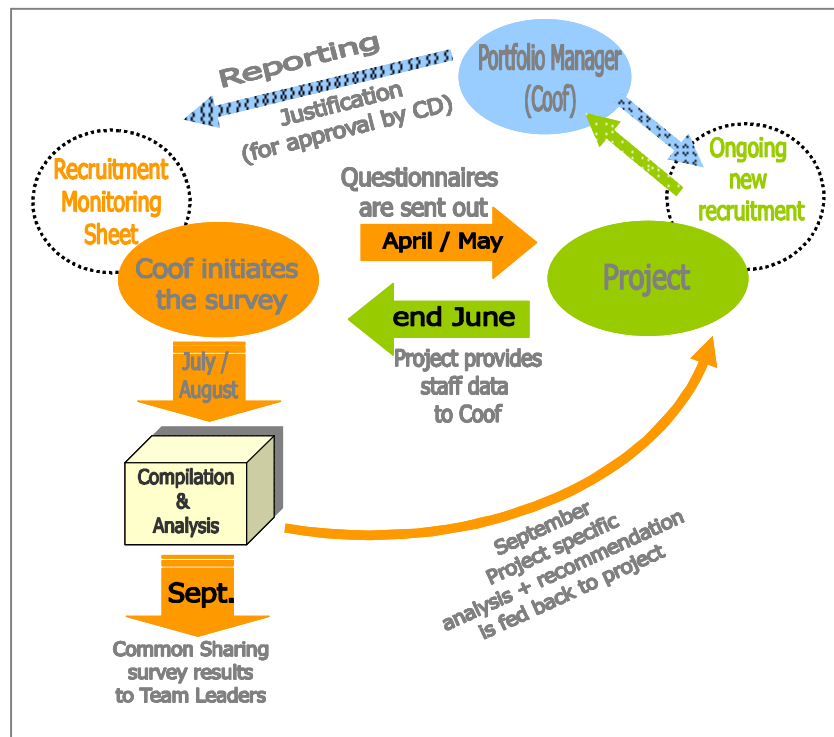
Vacancy announcement for district-based positions is made within the concerned district and its surrounding areas (districts). To facilitate participation by local candidates, recruitment/selection process is carried out in the district.

SDC ensures that its own selection committee will have at least one female staff and one staff member representing the discriminated groups (a woman committee member from Dalit, Discriminated Newar castes, Janajati, Madhesi, or ethnic minorities may represent both criteria).

To encourage and promote participation of discriminated groups, SDC (i) gives due attention to their needs and expectations on its staff policy (e.g. maternity/paternity leave, child care centre, scholarship, flexible hours); (ii) supports and provides proper advice for career development (performance evaluation, regular coaching & feedback sessions, mentoring and training); and (iii) provides diversity awareness training for all staff (to handle conflict in a constructive manner, reduce stress and negative energy).

#### ***SDC, along with promotion and implementation of workforce diversity, consistently monitors its performance and achievement***

SDC conducts staff composition survey every year focusing on disaggregated data – both quantitative and qualitative - on gender, caste/ethnicity, position, age and origin of staff with participation from SDC projects and partners to take stock of experiences and lessons learned, monitor performance and document results achieved (Annex 3: Staff Composition Survey Questionnaire, Recruitment Monitoring Sheet).



Communication with Projects and Partners

***SDC conducts recruitment/selection processes internally to ensure conformity with its policies and core values***

Recruitment and selection processes is conducted internally as far as possible. An option to outsource recruitment responsibility to an external firm or consultant could be sought only in case of lack of internal expertise or if only this option justifies valid advantage for the organization in terms of time, resources and competencies.

***SDC considers not only its own but its projects' and partners' attitudes and assumptions about diversity***

Swiss Cooperation Office Nepal works with its projects and partners to implement its policy, monitor and share recruitment-related results, lessons learned and best practices on a regular basis through appropriate forums.

***SDC recognises and rewards its workforce on the basis of its commitment and contribution to remote & difficult geographical regions***

SDC ensures that staff members working in remote and difficult regions are duly compensated for their commitment and contribution through introduction of appropriate benefit packages (e.g. hardship allowance).

***SDC provides opportunity for growth to Discriminated Groups through internship/apprenticeship to compete in the job market***

Potential candidate who falls under SDC's "1st Priority" group is offered Internship/apprenticeship<sup>8</sup> at any point of time to learn, grow, and become competitive in the job market through exposure to SDC's activities in Nepal; working closely with and being coached by middle and senior level staff at SDC Cooperation Office and project offices; and participating in field visits, common events, internal workshops and training programs.

<sup>8</sup> Internship Policy, SDC Nepal

## **Best practices of recruitment procedures**

SDC Nepal recommends appliance of the following “Best Practices”:

### **Corporate Identity**

The vacancy announcement must contain standard corporate identity of SDC.

### **Job Profile**

The concerned line manager with support from Personnel Manager prepares the first draft *Job Description* outlining required/essential<sup>9</sup> & desired<sup>10</sup> qualifications and competencies including *Person Specification (knowledge, education and qualification, skills, experience, personal qualities)*. The draft must be consulted within the concerned people/team and finalized after approval from the Management.

In case of vacancy of an existing post, the concerned office will undertake a job evaluation to determine whether an individual post has changed, or is due to change significantly from the existing *Job Description/Person Specification*. In case of significant changes, a new *Job Description/Person Specification* will be drawn to reflect and determine the respective grade and salary scale.

### **Vacancy Announcement**

SDC strongly believes in and advocates for individuals' right to access to information and resources. Depending upon the need of the office, the office may chose to advertise vacancies internally only or internally and externally both ensuring that vacancy announcements reach a wide range of potential job applicants.

The choice of media for advertising vacancy announcements should at least encompass national and local dailies/newspaper, COOF website, radio (for district based positions), network of partner organizations, Associations, Commissions or organizations associated with discriminated groups (including headhunting).

### **Internal candidates**

An internal candidate must go through formal selection process as all other applicants. She/he must take annual leave days if she/he will be absent from work for attending the above-mentioned selection procedure.

### **Selection Criteria**

Only bonafide Nepalese citizen will be eligible to apply for local employee positions.

Apart from the requirements, qualifications and competencies defined under *Job Description* and *Person Specification*, the office will consider gender and caste/ethnicity as one of the selection criteria for recruitment process.

### **Selection Committee**

For internal<sup>11</sup> recruitment process, the head of office (or Delegate) nominates a balanced selection committee (maximum of 4 members) comprising the concerned line manager and/or immediate supervisor, HRD in-charge or Personnel Manager ensuring that the committee will have at least one female staff and one staff member representing the discriminated group (a woman committee member from the discriminated group may represent both criteria).

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<sup>9</sup> Essential: those which the applicant must meet in order to be able to do the job

<sup>10</sup> Desired: those which, whilst not essential, would enhance the elective performance of the job

<sup>11</sup> A process conducted by COOF or concerned project

The office may choose to hold recruitment process through an external recruitment agency in case of lack of internal expertise or if only this option justifies valid advantage for the organization in terms of time, resources and competencies.

In case of both internal and external recruitment processes, the office will emphasize on having a balanced selection committee and follow affirmative actions outlined in the Policy of Workforce Diversity.

With support from Personnel Manager, the selection committee will be responsible for:

- ✓ First preliminary short-listing of candidates
- ✓ Invitation of short-listed candidates (through letter or by telephone)
- ✓ Developing and organizing Skills Test and Assignment (written test, group work, etc.)
- ✓ Interview
- ✓ Final decision or recommendation of maximum best 3 candidates for final decision
- ✓ Informing candidates (both selected and not selected)

#### ***Reimbursement of travel expenses***

Non-resident candidates (both internal and external) who may have to travel to COOF or district office strictly for selection process will be reimbursed travel expenses to/from on actual basis (the most economic travel option available).

#### ***Confidentiality and privacy***

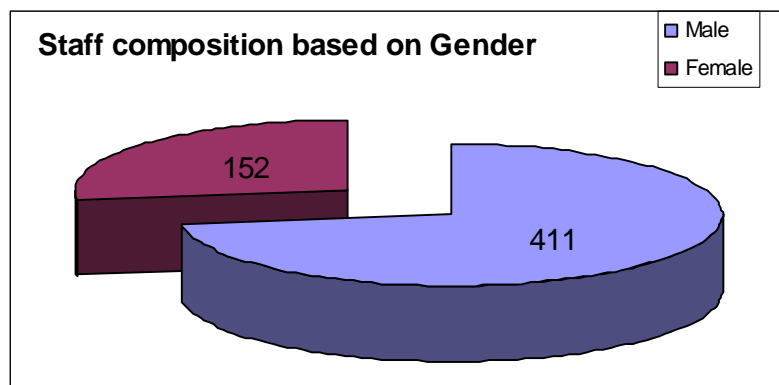
The office must strictly respect privacy and maintain confidentiality regarding personal data provided by an applicant including her/his intention to apply for a vacancy and obtaining reference from the applicant's current or former employers without her/his prior consent.

**Annex 1**

The findings of the Staff Composition Survey (March 2005)<sup>12</sup> clearly showed a disparity in relation to gender:

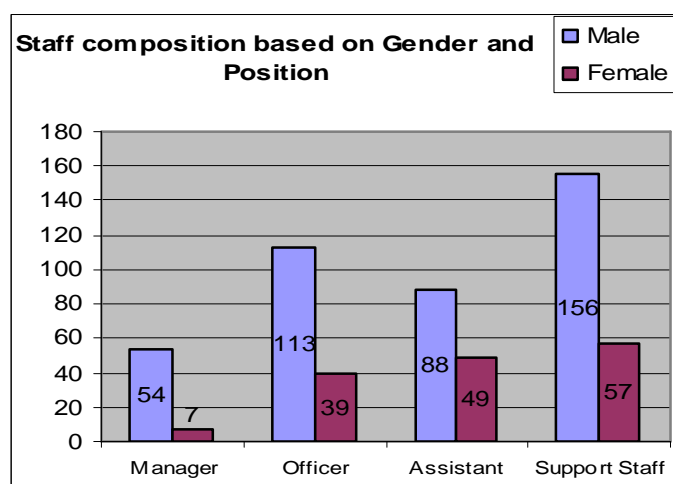
**Staff composition based on Gender**

	Number	%
Male	411	73%
Female	152	27%
Total	563	100%



**Staff composition based on Gender and Position**

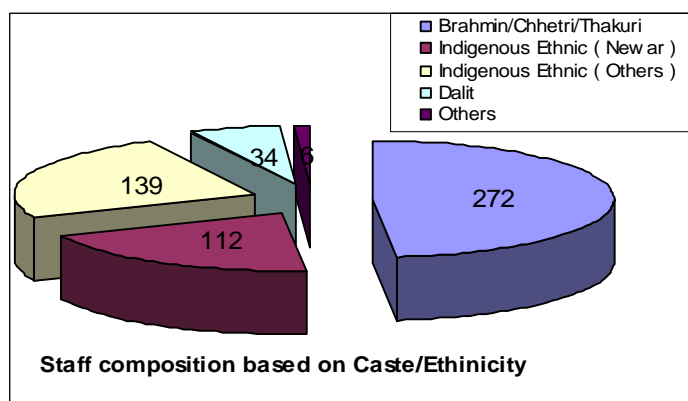
	Male	Female	Total	%	
				Male	Female
Manager	54	7	61	89%	11%
Officer	113	39	152	74%	26%
Assistant	88	49	137	64%	36%
S. Staff	156	57	213	73%	27%
Total	411	152	563	73%	27%



Similarly, a disparity in relation to caste/ethnicity in representation and in relation to positions were clearly seen:

**Staff composition based on Caste/Ethnicity**

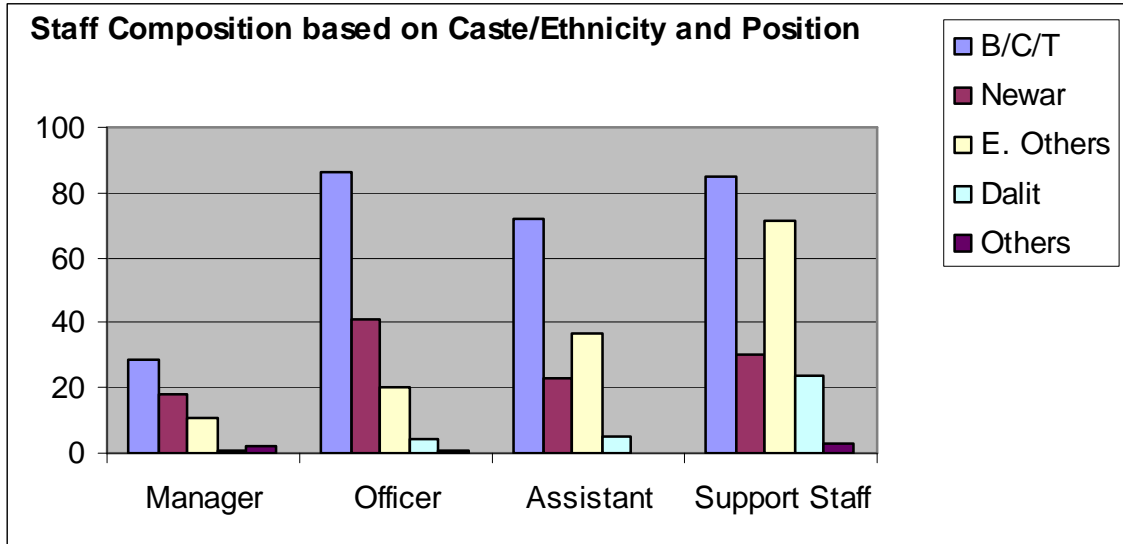
	Number	%
Brahmin/Chhetri/Thakuri	272	48%
Indigenous Ethnic (Newar)	112	20%
Indigenous Ethnic (Others)	139	25%
Dalit	34	6%
Others	6	1%
Total	563	100%



**Staff composition based on Caste/Ethnicity and Position**

<sup>12</sup> Staff composition survey, March, 2005

	B/C/T	Newar	E. Others	Dalit	Others	Total	%				
							B/C/T	Newar	E. Others	Dalit	Others
Manager	29	18	11	1	2	61	48%	30%	18%	2%	3%
Officer	86	41	20	4	1	152	57%	27%	13%	3%	1%
Assistant	72	23	37	5		137	53%	17%	27%	4%	
Support Staff	85	30	71	24	3	213	40%	14%	33%	11%	1%
Total	272	112	139	34	6	563	48%	20%	25%	6%	1%





## Annex 2

## Percentage Composition of Caste/Ethnicity, Census 2001

Caste/Ethnicity			%		
Caste Hindus (57.5%)	High (32.8%)	A	<b>Hill / Terai Bhramin &amp; Chhetri</b>	<b>32.8</b>	
			<i>Hill Bhramin &amp; Chhetri</i>		
			Bahun	12.7	
			Chhetri, Thakuri, Sanyasi	18.1	
			<b>Terai Bhramin &amp; Chhetri</b>		
	Jha, Bahun, Rajput, Kayastha, Baniya, Marwadi, Nurang, Bengali	1.9			
	Middle (12.9%)	B	<b>Terai Middle Caste</b>	<b>12.9</b>	
			Yadav	3.9	
			Teli, Kalwar Sudhi, Sonar, Lohar	3.2	
			Koiri, Kurmi, Kanu, Haluwai, Hajam/Thakur, Badhe, Bahae, Rajbhar	3.6	
			Kewat, Mallha, Nuniya, Kumhar, Kahar, Lodha, Bing/Banda, Bhediyar, Mali, Kamar, Dhunia	2.2	
	Dalits <sup>13</sup> (11.8%)	C	<b>Dalits</b>	<b>11.8</b>	
			<i>Hill Dalits</i>	<b>7.1</b>	
			Kami	3.9	
			Damai	1.7	
Sarki			1.4		
Gaine, Badi (total population 10'329)			Below 1%		
<b>Terai Dalits</b>			<b>4.7</b>		
Chamar			1.2		
Musahar			0.8		
Dhusadh/Paswan, Tatma, Khatway, Bantar, Dom, Chidimar			1.6		
Dhobi, Halkhor, Dalit/unidentified Dalit	1.1				
Janajatis (37.2%)	Mountain Janajatis (0.8%)	D	<b>Janajatis<sup>14</sup></b>	<b>37.2</b>	
			<i>Mountain Janajatis</i>	<b>0.8</b>	
			Sherpa	0.7	
			Bhote, Walung, Byansi, Hyolmo	0.1	
	Newar & Thakali (5.5%)			<b>Hill Janajatis</b>	<b>26.6</b>
				<i>Newar and Thakali</i>	<b>5.5</b>
				Newar	5.5
				Thakali	0.1
	Other Hill Janajatis (21.1%)			<b>Other Hill Janajatis</b>	<b>21.1</b>
				Magar	7.1
Tamang				5.6	
Rai				2.8	
			Gurung	2.4	

<sup>13</sup> Various publications refer to the 2001 Census but report differing percent of Dalit population. The data reported by the 2001 Census and classification of Dalit communities e.g. in case of discriminated Newar caste continue to be contested.

<sup>14</sup> Janajatis refer to those Indigenous Nationalities (Adivasi Janajatis) and Ethnic Minorities who do not fall under the Four Varna Model of Hindu Arya. The term Janajati is used for both indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities in broad sense. In this respect, all Indigenous nationalities are Janajatis but all Janajatis are not indigenous peoples. [Nepal Tamang Ghedung (2006) , Nepal Statistics Indigenous Peoples]

Contd.....

		Limbu	1.6
		Gharti/Bhujel, sunuwar, Baramu, Pahari, Adivasi Janajati	1
		Yakkha, Chhantal, Jirel, Dura, Thami, Lepcha	0.3
		Chepang, Hayu, Raute, Kusunda	0.2
	Innter Terai Janajatis (1.1%)	<b>Inner Terai Janajatis</b>	<b>1.1</b>
		Majhi, Danuwar, Bote, Darai, Kumal, Raji	1.1
	Terai Janajatis (8.7%)	<b>Terai Janajatis</b>	<b>8.7</b>
		Tharu	6.7
		Dhanuk	0.8
		Rajbanshi, Tajpuriya, Gagai, Dhimal, Meche, Kisan, Munda, Koche	0.7
		Santhal / Satar, Dhangad / Jhangad, Pattarkatta / Kusbadiya	0.4
Religious Minorities & Others (4.3%)	<b>E</b>	<b>Religious Minorities</b>	<b>4.3</b>
		Muslim, Churoute	4.3
		Panjabi / Sikh, Jaine	Below 1%
Unidentified / Others (1.0%)	<b>F</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>1</b>
		Unidentified / Others	1

Source: CBS, Population Census 2001 [Nepal Statistics Indigenous Peoples, RIPP/UNDP & Nepal Tamang Ghedung (NTG), 2006]

**Questionnaire on the composition of staff (Nepali staff only)**

Name of the Project/Office: .....

Total number of staff: .....

as of .....month.....year

S. No.	Name	Gender	Caste and Ethnicity						Age Gr.	Category/ Level	Staff's	
			Brahmin/Chhetri/Thakuri	Janajati			Dalit	Madhesi/ Terai caste/ethnic group			Others	Duty station
Newar	D-Newar	Other Janajatis										

Age group: <30 = A; 30 – 39 = B; 40 – 49 = C; 50 – 59 = D 60 and above = E  
 Category Level: Manager = P Officer = O Assistant = A Support Staff = S

**Recruitment Monitoring Sheet**

Note: Each row must contain one single recruitment only e.g. entries for 10 Officers recruited at a time should be recorded individually in 10 rows

S. No.	Designation	Category	Duty Station	Institution	Vacancy Announced			Selection Process		Selection Committee Members								Involvement of Expat (Yes or No)		
					English	Nepali	Locally	Internal (Yes or No)	External (If yes - pls mention name of the firm)	Gender		Caste/ethnicity								
					(Yes or No) Pls attach the vacancy announcement	(Yes or No) Pls attach the vacancy announcement	at District (Yes or No)			Male	Female	Dalit	D-Newar*	Janajati	Madhesi / Terai caste/ethnic group	Others	Newar		B/C/T	
		Manager Officer Assistant Support Staff Intern / Trainee		COOF Project (specify name) Partner (specify name)																

Reference to Inclusion and equity e.g. statement  (Yes or No) If you choose "Yes": Please insert the formulation as a comment	Selected candidate										Residence in relation to duty station		Age Group	Remarks						
	Gender		Caste/ethnicity						Newar						B/C/T					
	Male	Female	Dalit	D-Newar	Janajati	Madhesi	Others	Newar	B/C/T	Resident	Non-Resident									