



Charter

The South Asia Women in Power Sector Professional Network (WePOWER)

November 20, 2019

Article I: Name

Section A – Name

The name of this regional network shall be “WePOWER” – The South Asia Women in Power Sector Professional Network.

Section B – Background

Energy access and infrastructure development are crucial to the regional development strategy – however, women’s opportunities to contribute to the energy sector are limited. In the South Asian countries, there is especially a lack of gender diversity in technical positions related to power, electrical, mechanical engineering and in senior technical and managerial positions. The World Bank initiated consultations with regional and international stakeholders to form WePOWER in January 2018.

Article II: Mission and Objective

Section C – Mission

The mission of WePOWER is to promote women in the energy and power sector in the eight South Asian countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Section D – Objective

The objectives of WePOWER are to: (i) support workforce participation of women in energy projects and institutions; and (ii) promote normative change for women and girls in STEM (Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education.

Article III: Governance

Section E – Governance

WePOWER will be composed of multiple stakeholders: Strategic Partners (SPs), Institutional Partners (IPs), and individual members. Initially, WePOWER will be administered by an Interim-Secretariat, which will engage partners and members to join the network. The Interim-Secretariat will form a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will manage the transition from Interim-Secretariat to a Secretariat of WePOWER and will authorize the administrative policies and procedures for the Secretariat.

Section F – Interim-Secretariat

The World Bank’s South Asia Gender and Energy Facility (SAGE) has been serving as the Interim-Secretariat of WePOWER. Its principal responsibilities include but are not limited to identifying initial members of the Steering Committee and ensuring the goals and objectives of WePOWER are being fulfilled and there is appropriate coordination and convening of the network.

The activities of the Interim-Secretariat, subject to availability, will be funded by the World Bank and various trust funds administered by the World Bank.

Section G - The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will authorize policies, procedures and key decisions of the WePOWER Secretariat and facilitate the transition from the Interim-Secretariat to the Secretariat and define its functions. It will provide timely guidance to the WePOWER Secretariat and partners.

The Steering Committee will be composed of a diverse group of stakeholders including, but not limited to: multilateral financing organizations, professional associations, institutional and strategic partners. It may establish such advisory groups and committees as necessary to carry out its functions.

Section H – Partners and Members

WePOWER partners and members will collaborate to achieve the network’s objectives and implement its work program. They are invited to become members after their adoption of this Charter. The WePOWER network will consist of: (1) Strategic Partners (SPs); (2) Institutional Partners (IPs); and (3) Individuals Members defined as follows:

- 1. Strategic Partners (SPs):** A wide range of stakeholders in the energy sector, including technical universities, private-sector companies, professional associations, multilateral financial organizations, bilateral agencies, and civil society organizations. These organizations must be legal entities that are currently working or aiming to work in the South Asia.
- 2. Institutional Partners (IPs):** Energy sector utilities who are legal entities in South Asia and public-sector agencies. The IPs, through their programs and resources, will play an important role in implementing various activities aligned with the pillars of WePOWER.

3. **Individual Members:** Individual members can be both (i) the WePOWER target beneficiaries: female engineers and female engineering students who are based in South Asian Countries; and (ii) people who contribute to WePOWER activities. They can join the WePOWER through signing up on the WePOWER website.

Section I –The Five Key Pillars of WePOWER:

WePOWER partners and members agree to support the following key pillars.

- **Pillar 1: STEM Education:** Raising interest in girls for STEM subjects, increasing female enrollment in engineering programs, access to power sector/energy coursework and practical internship opportunities will be key to ensuring a pipeline of qualified female candidates.
- **Pillar 2: Recruitment:** Engaging with engineering students and engineering professionals to raise awareness of viable jobs/opportunities in the power sector. This will require a partnership between the private sector, civil society organizations, the academic institutions, existing local networks (if any), and power sector organizations (utilities) to organize job fairs and networking events.
- **Pillar 3: Professional Development:** Personal and professional development opportunities, such as mentorship programs, leadership training/coaching, are crucial for women’s continued progression in their careers, especially in the more technical fields.
- **Pillar 4: Retention:** A conducive/gender-friendly working environment and support for increased household responsibilities after marriage are the two major factors for the low retention of women. Addressing these through instituting family-friendly HR policies, providing reintegrating services for returning mothers and access to facilities such as daycare services, separate toilets, and safe transportation services will be crucial.
- **Pillar 5: Policy and Institutional Change:** This forms a cross-cutting base for the other pillars in order to achieve normative change in society. Institutionalizing and enforcing gender considerations at the national and institutional level will be crucial. This will entail policies for encouraging more women to study STEM subjects, quotas/targets for female enrollment and hiring in academic/power sector and lobbying for more women in senior/board positions.

Article IV: WePOWER Meetings

Section J – Annual Meeting

The WePOWER Secretariat will organize at least one annual meeting in the South Asia Region to convene the SPs, IPs, individual members, and other stakeholders. Proceedings and key decisions of the annual meetings will be shared publicly.

Section K – Working-group Meetings

The WePOWER Secretariat may organize several working-group meetings with SPs, IPs, individual members, and other stakeholders. These meetings may be organized as needed and can be in-person and/or virtual. Key decisions of the working-group meetings will be disclosed based on the discretion of the Secretariat, and later as per the administrative policies and procedures of the Secretariat.

Article V: Location

Section L – Location of the Interim-Secretariat

Interim-Secretariat of WePOWER will be located in the Headquarters of the World Bank Group in Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America.

**1818 H St. NW
Washington D.C., 20433
USA**

Section M – Location of the WePOWER Network’s activities and the WePOWER Secretariat

The WePOWER Network’s activities will be mainly conducted in South Asia Region and affect beneficiaries in the eight countries: (1) Afghanistan; (2) Bangladesh; (3) Bhutan; (4) India; (5) Maldives; (6) Nepal; (7) Pakistan; and (8) Sri Lanka.

Location of the Secretariat will be determined by the first Steering Committee.