Nineteen® hydropower companies signed up for IFC’s “Powered by Women Nepal” Initiative in September 2020 to promote gender equality and diversity at the workplace.

Under the initiative, member companies had to commit to at least one of the following four objectives and develop time-bound action plans to promote:

- Women in leadership
- Respectful workplaces
- Women as stakeholders
- Women in non-traditional roles

1. Butwal Hydropower Company Limited (BPC)
2. Chaudhary Group Energy Infrastructure Private Limited (CG)
3. High Himalaya Hydro Construction Private Limited (HHC)
4. Hydro-Consult Engineering Limited (HCEL)
5. IDI Hydropower Company Private Limited (IDI)
6. Independent Power Producers’ Association, Nepal (IPPN)
7. Lower Erkhuwa Hydropower Company Private Limited (Lower Erkhuwa)
8. Kalinchowk Hydropower Company Private Limited (Kalinchowk Hydropower)
9. National Hydro Power Company Limited (NHPC)
10. Nepal Water and Energy Development Company Private Limited (NWEDC)
11. Nilgiri Khola Hydropower Company Limited (Nilgiri Khola)
12. NRN Infrastructure and Development Limited (NRN)
13. Rairang Hydropower Development Company Limited (Rairang)
14. Ruby Valley Hydropower Limited (Ruby Valley)
15. Sanima Group of Companies (Sanima)
16. Sanjen Jalavidhyut Company Limited (Sanjen Jalavidhyut)
17. Solu Hydropower Pvt Ltd (Solu Hydropower)
18. Urja Developers Private Limited (Urja Developers)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signing of commitments; launch of the “Powered by Women Nepal”</td>
<td>Sept 22, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiative and Report</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Baseline survey of companies including data collection, validation,</td>
<td>Oct 1 - Dec 16, 2020</td>
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<td>and analysis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support companies in preparing action plans</td>
<td>Oct 1 - Nov 31, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Powered Series webinars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 25, 2020 - Women in Leadership</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 20, 2021 - Human Resources and Women in Non-Traditional Roles</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 4, 2021 - Building Respectful Workplaces</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Two quarterly roundtable meetings with Focal points and management</td>
<td>Dec 16, 2020 - Mar 24, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support companies in finalizing action plans</td>
<td>Jan 4, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training on “Gender in Environmental and Social Impact Assessments”</td>
<td>Feb 10-12, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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</table>
Companies have been making considerable progress in each of the four commitment areas.

ENCOURAGING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

HIGHLIGHTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Companies with women on boards</th>
<th>Committees chaired by women</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61%</td>
<td>9</td>
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</table>

Then (December 2020)

Now (Until March 2021)

10 companies invested in leadership training

12 companies investing in leadership training

Note: The above captures baseline and progress results for participating companies.

7 companies, namely BPC, CG, IDI, IPPAN, Kalinchowk Hydropower, Solu Hydropower and NRN Infrastructure have committed to encouraging women in leadership:

- 6 are setting up new committees chaired by women.
- 5 are increasing female representation in boards and senior management positions.
- 5 are introducing training programs for women.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- NRN Infrastructure elected a woman to its board of directors in February 2021.
PROMOTING RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES

HIGHLIGHTS

Note: The above captures baseline and progress results for participating companies.

ACHIEVEMENTS

• Kalinchowk Hydropower developed a new HR policy, which received board approval in February 2021.
• 3HC set up a formal grievance mechanism, which was endorsed by its board in February 2021.
• 3HC, Sanjen Jalavidhyut, HCEL, and Kalinchowk Hydropower recruited respectful workplace advisors.
• BPC appointed a woman staff as the Grievance Handling Officer in March 2021.

14 companies, namely BPC, CG, 3HC, HCEL, IPPAN, Kalinchowk Hydropower, Solu Hydropower, NWEDC, Nilgiri Khola, NRN Infrastructure, Rairang, Ruby Valley, Sanjen Jalavidhyut and Urja Developers have committed to promoting respectful workplaces:

• 11 are developing family-friendly policies and guidelines.
• 7 are launching codes of conduct against bullying and sexual harassment.
• 7 are appointing respectful workplace advisors.
• 7 are investing in training, awareness-raising, and capacity-building programs.
• 3 are carrying out staff surveys and assessing employees’ satisfaction and policy gaps.
• 2 are creating gender-inclusive hiring panels.
• 5 are setting up grievance-redress mechanisms.

Note: The above captures baseline and progress results for participating companies.
ENHANCING THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS STAKEHOLDERS

HIGHLIGHTS

2 companies held women-only consultations as part of the environmental impact assessment process

0 female staffer as community engagement officer

1 female staffer as community engagement officer

5 companies are in the process to hold women-only consultations as part of the environmental impact assessment process

Then (December 2020)
Now (Until March 2021)

Note: The above captures baseline and progress results for participating companies.

5 companies namely IDI, Sanima, Solu Hydropower, Urja Developers, and White Lotus have committed to enhancing the role of women as stakeholders:

- 5 are planning to undertake gender impact assessments as part of their environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs) for projects.
- 5 are disaggregating community data by gender.
- 2 are revising their community-engagement guidelines.

ACHIEVEMENTS

21 participants from IDI, Sanima Group, Solu Hydropower, and Urja Developers, including 7 females, attended a three-day training on “Gender in ESIAs” organized by IFC and International Centre for Hydropower in February 2021.
- IDI has appointed a female stakeholder-engagement officer to lead women-only community consultations.
- Solu Hydropower’s women-only consultation with families affected by a hydropower project in October 2020 led to a change in the design of its livelihood restoration plan.

Anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment messages are displayed on the notice boards of 3HC offices.
ENCOURAGING WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL ROLES

HIGHLIGHTS

47 women were employed in non-traditional roles
53 women are employed in non-traditional roles
58 women were trained in non-traditional roles
69 women are trained in non-traditional roles

Then (December 2020)
Now (Until March 2021)
8 companies invested in technical training for staff
11 companies are investing in technical training for staff

Note: The above captures baseline and progress results for participating companies.

ACHIEVEMENTS

10 companies, namely CG, 3HC, HCEL, Lower Erkhuwa, NHPC, Solu Hydropower, NWEDC, Ruby Valley, Urja Developers, and White Lotus have committed to encouraging women in non-traditional roles:

- 2 have initiated partnerships with technical and educational institutions to recruit women in non-traditional roles.
- 1 is setting up a technical school in their project area to train women in non-traditional roles.
- 5 are investing in technical capacity-building programs aimed at women from project-affected communities.

IDI, 3HC, HCEL, and Urja Developers have recruited women in non-traditional roles:

- 7 women have been hired in civil engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, security, and procurement positions.

Urja Developers has invested in the following training programs:

- 30 employees from the company, including 4 women, participated in the “Operation and Maintenance Training” organized by IFC in March 2021.
- 33 participants from the company, including 6 women, attended the “Hydropower Project Management and the Practical Use of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) Conditions of Contract” in March 2021.

EMERGING CHALLENGES

- Retention of female staff in site-based positions remains a major challenge for companies who prioritize female recruitment in non-traditional roles. Many women cited family issues, remote locations of duty stations, and inadequate capacity and mental preparedness to handle the roles, as reasons for leaving their jobs.
- Turnover rate among women in non-traditional roles is seen to be high this quarter, with 2 newly recruited women leaving.
- The pace of recruitment to find new staff in senior positions is still slow.
- Due to COVID-19, personnel mobility at project sites is still restricted. This can further delay or affect planned actions to build more inclusive communities.
“IFC’s Powered Webinar series not only enhances our knowledge and skills in planning and implementation but also boosts our confidence to speak up in meetings on various topics and present our views.”
—Rajmi Aryal, Manager-IDI, Prabha Panta, Admin Officer- Kanlinchowk Hydropower, Ruchi Joshi, Assistant Manager HR/Admin- Sanima, and Chetan Chhimire, Admin Officer-Sanjen Jalavidhyut.

“Women representing various sectors other than hydropower are also able to reap benefits and enhance their knowledge by participating in the Powered Webinar series. This can help spread the momentum and work of the Powered by Women Nepal Initiative beyond the participating companies to a wider energy sector.”
—Kabita Pokhrel, Executive Member, IPPAN

“The Powered by Women Initiative has reminded us of our responsibility to achieve our vision of creating a respectful workplace.”
—Abhigya Malla, Vice President, 3HC

Ensuring women's representation in our existing grievance redressal mechanism and on hiring panels has been initiated at BPC since the company's participation in the Powered by Women Initiative.”
—Priyanka Rauniyar, Financial Analyst, BPC
Powered by Women Nepal works with renewable-energy companies to promote business growth, efficiency, and sustainability through greater gender equality and diversity. Nineteen companies have joined the initiative and committed to actions to promote gender equality. The initiative was launched in September 2020 following an IFC study that surveyed 20 hydropower companies in Nepal between 2019 and 2020 to understand the role of women and their contribution to business productivity, opportunities, and challenges in the sector. The program gives participating companies a unique opportunity to take the lead in initiating positive changes in the broader economy.

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