

Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy/Framework



Madan Bhandari Memorial College
New Baneshwor, Kathmandu
+977-01-5172175, 5172715
info@mbmc.edu.np

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1. Introduction

Purpose

The Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy (ESSP) of Madan Bhandari Memorial College (MBMC) has been developed to ensure adherence to the environmental and social standards set forth by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and to facilitate the smooth and effective implementation of the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP). The primary purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for identifying, managing, and mitigating environmental and social risks and impacts related to all MBMC operations, projects, and activities. The ESSP aims to promote sustainability, inclusivity, and accountability across MBMC's academic, administrative, and infrastructural functions.

This policy ensures that all activities undertaken by MBMC, including infrastructure development, research projects, teaching, and student engagement, are conducted in a manner that is socially responsible and environmentally sustainable. It aligns with the broader goals of fostering a safe, healthy, and equitable environment for all stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community.

Scope

The scope of the ESSP extends to all operations, projects, and activities carried out by Madan Bhandari Memorial College (MBMC). This includes but is not limited to:

- **Infrastructure Development:** This includes the planning, construction, renovation, and maintenance of physical facilities on the campus. Environmental considerations such as waste management, water and energy use, and biodiversity protection must be considered in all phases of construction and operation.
- **Academic and Research Activities:** MBMC ensures that all academic and research initiatives, including student projects, faculty research, and institutional collaborations, comply with environmental and social safeguard standards. This encompasses the management of any waste, emissions, or other environmental impacts resulting from research activities.
- **Teaching and Student Engagement:** The policy covers teaching and student involvement in sustainability programs, environmental education, and social responsibility initiatives, ensuring that students gain knowledge and experience in environmental stewardship and social justice.
- **Administrative Functions:** Administrative operations, such as staffing, procurement, and institutional policy development, are subject to environmental and social safeguards. This includes the establishment of labor management procedures and ensuring occupational health and safety (OHS) standards for staff.
- **Project Implementation and Operations:** For any new projects or ongoing initiatives within the college, this policy ensures that environmental and social risks are assessed and mitigated, in line with the ESCP, with a focus on resource efficiency, pollution management, and community health and safety.

The ESSP covers all phases of the institutional activities, from planning and implementation to monitoring and reporting, ensuring that environmental and social considerations are incorporated at every stage of operation.

Through the successful implementation of this policy, MBMC will not only comply with UGC's environmental and social safeguard guidelines but also foster a culture of environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical governance across the institution.

2. Objectives of the Policy

- a. Risk and Impact Management:** Identify, assess, and manage environmental and social risks and impacts across MBMC's activities.
- b. Improved Labour Conditions:** Ensure safe, fair, and healthy working conditions for all workers, including adherence to labour management policies and occupational health and safety (OHS) standards.
- c. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Control:** Optimize the use of natural resources and establish robust pollution management systems, including waste management.
- d. Community Health and Safety:** Enhance community health measures, prevent sexual abuse and harassment (SEA/SH), and address safety risks related to MBMC operations.
- e. Stakeholder Engagement:** Strengthen mechanisms for dialogue with stakeholders, ensuring transparent information sharing and grievance resolution.

3. Key Areas of Action and Activities

To ensure that Madan Bhandari Memorial College (MBMC) meets its environmental and social commitments in line with the University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines, the following key areas of action have been identified. Each of these areas will involve specific activities aimed at managing risks and improving practices across the institution. The actions outlined here will be critical for achieving the goals of sustainability, social equity, and accountability.

3.1 Environmental and Social Risk Management

Action Plan:

- a. Establish an Environmental and Social (E&S) Unit:** MBMC will create an E&S unit to oversee the implementation of environmental and social safeguards. This unit will be responsible for assessing risks, monitoring compliance, and ensuring the college's activities align with both UGC guidelines and best practices in environmental and social management.
- b. Conduct Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA):** For all major projects, such as campus development, new infrastructure, or significant renovations, MBMC will conduct regular ESIA's to assess potential environmental and social impacts. The assessment will identify risks related to land acquisition, resource use, emissions, and other factors.
- c. Develop Risk Mitigation Strategies:** Based on the ESIA results, MBMC will develop and implement specific risk mitigation measures. These will focus on minimizing negative impacts and ensuring the college's operations are sustainable. Compliance with these measures will be regularly monitored to ensure effectiveness.

3.2 Labour and Working Conditions

Action Plan:

- a. Develop and Enforce Labour Management Policies:** MBMC will establish comprehensive labour management policies that address issues such as recruitment, compensation, working hours, workers' rights, and equal opportunities. These policies will align with national and international standards, ensuring a fair and respectful working environment for all employees.

- b. **Implement Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Protocols:** MBMC will implement OHS regulations to safeguard the health and safety of all workers and contractors. This will include the provision of necessary training, resources, and protective equipment to ensure a safe working environment.
- c. **Establish a Grievance Redress Mechanism:** A clear and accessible grievance redress mechanism will be set up for all workers. This system will address complaints related to working conditions, ensuring that all issues are resolved fairly and in a timely manner.

3.3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention

Action Plan:

- a. **Create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** MBMC will develop SOPs for managing e-waste, solid waste, and hazardous materials generated by college operations. These SOPs will define how waste should be segregated, stored, and disposed of, minimizing harmful environmental impacts.
- b. **Develop Resource Efficiency Plans:** The college will establish resource efficiency plans focused on reducing the consumption of energy, water, and materials. Strategies will include energy-efficient technologies, water-saving practices, and sustainable procurement processes.
- c. **Monitor Pollution Levels and Corrective Actions:** MBMC will continuously monitor pollution levels on campus (e.g., air quality, water usage, waste generation). If non-compliance with environmental standards is identified, corrective measures will be taken immediately, including necessary adjustments to practices and policies.

3.4 Community Health and Safety

Action Plan:

- a. **Implement Health Protocols for Pandemics and Other Risks:** MBMC will develop and implement health protocols to address potential community health risks, including pandemics like COVID-19. These protocols will include preventative measures, emergency responses, and guidelines for maintaining a safe campus environment.
- b. **Develop and Enforce a Code of Conduct (CoC):** MBMC will establish a Code of Conduct for all staff, students, and contractors that addresses the prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEA/SH). The CoC will include clear guidelines for acceptable behavior and sanctions for violations.
- c. **Conduct Awareness Programs on SEA/SH:** Regular sensitization programs will be conducted for all staff and students, focusing on the prevention of SEA/SH. These programs will help build awareness, promote respect for human dignity, and foster a safe campus environment.
- d. **Establish a Grievance Mechanism for Community Stakeholders:** A grievance redress mechanism will be set up to address community health and safety concerns, including issues of sexual harassment and exploitation. The system will be accessible to all stakeholders, ensuring that complaints are handled in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

3.5 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

Action Plan:

- a. **Update and Implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP):** MBMC will regularly update and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) that identifies key stakeholders

(students, staff, community members, etc.), their concerns, and methods of engagement. The SEP will ensure that stakeholders are informed, consulted, and involved in decision-making processes.

- b. Establish Transparent Information Sharing Channels:** Transparent communication mechanisms will be set up to share information regarding MBMC's environmental and social risks, safeguard measures, and project activities. These channels will include websites, newsletters, public meetings, and other forms of communication to keep stakeholders informed.
- c. Strengthen Feedback Mechanisms:** MBMC will enhance feedback mechanisms to incorporate stakeholder input into decision-making processes. This will ensure that concerns related to environmental, social, or governance issues are addressed and resolved in an open and inclusive manner.

4. Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms

Effective monitoring and reporting are essential for ensuring that MBMC's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy (ESSP) is being implemented as planned, and that any challenges or gaps are promptly addressed. This section outlines the monitoring framework, reporting protocols, and key indicators of success to track the progress of safeguard measures.

4.1 Monitoring Framework

A comprehensive monitoring system will be established to ensure that the environmental and social safeguard measures are continuously tracked, evaluated, and refined to meet UGC guidelines.

Action Plan:

- a. Establish a Monitoring System:** MBMC will set up an integrated monitoring system to assess the performance of all safeguard actions. This system will track the progress of implementation across various departments and stakeholders, ensuring that environmental and social risks are identified and mitigated effectively.
- b. Conduct Internal Audits:** Regular internal audits will be conducted by the E&S unit within MBMC to assess the compliance and effectiveness of safeguard measures. These audits will provide real-time feedback and help in making necessary adjustments to safeguard actions.
- c. Independent External Assessments:** To ensure objectivity and transparency, independent external experts will be engaged to conduct periodic assessments. These assessments will provide an unbiased evaluation of MBMC's performance in meeting its environmental and social commitments and offer recommendations for improvements.
- d. Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** A set of clear KPIs will be developed to track the implementation of environmental and social safeguards. These KPIs will include measurable targets for key actions, such as waste reduction, compliance with occupational health and safety (OHS) protocols, stakeholder engagement effectiveness, and grievance resolution.

4.2 Reporting Protocols

To ensure transparency and accountability, MBMC will establish a set of reporting protocols to communicate progress, challenges, and corrective actions to UGC, stakeholders, and relevant authorities.

Action Plan:

- a. Regular Reporting to UGC:** MBMC will submit regular reports to UGC, detailing the status of environmental and social safeguards implementation. These reports will cover progress,

challenges encountered, corrective actions taken, and any changes to the initial plans. Reports will be submitted quarterly or annually, as required by UGC guidelines.

- b. Stakeholder Communication:** In addition to submitting reports to UGC, MBMC will ensure that progress reports are shared with key stakeholders, including students, staff, local communities, and contractors. These reports will include updates on environmental and social risks, compliance levels, and community health and safety measures.
- c. Reporting on Corrective Actions:** Any issues or non-compliance identified during internal or external monitoring processes will be documented in reports. These will detail the corrective actions taken to address the issue and prevent recurrence. The reports will also include timelines for implementing these actions and responsible parties for follow-up.

4.3 Key Indicators of Success

The effectiveness of the Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy will be measured through a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) that provide tangible evidence of success in safeguarding environmental and social outcomes.

Key Indicators:

- a. Reduction in Environmental Violations:** A primary indicator of success will be the reduction in environmental violations, including non-compliance with waste management protocols, emissions standards, and resource efficiency targets. This will be monitored through regular audits and reports on environmental performance.
- b. Compliance with Labour and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Standards:** Compliance with labour management policies and OHS regulations will be tracked to ensure the safety and well-being of all MBMC workers. Success will be measured by the absence of workplace accidents, adherence to working hours, fair compensation practices, and the resolution of any worker grievances related to labour conditions.
- c. Timely Resolution of Stakeholder Grievances:** An important success indicator will be the timely resolution of stakeholder grievances, particularly those related to community health and safety, labour issues, or environmental concerns. Grievance redressal mechanisms will be monitored to ensure that complaints are addressed promptly, fairly, and transparently.
- d. Improved Stakeholder Engagement:** The effectiveness of stakeholder engagement efforts will be tracked through the level of participation in meetings, workshops, and feedback sessions. Successful engagement will be evidenced by active involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes and positive feedback from surveys.
- e. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Control:** MBMC will measure the efficiency of its resource usage (e.g., energy, water, and materials) and the reduction in pollution levels on campus. This will be tracked through reports on waste management, energy consumption, and water usage, aiming for a consistent reduction in environmental impact.

4.4 Reporting Cycle and Documentation

- a. Frequency of Reports:** Reports will be submitted on a regular cycle—either quarterly or annually—depending on the scale and impact of the projects being undertaken. MBMC will ensure that all relevant data is collected and compiled in a standardized format for easy review by stakeholders.

- b. Documentation and Record-Keeping:** All monitoring and reporting activities will be documented and stored securely. This includes audit reports, assessments, corrective action plans, and communications with UGC and other stakeholders. Proper documentation will ensure that MBMC maintains a transparent record of its compliance with environmental and social safeguard measures.

5. Expected Outputs/Outcomes

The successful implementation of the Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy (ESSP) at MBMC will lead to the achievement of several critical outputs and outcomes, contributing to the overall sustainability and ethical responsibility of the institution. These outputs and outcomes will be aligned with UGC's guidelines, ensuring that MBMC meets both national and international standards for environmental and social practices.

5.1 Improved Environmental Management, Including Resource Efficiency and Pollution Control

Expected Outputs:

- a. Reduction in Environmental Footprint:** MBMC will achieve a measurable reduction in its environmental footprint through effective resource management (e.g., energy, water, and materials) and pollution control strategies. The introduction of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for managing e-waste, solid waste, and hazardous materials will ensure that environmental impacts are minimized.
- b. Resource Efficiency Plans:** The development and implementation of resource efficiency plans for energy and water use will contribute to reduced consumption and promote sustainable practices in the institution's operations.
- c. Pollution Monitoring:** Regular monitoring and control of pollution levels (e.g., air, water, and noise pollution) will ensure that MBMC adheres to environmental regulations and contributes to cleaner and healthier surroundings.

Expected Outcomes:

- a. Long-Term Sustainability:** By optimizing resource usage and reducing pollution, MBMC will establish itself as a leader in sustainable campus management, setting an example for other educational institutions.
- b. Compliance with Environmental Standards:** MBMC will meet or exceed national environmental standards and UGC's sustainability requirements, contributing to broader efforts to protect the environment.

5.2 Safer and Healthier Labour Conditions

Expected Outputs:

- a. Improved Labour Management Policies:** MBMC will implement comprehensive labour management procedures that cover areas such as hiring practices, fair compensation, working hours, and workers' rights, ensuring that all employees work in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment.
- b. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Compliance:** Through the introduction of OHS protocols, MBMC will establish a safer work environment for all staff, contractors, and students, with regular training and clear safety measures.

- c. **Grievance Redress Mechanism:** A formal grievance redress system will be in place to resolve any labour-related disputes, ensuring that all employees have a clear path for addressing concerns.

Expected Outcomes:

- a. **Zero Workplace Accidents:** MBMC will strive for zero accidents and injuries in its operations, demonstrating commitment to the well-being of staff and workers.
- b. **Enhanced Staff Satisfaction:** The institution's commitment to fair labour practices will lead to higher staff satisfaction, retention, and productivity.
- c. **Compliance with Labour Laws:** MBMC will fully comply with national labour laws and international OHS standards, improving its reputation as a responsible and ethical employer.

5.3 Enhanced Community Health and Safety Measures, Especially in the Context of Pandemics and SEA/SH Prevention

Expected Outputs:

- a. **Health Protocols for Pandemics:** MBMC will implement robust health and safety protocols to manage pandemics (e.g., COVID-19) and other public health risks. These protocols will be designed to protect the health of students, staff, and the local community.
- b. **Code of Conduct for SEA/SH Prevention:** MBMC will develop and enforce a Code of Conduct (CoC) to prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) across the institution. Regular awareness programs will be held to educate staff and students on these issues.
- c. **Grievance Mechanisms:** A dedicated grievance redress mechanism will be in place to address complaints related to community health and safety, including cases of SEA/SH, ensuring that concerns are handled promptly and fairly.

Expected Outcomes:

- a. **Healthier Campus Environment:** With the implementation of health protocols, MBMC will provide a safer environment for students, staff, and visitors, significantly reducing the risk of health crises.
- b. **Decreased Incidence of SEA/SH:** Regular sensitization programs, combined with strong CoC enforcement, will help reduce cases of SEA/SH, ensuring that MBMC is a safe place for all individuals.
- c. **Enhanced Community Well-Being:** MBMC will contribute to the well-being of the surrounding community by implementing effective health and safety measures that benefit both the campus and the local population.

5.4 Transparent and Participatory Stakeholder Engagement Processes

Expected Outputs:

- a. **Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP):** MBMC will regularly update and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), fostering inclusive and transparent dialogue with all internal and external stakeholders (students, staff, community members, and contractors).
- b. **Information Disclosure Mechanisms:** MBMC will create transparent channels to share environmental and social risks, impacts, and progress reports with all stakeholders. This will include clear, accessible information on the institution's safeguard actions and outcomes.

- c. **Stakeholder Feedback Mechanisms:** A strong feedback system will be in place to gather input from stakeholders, ensuring that their concerns are considered in decision-making processes.

Expected Outcomes:

- a. **Stronger Community Trust:** By involving stakeholders in decision-making processes and ensuring transparency, MBMC will build stronger relationships with its community, stakeholders, and the public.
- b. **Increased Stakeholder Satisfaction:** The participatory approach will result in greater satisfaction among stakeholders, as their concerns are addressed and their opinions are valued.

5.5 Sustainable Institutional Practices Aligned with UGC's Environmental and Social Safeguards

Expected Outputs:

- a. **Long-Term Sustainability Framework:** MBMC will develop a sustainability framework that integrates environmental and social safeguards into its operations and strategic planning, ensuring that future projects and activities align with UGC's environmental and social policies.
- b. **Institutional Capacity Building:** Training and capacity-building initiatives will be conducted to enhance the skills of MBMC's staff in implementing environmental and social safeguard measures effectively.
- c. **Commitment to UGC Guidelines:** MBMC will ensure that all operations, infrastructure projects, and academic programs comply with UGC's environmental and social safeguard requirements.

Expected Outcomes:

- a. **Institutional Sustainability:** MBMC will become a model for sustainable and responsible higher education, aligning its practices with national and international standards for environmental and social governance.
- b. **Enhanced Reputation:** By adhering to UGC's guidelines and effectively implementing safeguard measures, MBMC will strengthen its reputation as a responsible educational institution that prioritizes sustainability and ethical practices.

6. Implementation Timeline

Phase 1: Initial Setup (Months 1–6)

- a. Establish the E&S Unit and conduct baseline assessments.
- b. Build capacity through training programs for staff and stakeholders.

Phase 2: Policy Implementation (Months 7–18)

- a. Develop and roll out SOPs for waste management, resource efficiency, and OHS protocols.
- b. Launch awareness campaigns on SEA/SH prevention and stakeholder engagement activities.

Phase 3: Monitoring and Improvement (Months 19 and Beyond)

- a. Conduct regular evaluations of safeguard measures.
- b. Adjust policies based on stakeholder feedback and evolving challenges.

The Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy/Framework is a critical tool for integrating sustainability and social responsibility into MBMC's operations. By aligning with UGC guidelines, this policy ensures the institution's commitment to environmental and social integrity, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. Regular updates and stakeholder collaboration will drive the success and sustainability of MBMC's initiatives.