



Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited

Environmental and Social Policy 2020

1.1 Context

The Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM) has a Vision of becoming Number One in Customer Satisfaction in South Asia in Power Distribution. The Mission of BESCOM is to ensure absolute consumer satisfaction and continuous profit in business; by ensuring total employee satisfaction, by developing infrastructure, commensurate with growth, thus ensuring reliable and quality power supply and by using best technology in communication and best practices in power sector.

The Government of Karnataka through the Department of Energy (DoE) has mandated the BESCOM to finance and develop energy infrastructure projects in Bangalore. BESCOM, which has set out to implement several energy distribution projects, aims to promote environmentally sound and sustainable, socially acceptable and economically viable energy infrastructure projects. Each of these projects will improve the living standards and the environment of populations of Bangalore and areas around Bangalore.

In line with this policy, BESCOM is committed to identify, prepare and implement socially acceptable, environmentally sound and sustainable and financially feasible projects. Further, these projects would be implemented with the continuous technological improvement, financial prudence and managerial prowess that are inherent strengths of BESCOM.

BESCOM commits to environmental and social acts, policies, regulations and guidelines of Government of India and Government of Karnataka in this context.

1.2 Environmental Policy

BESCOM is committed to environmentally sustainable energy development and distribution. BESCOM would ensure effective management of environmental issues in its activities with a special focus on the following:

- Ensuring that its projects adhere to the national, state and local legal requirements during the design and implementation stages.
- Ensuring that best environmental practices are mainstreamed/ integrated with the project design and implementation wherever practicable.

- Striving to enhance environmental conditions in the energy context wherever feasible.
- Undertaking capacity building and training initiatives for its stakeholders such as the staff, contractors and consultants.
- Preparing and implementing project specific Environmental Management Plans as a means to ensure the effective implementation of this policy.

1.3 Social Policy

The Social policy aims at addressing the following social issues:

Land Appropriation: Often private Land Appropriation becomes unavoidable when implementing development projects. This deprives the people of the land to which they are attached to. BESCOM emphasis is to minimize this and to properly compensate people who lost their lands.

Displacement: Often people are displaced when their homestead land is acquired or land is acquired in bulk for the implementation of development projects. This development induced displacement causes hardship to people in relocating and resettling. BESCOM emphasis is to minimize this and to properly resettle people who are displaced.

Loss of Livelihoods: This is a result of Land Appropriation and/or displacement. People who lose their livelihoods have to face hardship in rehabilitating themselves. BESCOM emphasis is to minimize this hardship and properly rehabilitate people who lost their livelihoods.

Top-Down Approach: This approach results in people not owning the products of development interventions and maintaining them. BESCOM emphasis is on using a Bottom-Up Approach through a process of people participation.

Exclusion: Often the vulnerables viz. disadvantaged sections, Scheduled Castes (SCs)/ Scheduled Tribes (STs), women, differently abled, etc. are sidelined or taken for granted in the design and implementation of development projects. This alienates them from project interventions and denies access to them to the services. BESCOM emphasis is to provide them opportunities and access through a process of inclusion.

Hazards: Ill-conceived development projects pose health and safety hazards to people. BESCOM emphasis is to address and incorporate health and safety provisions in the project design and implementation.

This Social Policy is based on gaining Social Acceptability, Significance, Relevance and Adequacy for each of the projects. This is achieved by commitment to the following Pancha Sutras (Five Principles):

Resettlement: Avoiding or minimizing resettlement due to land appropriation through appropriate technical and management measures. Wherever resettlement is triggered by land appropriation, if possible, the agreement of the concerned stakeholders to give their land voluntarily on consent basis will be obtained and/or alternatives will be considered. The endeavour would be on avoiding land appropriation and resettlement.

Rehabilitation: Where resettlement is unavoidable, ensuring proper and responsible resettlement and rehabilitation of PAPs, according to the laws in force, through sustainable livelihood options that at least restore, if not improve, their standard of living. Ensuring resettlement and rehabilitation plans are prepared and implemented in a timely manner and that those to be resettled are aware of their entitlements and of the grievance mechanisms open to them should they seek redress. The endeavour would be to improve the living standards of the PAPs.

Participation: Addressing stakeholders' legitimate concerns while paying special attention to PAPs. Providing opportunities and avenues for informed stakeholder consultation, and, where appropriate, ensuring their participation in decision-making in project preparation, implementation and evaluation, in order to foster greater sense of ownership and sustainability. The endeavour would be to involve all stakeholders in the complete project life cycle. This endeavour is extended to all community development activities of the projects involving all categories of stakeholders. In fact, the process of participation for all community development activities starts from the planning stage itself.

Inclusion: Protecting the marginalized, socially and economically disadvantaged, SCs, STs, women, children, differently abled and other vulnerable groups. Promoting and providing, wherever possible, opportunities for such groups to take advantage of the investments. The endeavour would be to address equity, gender and inclusion issues in the project design itself. Gender issues will be addressed through women empowerment in all the project activities. This protection to the marginalised involve poverty alleviation programs to the BPL families.

Health and Safety: Minimizing health and safety hazards and providing opportunities for enhancing public and environmental health. The endeavour would be to improve the public and environmental health and safety of the populations in and around Bangalore.

Grievance Redress: Continuously updated and improve the Grievance Redress mechanism to provide for speedy redressal of grievances. The endeavor is to provide multiple platforms for filing grievances and their redressal.

1.4 Other Enabling Factors

The above are achieved through Technological Perfection, Financial Prudence and Managerial Prowess of the BESCO.

Technological Perfection by

- Using State of the art technology appropriate to the location
- Adopting well established standards and codes of practices
- Enhancing technical capabilities of BESCO and its stakeholders
- Promoting best practices in Operation and Maintenance (O&M) and management of assets
- Making optimal use of Information Technology

Financial Prudence by

- Ensuring sustainability of investments
- Investing in commercially viable projects
- Working towards increasing creditworthiness of BESCO
- Aiming at functional financial independence of BESCO

Managerial Prowess by

- Standing out as a Centre of excellence
- Decentralizing decision making process
- Introducing highest quality standards and best practices

BESCO expects that the limited resources available for mitigating environmental and social issues arising within projects could affect their economic viability. Therefore, mitigation measures to deal with environmental and social issues such as best practices available would be encouraged. Further, BESCO would endeavour to continually seek alternate mechanisms and routes to operationalize the environmental and social policy. While adopting this environmental and social policy, BESCO has reflected its commitment through disclosure of the same along with its Safety Manual and Corporate Social Responsibility policy.