



RESEARCH  
PROGRAM ON  
Dryland Systems



March 2016

# Self-Check: Is your organisation gender- responsive (gender-fit)?

Food security and better livelihoods  
for rural dryland communities

### Author

[karin.reinprecht@yahoo.de](mailto:karin.reinprecht@yahoo.de) for Drylands System CRP, June 2016.

### Acknowledgments

The author is grateful to the following persons, who acted as test interviewees and gave their time and feedback ideas without compensation: Enrico Bonaiuti, , Bezaiet Desalegn, Tana Lala-Pritchard, Bao Le Quang, Claudio Zucca, and Richard Thomas, director of Dryland Systems CRP, for allowing its preparation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TOPIC 1: Check your research targets: Do you actually do research on people? And is this known?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TOPIC 2: Check your research activities: Do you have the staff basis to research on women and men/the young?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Topic 3: Check your approach: Does your approach really target both genders?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>TOPIC 4: Check your organisation: Is your organisation and its procedures appropriate for research on gender?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>TOPIC 5: Check your resource base: Do you have sufficient resources for researching on gender?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>TOPIC 6: Check your strategies: Is research on gender and youth planned in strategies, work plans and budgets?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Sources</b>	<b>20</b>

## Self-Check: Is your organisation gender-responsive (gender-fit)?

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### Why should a research organisation be gender-responsive?

To achieve innovation and adoption of new technologies and research results in small scale farming at a bigger scale and more quickly, all people, who do the farm work as well as those who influence decisions need to be included. Every research involving people such as farmers, processors of agricultural produce and livestock or fish, extension workers, traders or other service providers to agriculture need to ensure to research on the contributions and needs for development of these people, women and men. All agricultural livelihood systems have ecological and socio-economic aspects – the interplay between these aspects and the interplay of social, cultural and economic. Putting more emphasis on the systemic interrelations of human agents among themselves and with the ecological environment (including the economic use of it through agriculture, agro-forestry, livestock and fisheries) will lead to a better understanding of the mechanisms of change (and will allow forecasting possible feedback loops). Gender-sensitive research on agricultural livelihood systems will thus allow to give better advice to investors into the development of agriculture.

### What is this Self-Check?

This Self-Check is a tool for doing a **self-check of one's own organisation**. It is carried out by an internal team with support from external facilitators. The goal of the self-check is, to find **opportunities for improvement** in one's own organisation. The Self-Check is **tailor made** for organisations, which do research in different agriculture and livestock dominated livelihood systems.

### What is the aim of this Self-Check?

The aim of this self-check by research organisations is to diagnose to which extent the organisation can do gender-sensitive research, and to identify areas and activities of improvement.

### Why a self-check?

The self-check method is promoted as knowledge about possible opportunities for improvement of an organisation are found most easily within the organisation itself. The Self-Check is a way for an organisation to bring together all the improvement and innovation ideas of its employees and managers.

### How to use this Guide?

This Guide comprises a list of questions covering six themes which should be answered during the self-check process. Questions on strategies, approaches, staff expertise and resources should clarify, **what the organisation can do to improve its gender-sensitive and gender-responsive research**.

All questions are yes/no questions. As time allows, the answers should be explained during the interviews, which last about one hour. After questions have been answered in interviews, a workshop discussion with interviewees should analyse the results.

## Self-Check: Is your organisation gender-responsive (gender-fit)?

---

### How can one answer the self-check questions?

The answers to the YES/NO questions in this guide are partly reflected in your organisation's (on-line) documents and web-sites, and partly in the attitudes and actions of your employees' and managers'. Stakeholders of your research and the views of people outside the organisation can provide insightful answers to some of the questions.

The following methods to answer the questions of this self-check guide are recommended:

1. **Document analysis** – analysis of the organisation's relevant (on-line) documents
2. **Interviews** - with key or representative employees, managers and stakeholders of your research
3. **Workshops** – guided discussions with employees, managers and researchers

### What is the self-check process?

1. Form a team of up to three people to carry out the self-check (they should be from the organisation supported by one outside facilitator);
2. Analyse on-line and hardcopy documents of your organisation applying the questions of this guide;
3. Select types of interviewees, define three to five interviewee types, interview about four people from each group (e.g. Group 1: biophysical researchers – interview four female and male researchers of your organisation, which can be categorised in this group; or Group 2: Farmers, who were somehow involved in the research of your organisation);
4. Interview in one-to-one interviews up to 20 employees/managers/researchers from your organisation and clients; the interviews are anonymous;
5. Analyse the results in your group and formulate questions to be discussed in a workshop;
6. Carry out a workshop (duration half to entire day), to discuss the questions and issues, which arose from the interviews. Jointly, develop an action plan to achieve gender-responsive research;
7. After a year, carry out a discussion to see, what has changed and maybe re-do the self-check;

### How long does the self-check take?

Depending on the size of the organisation and on the availability of interviewees, the Self-Check generally lasts 5 to 7 days. If workshops are held with research stakeholders (e.g. farmers) to find out more about their views and suggestions, the Self-Check might take longer.

### How to use of Excel sheets?

Divide your interviewees in four respondent groups such as gender experts within the organisation, biophysical researchers within the organisation, female clients of the organisation (e.g. female farmers or female representatives from government), and male clients.

## Self-Check: Is your organisation gender-responsive (gender-fit)?

Try to have at least 4 interviewees for each group. Put the actual number (red number 2 in the example below) of interviewees at the top of the first sheet. Then ask your interview partner to answer *yes, to a large extent, half/half, hardly or no* and put 1 for one person in the respective column at the respective question in the respective line. When a second person gives the same answer change the number one to two and so on.

Number of respondents in Group 1	2 strategic functions DS				
	yes/a lot	to a large extent	half/half	hardly	no
1.1 Is your research on people? More than 30% of it?	1	0	1	0	0
1.2 Do you disaggregate your research results by gender ?	0	0	0	2	0

Comments can be put in the line of the question. The cross-check provided, should be 100% - if it is not, please check, if the number of interviewees and number of persons answering a specific question are the same. In case the answer is 'I do not know' – which should be avoided as much as possible – the answer remains at zero and the cross check will no longer be 100%.

## Self-Check: Is your organisation gender-responsive (gender-fit)?

Results Summary of Group 1 to Group 4						
	yes/a lot	to a large extent	SUM	half/half	hardly	no
Topic 1: Check your research targets: Do you actually do research on people?	14%	15%	29%	25%	38%	8%
Topic 2: Check your research activities: Do you have the basis to research on women and men?	11%	12%	24%	26%	34%	16%
Topic 3: Check your approach: Does your approach really target both genders?	5%	11%	16%	41%	31%	25%
Topic 4: Check your organisation: Is your organisation & procedures appropriate for research on gender ?	5%	13%	19%	31%	43%	7%
Topic 5: Check your resource base: Do you have sufficient resources for researching on gender ?	13%	8%	20%	17%	38%	25%
Topic 6: Check your strategies: Is research on gender and youth planned in strategies, work plans and budgets?	66%	3%	69%	13%	3%	16%
How gender-fit is your organisation?			29%			

The results of all four groups are captured in the Excel-sheets of results, which allow to see at one glance, where or regarding which topics an organisation needs to improve and gives an overall marker on how gender-fit an organisation is. Please, see the example below:

### Interpretation and use of results?

In the above example, the organisation is only gender-fit with respect to strategies, workplans and indicator setting (69% positive answers). The organisation needs to especially work on its approaches to target and include both genders equally in its research (only 16% positive answers). A workshop with staff from this organisation including managers, social and biophysical researchers and support staff (e.g. budgeting) is recommended to put together an action plan to render this organisation more gender fit.

## TOPIC 1: Check your research targets: Do you actually do research on people? And is this known?

Questions to ask

**1.1 Is your research on people? More than 30% of your research?**

**1.2 Do you disaggregate your research results by gender and age?**

**1.3 Is your organisation well known by all stakeholders of your research topics within your area of operation (local/national)?**

- Is your organisation known to the general public (not only to experts)?
- Is your organisation generally known by stakeholders?
- Is the research on gender of your organisation known?
- Are women more likely than men to know about your organisation?
- Are women more likely than men to know about the gender research of your organisation?

## TOPIC 2: Check your research activities: Do you have the staff basis to research on women and men/the young?

Questions to ask

### 2.1 Do you have sufficient knowledge about gender related issues?

#### 2.11 Do the people in your organisation have awareness and training regarding gender?

#### 2.12 Do the people in your organisation have experience in the field of gender?

- Do your employees/researchers recognize and understand the varying opportunities and barriers specific to different gender?
- Are your employees/researchers aware of the particular opportunities and barriers of women farmers?
- Do you know how many women and men there are working/did work on gender in your organization?

#### 2.13 Do the people in your organisation know which research topics female and male stakeholders differentiated by age need and demand?

- Do you use participatory needs assessment methods?
- Do you try to find solutions to address the specific problems of different research stakeholders and target groups?
- Do you support clients in reaching their (farming, income, business etc.) goals?
- Do you try to create demand from needs you have perceived?

#### 2.14 Is your organisation's expertise reflected in your research design, approaches and tools?

- Are the different barriers and opportunities which women and men in farming face taken into account in the research design and approaches?
- Are research approaches and tools adapted to the different social and physical requirements of women and men in farming?
- Are there solutions proposed (e.g. through your research and the activities and services offered by your organisation)?
- Are solutions also proposed for the problems specific to either female or male farmers and farm workers?

**2.15 Do your researchers know how to adapt research activities in the field to gender of stakeholders/target groups?**

- Are gender analysis methods known, and applied, in your organisation?
- Are researchers in the field to translate knowledge on differences in social and physical requirements of women and men into adapting their research approaches and tools?
- Are approaches to analysing gender-differentiated requirements known, and developed, by your organisation?
- Is your organisation's proposal and guidance regarding gender-responsive and gender-sensitive research feasible?

**2.2 Have you integrated gender in your research?**

**2.21 Do your methods of research give equal voice to women and men, and equal participation opportunities?**

- Is your communication method appropriate for women?
- Is your communication method appropriate for women?
- Are you understood by smallholder farmers, farmers with large farms, farming companies?
- Are you understood by different female and male actors in the farm value chain?
- Do you encourage the participation of and contribution from women in farming and at other stages of the farm production value chain?

**2.22 Is your expertise on gender reflected in the research approach?**

**2.23 Is your expertise on gender reflected in the research outputs and research reports?**

- Is your gender expertise reflected in your international public goods such as publications, policy briefs, tools, guidelines, training materials, communication outputs (videos, animations, blogs, stories)?

## Self-Check: Is your organisation gender-responsive (gender-fit)?

---

### 2.24 Does staff have the know-how (trained staff, experts) on gender with respect to the specific research topics?

- Are the organisation's researchers trained to do gender-sensitive research?
- Do they have experience in this?
- Do the organisation's researchers have a specialisation (by education or experience) for gender-sensitive and gender-responsive research on specific research issues?

### 2.25 Do men and women in farming experience improvements due to your research (follow-up evaluation, impact evaluation)?

- Is there a follow-up evaluation after your research and implementation of its results?
- Does your organisation provide any kind of after research check?
- Does feedback from research stakeholders on the quality of your research activities and services reach the organisation's staff and managers?
- Is this feedback information from research stakeholders and 'clients' used to improve your activities and services?
- Do you have research clients, who ask you for more research (services)?

### 2.26 Do you adapt to women and men in farming by employing both sexes in your organisation and by involving staff of both sexes in your research activities?

- Is 50% of your organisation's staff female?
- Is 50% of your managers female?
- Do your organisation's female employees deliver services to men and women alike?
- Do male as well as female researchers specialise in women's issues and gender research?

## Topic 3: Check your approach: Does your approach really target both genders?

Questions to ask

### 3.1 Do you know which research both genders demand respectively?

#### 3.1.1 Is the evidence on gender researched demanded by female and male research stakeholders?

- Are you able to identify the research demanded by research stakeholders?
- Do you assessments to ensure that research, information analysis and information presentation are quick, to the point, understandable and applicable?
- Do you use client feedback systems to understand the reception of your research on gender?

#### 3.1.2 Do you have procedures, which allow for the innovation of research approach, topics and activities on gender?

- Do you create an environment, which allows experimentation and free development of ideas on approaches, topics and activities regarding gender research?
- Does your organisation encourage researchers of all ages and hierarchical positions to suggest improvements and to test new ideas?

### 3.2 Are your research results on gender clearly presented?

- Do you explain your approach (how you want to go about researching gender) in a way that assists research stakeholders in making the right **choices about applying** your research results?
- Do your publications, policy briefs, your website, your videos and other international public goods illustrate your messages in a way that is **meaningful** to all research stakeholders (e.g. women and men in farming, national ministries)?

### 3.3 Are your research results on gender disseminated to all stakeholders of research?

- Do you package information on your research in a way that is useful for your research stakeholders (e.g. showing links to other relevant research on the same topic, in the same area, or otherwise linked)?
- Do you have vertically, horizontally and systemically integrated research results?
- Do you know the impact of the adoption of your research results on the performance of your target groups (e.g. women in farming)?

**3.4 Are your approaches cost-efficient to enable gender differentiation?**

**3.41 Are the costs to access your research affordable to the research stakeholders?**

- Do you package your dissemination of research results so that the main stakeholders and client of these results can easily afford them? (publications, tools, methodologies, recipes etc.)
- Do you offer flexible payment systems?
- Do you have a clear price strategy that encourages main stakeholders and client of research results to purchase them from you?
- Do you have different pricing strategies for different groups of stakeholders and clients?

**3.42 Does the income from the dissemination of research results cover 30% of your research costs? Or, when not applicable: Does your organisation receive funding because of gender research?**

- Do you have a strategy of high volume/low price or low volume/high price' (e.g. no sales growth due to price dumping; sales not depending on one large client only)?
- Do you follow sustainable price strategies? (e.g. that at least cover a set percentage (30%) of research costs and organisation's over-heads) or do you plan to in the future?
- Do you cross-subsidise research with other services/activities of your organisation?

## **TOPIC 4: Check your organisation: Is your organisation and its procedures appropriate for research on gender?**

Questions to ask

### **4.1 Is communication with women conducive to their participation in the research?**

- Do all people in the organisation know how to behave towards different research stakeholders or clients (For example: women, men; of different age; from small, large farm; from different ethnic groups etc.)?
- Have all people (incl. administrative personnel and managers) received training in the correct attitudes towards different research stakeholders?
- Do your research service providers (e.g. enumerators, local researchers) understand the circumstances under which different research stakeholders work and live?
- Are respect and tolerance values consciously promoted by your organisation?
- Is the dress code of your employees appropriate for your towards different research stakeholders or clients, or alienating them?
- Are your buildings/field stations inviting or welcoming to your different research stakeholders?

### **4.2 Is your language simple?**

- Are your researcher/employees trained to express themselves clearly, and do they adapt their language according to their respondent's needs/preferences?
- Does your language refer to both sexes, even when biophysical farm issues are concerned (is language not gender-blind)?
- Do your materials destined for research stakeholders use clear and simple language?
- Do you use other means to clarify your message?

### **4.3 Are your organisational procedures for research smooth and streamlined?**

- Is it clear to your research stakeholders and clients as well as people outside the organisation who they should contact in your organisation, and for which purpose?
- Are the structures and processes of your organisation transparent to your research stakeholders and clients?

## Self-Check: Is your organisation gender-responsive (gender-fit)?

---

### 4.31 Are responsibilities to ensure gender-responsive and -sensitive research results delegated to researchers in the field?

- Do researchers in the field know how to adapt to research situations and ensure that men and women alike have a voice and input in the social or biophysical research?
- Are researchers in the field encouraged , to take responsibility for gender-sensitive research approaches?

### 4.32 Is the responsibility to manage research budgets (also regarding gender) delegated to researchers in the field?

- Do researchers in the field have the possibility to dispose over budgets and reallocate it according to needs of research targets?
- Are there reporting structures, which allow for reporting of these changes or detailing of use of budget?

### 4.33 Are research results monitored and fed-back to the strategy function (leadership of the organisation)?

- Does staff responsible for ensuring strategy implementation and formulation get information on research results and lessons learnt from the research process?
- Is this information provided in a timely fashion (e.g. reported as soon as possible and centrally available)?

### 4.34 Is actual spending on gender controlled, related to budget and reported to the strategy function (leadership of the organisation)?

- Are gender budget lines clearly formulated?
- Is the spending controlled and reported in a timely fashion (to allow for reactions by research managers)?

### 4.35 Are main feedback loops regarding gender within the organisation identified and monitored?

- Is it clear to researchers, which main other research topics relate to the gender topics studied?
- Is interaction between the researchers concerned set-up formally?
- Is the interaction between the related research topics and the feedback loop postulated and monitored?

## Self-Check: Is your organisation gender-responsive (gender-fit)?

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### 4.4 Do researchers on gender have a strategically important position within the organisation?

- Are there enough people working to research on gender issues and women in agriculture?
- Do the relevant heads of department and research managers have enough power and responsibility within the organisation to implement the strategically required gender research?
- Do you have enough space and work materials to deliver your research plans?

### 4.5 Are the organisation's researchers motivated to research on gender?

- Does the leadership of the organisation know, what motivates its researchers, employees, managers and other co-workers (e.g. ideals, a good salary, being able to publish more, being able to gain a good reputation as researcher, maintaining the good reputation of your organisation, a strong interest in specific research topics)?
- Do you have incentives (financial and non-financial) to motivate your researchers, employees and managers?

### 4.6 Are the access requirements promoting equal participation of women and men?

- Can all research stakeholders (e.g. women and men in farming) afford the cost<sup>1</sup> and time<sup>2</sup> required to participate in your (research) activities and access your services?
- Is the level of knowledge required to participate in your activities and access your services a pre-requisite but not a barrier?
- Is the attitude required liberal and gender sensitive rather than dominated by “cultural, social or gender stereotypes”?

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<sup>1</sup> Costs = could also include a consideration of social costs, which might be higher for women than for men;

<sup>2</sup> Time = women have different social roles e.g. regarding household duties and child rearing than men; so, when and how long stakeholders will be able to participate needs to be considered, when planning for their equal participation;

## **TOPIC 5: Check your resource base: Do you have sufficient resources for researching on gender?**

Questions to ask

### **5.1 Can you build on a body of research on gender from your organisation?**

- Is research on gender readily available (e.g. through open source or accessible archives with good search functions)?
- Is research on gender published in regular formats?
- Are communities of practice existing within the organisation or have strong link to such been established?

### **5.2 Is your equipment appropriate for researching on gender?**

- Do you have proper equipment (computers, furniture, boards), which are mobile and flexible enough for your work in the field or with female and male research ‘clients’?
- Do you have an appropriate building for working with female and male stakeholders?

### **5.3 Is the time allocated for research on gender sufficient?**

- Are the employees of your organisation able to allocate sufficient time for their research on gender or on gender-aspects?
- Is administrative and other work preventing employees from spending enough time working on gender?
- Is the time allocated for work on gender in proportion to women and men’s contribution to the main focus of the research and research results?

## Self-Check: Is your organisation gender-responsive (gender-fit)?

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### 5.4 Is the funding of research on gender adequate to implement your research plans on gender?

#### 5.4.1 Are you self-sustainable through core budget financing for gender research?

- Is the percentage of your organisations total research budget, which is directly related to gender, higher than 30%?
- Is the percentage of budget, which your organisation receives as a subsidy/core financing for your research on gender high?
- Is the percentage of your organisation's budget received from donors earmarked for gender research higher than 30%?
- Is your budget financing high relatively to comparable organizations because you prioritize gender research?
- Does your organisation monitor the budget financing received for research on gender?
- Is the ratio between budget per research staff higher for research staff working with gender than for other employees?

#### 5.4.2 Do you receive funding/subsidies for specific research projects on gender?

- Is the percentage of funding for gender-specific research projects above 30% of the total income of the organisation?
- Do you expect funding for gender-specific research projects in the near future?
- Is the (financial) planning of your organisation relying on project funding?
- Is your organisation trying to create self-sustainable activities and services with respect to advice on gender (that is activities and services that can continue without subsidies or project money)?

#### 5.4.3 Are your costs of working for gender low? Do you work efficiently?

- Is you cost-covering with the ability to build reserves?
- Are your indirect costs lower than 20% of your total costs?
- Are your highest cost items salaries for your researchers, enumerators and similar staff?
- Did you divide the costs of researching gender into regions (rural/urban), legal status (farmer groups/sole proprietors), value chain positions and/or sectors?

**5.5 Is a reasonable/significant amount of your capital used to develop research capacities on gender?**

- Is the amount spent on researchers working on gender in line with the contribution of funds for gender to your organisation's income?
- Is the amount spent on publishing and documenting gender research in proportion to the gender research done in your organisation's income?
- Are the costs spent on gender training for researchers/employees in line with the requirements regarding gender knowledge set by the strategy of your organisation?

## TOPIC 6: Check your strategies: Is research on gender and youth planned in strategies, work plans and budgets?

Questions to ask

**6.1 Do you have a mission statement or similar, which states the importance of gender-responsive research?**

**6.2 Do you have strategies, action plans or work plans for your research on gender?**

- Do your strategies allow an iterative approach to achieving the objectives?
- Is it possible to adapt your plans to changes in the ecological, physical and institutional environment or to new framework conditions?

**6.3 Do you have indicators to measure the quality and extent of your research on gender?**

- Do you regularly evaluate the reaching of the set indicators?
- Do you have feedback loops installed to inform researchers and stakeholders about the indicators achieved?
- Do you assess the impact of your research results from time to time?

**6.4 Do you have an allocated budget for research on gender?**

## Sources

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2015

Vester



RESEARCH  
PROGRAM ON  
**Dryland Systems**

The CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems aims to improve the lives of 1.6 billion people and mitigate land and resource degradation in 3 billion hectares covering the world's dry areas.

Dryland Systems engages in integrated agricultural systems research to address key socioeconomic and biophysical constraints that affect food security, equitable and sustainable land and natural resource management, and the livelihoods of poor and marginalized dryland communities. The program unifies eight CGIAR Centers and uses unique partnership platforms to bind together scientific research results with the skills and capacities of national agricultural research systems (NARS), advanced research institutes (ARIs), non-governmental and civil society organizations, the private sector, and other actors to test and develop practical innovative solutions for rural dryland communities.

The program is led by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), a member of the CGIAR Consortium. CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future.

For more information, please visit

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