Guidelines and Template for How to Write a Success Story

The stories should be specific, that is, they should relate specific challenges, actors, solutions, and outcomes, and they should describe one compelling event or an interesting series of events. Stories can be of different types. They can show the impact of Dryland Systems, that is they can describe outcomes and how they were reached.

Stories can describe the potential impact of Dryland Systems, that is, stories can describe good science or good approaches with potential.

Keep in mind Dryland Systems central themes of agricultural livelihoods systems, partnerships, gender, and innovation platform. Make sure the story illustrates the benefits of the "systems approach" in bringing about tangible outcomes and positive change.

Please do not cut and paste from technical documents. Write in your own words. Convey the facts, figures and implications of the research, and your passion and enthusiasm. Do not worry too much about the style. Stories will be edited or rewritten.

1. Title

Suggestion(s) for a title to attract readers' attention.

2. Category

Please indicate the type of "Most significant achievement/success story" by marking with an "X" the appropriate category (ies) below.

IDOs	
• Resilient Livelihoods (IDO 1)	
• Wealth & Well-being (IDO 2)	
• Food Access (IDO 3)	
• Natural Resources Management (IDO 4)	
• Gender Empowerment (IDO 5)	
• Capacity to Innovate (IDO 6)	
DS cross cutting issues	
• Gender	
• Youth	
• Capacity development	
• Partnerships	

3. Challenge

Start with the challenge, problem, issue or opportunity that Dryland Systems has aimed to address. This should relate to one of the IDOs (resilience, wealth and wellbeing, food access, natural resources management, gender empowerment, capacity to innovate).

Clarify who the story is about (e.g., farmer, scientist, community, research partner, policy maker, etc.) by aadding a human interest angle–who is experiencing this problem and how would they benefit if it was solved? In other words, what is at stake for a person, community or other group of people? **(200–250 words)**

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4. Initiative

Describe what Dryland Systems researchers have done to address the challenge. Showcase the research strategy and timeline of actions. How were different research users engaged in or consulted in the research process? Specify who benefitted from the research and how is the research knowledge that was produced being used now by different beneficiaries (farmer, community, policy maker, private sector, university, etc.) to change their practice, policy, investments, etc. **(350–500 words)**

5. Key result/insight/interesting fact

Describe the key result/insight/interesting fact stemming from the research. What were the key research outputs such as recommendations, models, trials, research papers, etc.?
Provide evidence of this result/outcome by giving links to scientific journal articles, reports, and other references that document the research. **(150–200 words)**

6. Impact

Provide a short summary of the actual change (on knowledge, attitude, skills, practice, or policy) that took place and how this could lead to large-scale impact at system level and significant progress towards the IDO. Provide quantitative measures, where possible and use simple graphs or tables to illustrate a point.

(150–200 words)

7. Lessons Learned

1. What did you learn in this process? What was difficult or challenging?
2. How did you overcome the challenges faced?
3. If you were to do it all over again, what would you do differently?

(350 - 400 words)

8. Supporting Quotes and Images

First person accounts or account of a community or group: Please provide 3-4 quotes of 50-words each from different people that bring a different perspective to the story (including name of person, who they are/position, location). These could be account from a single beneficiary or a group of people who talk about how Dryland Systems research has made a tremendous difference in their livelihood, community, behaviours/attitudes, policies, investment, etc.

Photo: Provide 2-3 quality photographs, with a 10–20 word caption. The photograph should capture the person/people/landscape in the story context.

9. Additional information

Please provide additional relevant information, such as:

1. List of all research partners and/or donors who supported the work
2. Links to supporting materials, such as news items, photos on Flickr and presentations on SlideShare
3. Contact person for this story (name, position, email address)
4. Other information you want to add

RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Dryland Systems
CGIAR

*Food security and better livelihoods
for rural dryland communities*

Finally, use the checklist below to ensure your story meets the 10 criteria outlined and is ready for sharing.

10. Checklist

No.	Question to consider	Yes	No
1	Is the story interesting to the target audience of the annual report?		
2	Does the story explain what new insights the research brings? What is the main lesson learned from this story? Does the story describe a key insight on what works and what doesn't and something that future research could build on.		
3	Does the story describe the outcomes the research produced and the people who are benefitting? What changes–in skills, knowledge, attitude, practice, or policy–has the research brought, and who is benefitting from these changes?		
4	Does the story make a compelling point that people will remember? Does the story show how the research makes a difference to improving livelihoods and lessening poverty?		
5	Does the story provide an interesting fact that people will remember? For example, how much yields increased, how many hectares of land could become more productive from this innovation or technology?		
6	Does the story explain what kind of impact this innovation or technology could have if scaled up?		
7	Does the story show which partners contributed and how?		
8	Does the story include quotes from scientists or beneficiaries?		
9	Have I provided links to other media (journal articles, website news, newsletter, blogs, annual reports of other CGIAR centres, CRPs) that also feature this story?		
10	Have I provided the contact details of people who can provide more information?		