

Dryland Systems Annual Report 2014 Comments

Consortium Office

The Dryland Systems Annual Report (AR) is of good quality, but some aspects can certainly be improved to make the report more readable and show progress more clearly.

It is acknowledged that the Dryland Systems is relatively new. It has also had managerial difficulties and some of the efforts made to improve the situation have still to take effect. Dryland Systems is also making efforts to implement integrated systems research and address key research questions.

Dryland Systems' options-by-context analysis structure is of excellent added value, however it is unfortunate that Dryland Systems is not looking at the whole food systems and its actors are still concentrating only on primary production. The examples chosen to show progress towards outputs demonstrate Dryland Systems' efforts to have an integrated and systemic approach. Publications are adequate and proportional to the effort. The progress towards impact is still limited but this can be explained by the age of the program.

Dryland Systems' Gender Strategy was a relatively late to start compared to other CRPs (January 2014). Good progress has been made in bringing the performance up to a desirable standard on gender mainstreaming, piloting gender-responsive systems research by focusing on some key value chains and identifying entry points for gender-responsive interventions (e.g. resources endowment, land tenure, decision making). These initiatives are well understood and presented. POWB commitment for gender budget was met but is well below the guideline of 8% of total; it is 4.8% of total spend.

The capacity development strategy and a joined up training approach for system CRPs is a very good initiative.

To improve the quality of this good annual report, we recommend:

1. General Comments: Avoid repeating information. For example, the databases and the adoption of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) options are presented twice. The second time they should be mentioned with reference to presentation in the significant achievements.
2. Section C:
 - a) Progress on outputs, outcomes and impacts should reflect a global systems approach. In order to demonstrate progress, please include details on the specific locations of outcomes and impacts, as well as the efforts made to scale up outcomes.
 - b) In section C1-2, the role of the "village-based seed enterprises" to overcome on-going constraints to seed adoption should be explained in greater detail.
 - c) Explanations of the rationale supporting the metrics to calculate the number of "people" (households? small land farmers? women?) and the number of hectares impacted through sustainable land management are necessary. It would be of interest to know what kind of training has been given to the reported 368,000 trainees.
3. Section E: Specific examples of cross CRP collaboration would add value to the report, and credit should be given to the other CRPs when mentioning products jointly developed. Examples of specific partnerships with local partners would improve the recognition of their role.