



## Feedback on Dryland Systems Annual Report 2016

### General comments

This is the last Annual Report of Dryland Systems (hereafter referred as DS) as the program, as such, has closed down. In these difficult conditions, DS has produced a VERY GOOD Annual Report 2016, easy to read, describing well its activities and recognizing the contributions of all partners. In 2016, DS achieved significant accomplishments and generated a number of research outputs, including 135 journal articles (95 indexed ISI), 19 book chapters, several working papers (109), datasets (68), proceedings (51) and various other publications. Though the 2016 Annual Report (hereafter referred as AR) provides quality and credible information, it's clarity and internal consistency could be improved. The program organized a series of three 'legacy' papers that would stand to serve dryland and other ecosystems research in relation to major global challenges. DS MEL repository seems to be well-implemented.

We have few comments or recommendations for improvement:

1. The header of the Report is "Dryland System-2015 Annual Performance Report," which is obviously not correct.
  - Please modify
2. Section A presents a clear synthesis of progress towards well-identified challenges. The scope and the depth of the narrative are appropriate. Most links are leading to the MEL repository. Financial information and breakdowns of expenses are accurate.
  - Please include the link for the article "A new dryland development paradigm grounded in empirical analysis of dryland systems science" and the full document for "The threat of land degradation to realizing the SDGs and its remedies."
  - The three "legacy" papers reported in section A.1 are very informative and useful. However, it would be important to have the following additional clarification/revisions.
  - The Stringer et al. (2017) and some other papers have been referred differently (sometime by DOI) in different parts of the report. It would be better to follow a consistent style.

3. Section A2 could be reorganized emphasizing two significant achievements/success stories and the share of personnel cost in Section A.3 is reported as 281%, which cannot be correct.
4. Section B provides the links to the ToC and Program Impact Pathway. The impact pathways are relevant. However, the Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) are not clearly described.
  - Though section B of the AR provides a link to the Program Impact Pathway, it would be appropriate to explicitly state the IDOs and the related indicators.
  - Please include examples of how DS was intervening to have impact and what the main messages are regarding the DS progress.
5. Section C shows DS progress. The areas of significant scientific contributions are well summarized. Outputs described are credible, relevant and of high quality. But outcomes are not clear.
  - 5.1 C1.1. Publications: The publication numbers reported in this section are different from those in Annex C and on the MEL website. For example, Section C 1.1 reports that DS team produced 144 peer-reviewed journal articles (104 indexed by ISI) and 19 book chapters. While Annex C and MEL website indicate 131 journal articles (95 indexed by ISI) and 18 book chapters.
    - Please
    - it is recommended to provide a summary of the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) initiative results
    - Please review the links of this section. For example when the link only goes to the MEL website, rather than a specific document, it is better to take off the link as with the “GeOC tool”.
    - The Data-Envelopment-Analysis Programming (DEAP) and the following papers: Haileslassie et al. 2016 and El-Shater et al. 2016 are linked to the wrong document.
    - Include in this section links to annex three and to the outputs list of 144 peer-reviewed journal articles and 19 book chapters.
    - Several reports cited in this section (for example, ICRISAT 2015, Hindustan Times 2015, The Time of India 2015, Saharawat et al. 2015, ICARDA 2015, Chelang’a et al. 2015, Jensen et al. 2015a, 2015b) dated 2015. It is not explicit how the initiatives reported in those publications are impacting the target beneficiaries. Please clarify.
  - 5.2 C2. Most of the outcomes reported are essentially outputs.
    - This section should be rewritten with focus on outcomes.
  - 5.3 C.3. The C3 section is poorly written, and the progress towards impact is not properly described.
    - Though 2016 was the last year of DS, it is important to report how the DS scientific knowledge, data, tools and lessons learned are impacting rural dryland of the developing world.

6. Section D: effectiveness of gender research mainstreaming (as presented by the report)

Specific comments:

DS is commended for a sustained commitment to gender mainstreaming under difficult circumstances (reduced budget, program closure) and for producing strategic gender research (e.g. on gender inequality in labor markets) as well as innovative applied work (e.g. engaging Afghani women in village seed systems). The Program has done well to continue the dissemination of Gender Guidelines for Biophysical Researchers to mainstream gender throughout the research project cycle. After the program ends, it is hoped that CGIAR will make every effort to retain the very capable gender researchers who have laid a solid foundation for future work on gender topics with cross-program relevance (e.g. seed systems, extension, labor).

Significant outputs of gender research are reported: the study of empowerment in Burkina Faso; study in India of the status of extension services in these rural areas that pointed out the ineffectiveness of addressing gender inequalities. Documentation provided to support the narrative in Section D is suitable and commended for including links to research papers.

- a) 2. REPORT ON GENDER POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS: not applicable
- b) 3. GENDER BUDGET: total gender expenditure for the CRP not reported, instead unspent total shown as USD 4.736m. Difficult to interpret.
- c) 4. GENDER IN THE WORKPLACE: NOT REPORTED.
- d) 5. ANNEX 2 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: REPORTED meets standards on Indicator 1; approaches standards on Indicator 2- note budget restrictions and closure of Program

Notable achievement(s)

- a) Women-led village based seed enterprises <https://gender.cgiar.org/stepping-it-up-for-gender-equality/>
- b) Women, work and wage equity research  
The primary purpose of this research is to investigate and assess how working conditions, opportunities, constraints and sociocultural norms interact to shape the experiences of female and male agricultural laborers working under different terms and conditions (full time, part time, formal, informal, seasonal and permanent) in the agricultural sector. The empirical data for this study was collected through a survey administered to 415 laborers (187 women and 228 men) in Saiss, Morocco. The surveys were conducted in the districts of Betit, Ain Joma, and Sidi Sliman because they differ significantly in gender norms, levels of economic development and biophysical dynamics. The survey data was complemented with 36 unstructured interviews with participants in paid agricultural labour as well as participant observation.

Our findings have revealed that higher-paid equipment-intensive tasks tend to be assigned to men whereas women are much more likely to find themselves performing lower-paid time-intensive tasks. Even in the informal sector, men are routinely paid more than women for the same work. Enforcing equal-pay legislation for women is an essential first step towards enabling women to benefit equitably with men from their labor contributions to the agricultural sector.

7. Section E: The DS team worked with an impressive set of partners during the reporting period, including NARS, ARIs, civil society actors, the private sector and CGIAR center. The number of partners described on section E is impressive (481).
  - Please add a comment of the consequences of the partnerships ending in 2016, and highlight the plans in the future for those going on beyond the program. Include the concrete partnerships with other CRPs.
  - It is reported that “Dryland Systems collaborated together with all CRPs....” It is not evident whether DS work with IFPRI and IFPRI led CRPs. IFPRI and DS led two similar initiatives on economics of land degradation with no apparent cooperation.
  - Given 2016 was the last year of DS, it would be important to highlight as to whether or not NARS partners will be able to continue various programs previously supported by DS.
8. Section F: Capacity Building
  - 8.1 Various capacity building activities reported are relevant to the objective of DS. However, it is not very evident how effectively national partners are utilizing their improved capacity.
  - 8.2 In Section F on capacity building, please add into the narrative the overall numbers of trained scientists and stakeholders even if they are also detailed in Annex 1.
  - 8.3 Sections G and H are clear and reflect the efforts of the program to tackle the risks and challenges encountered during Phase 1 including the management of the budget cuts. Lessons learned are especially relevant, given the discontinuation of the program.
  - 8.4 DS faced a major risk in 2016 and was instructed to close down. The team produced a “close out plan,” and managed various activities accordingly.
    - It is desirable to explicitly mention how various essential DS activities would be continued under one or more Phase II CRPs.
9. More specifically in Section H, DS provided credible justifications when progress was not as expected; the main reason was budget cut due to the close down.
10. In Annex 1 when indicators are below targets, credible explanations are provided.
  - There are some discrepancies between information provided in Annex 1 and the website (for example, there are mismatches in column “planned” for several indicators).