Gender Inclusion Checklist:

An Assessment Tool for Breeding Operations Farm Stations

This checklist is for crop breeding organizations and farm station management staff to help assess and improve gender inclusion in their workplace. This tool was developed by [Martina Cavicchioli](https://www.iita.org/iita-staff/cavicchioli-martina/), a Gender Scientist at the [International Institute of Tropical Agriculture](https://www.iita.org/) (IITA), with the support of the EiB Communication and [Breeding Operation Network for Development (BOND)](https://excellenceinbreeding.org/BOND) teams. Information was derived from gender inclusion sessions in the EiB 2022 [West Africa](https://excellenceinbreeding.org/event/west-africa-breeding-operations-workshop) and [East and Southern Africa](https://excellenceinbreeding.org/event/east-southern-africa-breeding-operations-workshop) Breeding Operations Workshops.

**The Action Scale Assessment System:**

Gender inclusion must be supported at all levels within an organization. This checklist includes an action scale assessment system to ensure gender inclusion initiatives are implemented on the organizational and farm station levels. The following abbreviations are used in the action scale:

* O = Organization (often human resources)
* FS = Farm Station (breeding stations run by the organization)

**Considerations when applying the checklist:**

* This checklist will help you acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of your organization’s gender inclusion initiatives and measures. If you have a new gender inclusion initiative, think about its scalability within your organization.
* Most action points become more effective the more gender-related issues are discussed within your organization. Any kind of discriminatory verbal and non-verbal messaging can significantly compromise the efficacy of measures taken. For the same reason, ensuring continuity in your staff’s sensitization about gender inclusion (through trainings, informal exchanges, etc.) should be prioritized over any action area.
* Involving men in continuous gender sensitization is key to the creation of a gender-inclusive work environment.
* This checklist is accompanied by a short glossary that clarifies some of the concepts presented in the action points. These concepts are underlined in the text.

**Improvements are generally on five key Action Areas:**

* **Work organization:** This area defines and provides solutions on how work is designed, organized, and managed within your organization.
* **Improvement of work equipment:** This area explores the improvement of machinery, tools, or apparatuses to enhance your organization’s work performance.
* **Improvement of infrastructures:** Making facilities inclusive is a step towards ensuring equity for all your staff members.
* **Capacity development:** Through trainings and workshops, capacity development allows your staff to undergo a process of change that benefits them and your institution long-term.
* **Compliance:** Procedures must be in place to ensure that your employees adhere to rules and guidelines.

*For more information on this checklist, contact:* [*g.teixeira@cgiar.org*](mailto:g.teixeira@cgiar.org)

Breeding Operations Gender Inclusion Checklist

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| Action | Action scale  FS: farm station  O: org level | Yes | No, or in progress | Guidance | Assessment notes: Response to guidance, strengths, challenges, progress, next steps |
| *Work organization* |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Gender policy*  Does your institution have a gender policy? Or are gender-specific recommendations included in policies not addressing gender explicitly? | O |  |  | **If yes:** What is the current policy claiming? Is there a need to update the policy?  **If no:** A gender policy is a fundamental tool to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed at all levels of an organization and that it becomes part and parcel of the corporate culture. Consider a participatory process to the creation of an institutional gender policy. |  |
| *Sexual harassment policy*  Does your institution have a sexual harassment policy? | O |  |  | **If yes:** Is your staff well informed about the existence and sensitized about the importance of this policy? Is there a shared understanding about what sexual harassment means and what its consequences are?  **If no:** Sexual harassment can be verbal, written, and physical and can occur in any environment. To ensure your staff is protected from any kind of unwelcomed messaging with sexual connotations, a sexual harassment policy should be designed by a gender-mixed group of employees and its implementationensured through the identification of staff trained to handle such situations and thecreation of safe outlets (see Action Point “Safe Outlets”). |  |
| *Safe outlets*  Are there safe outlets to discuss critical issues in terms of gender at each farm station level? | FS |  |  | **If yes:** Is your staff aware of their existence? Are there factors that prevent staff reaching out to those outlets? If so, you may consider enhancing dialogue with staff, noting their concerns, and informing them about how safe outlets work and why they can be helpful.  **If no:** Safe outlets are spaces for employees to voice gender related concerns without fear of any consequences (such as losing their jobs or facing further discrimination). Safe outlets are necessary tools in any harassment policy (see Action Point “Sexual Harassment Policy”). Consider creating and promoting them among your staff. |  |
| *Gender-focal persons*  Have gender-focal persons to support gender related initiatives been identified within your institution? | O |  |  | **If yes:** Are the tasks overseen by gender-focal persons still adequate to the needs of your breeding operations staff?  **If no:** How to best represent and ensure that attention towards gender issues in your institutions is maintained with continuity? |  |
| *Equal payment*  Is equal payment given to women and men performing the same tasks? | O |  |  | **If no:** Promoting equal payment gives all the employees recognition of their efforts with no discrimination about their identity or social condition. Consider implementing your organizational policy in this direction. |  |
| *Gender-responsive recruitment and performance appraisal*  Do you have gender-responsive recruitment process and staff performance appraisals? | O with effect on FS |  |  | **If no:** Adding this to your appraisal system will ensure a fair recruitment and performance evaluation of your staff accounting for each person’s capacities and efforts irrespective of their identity or social condition. |  |
| *Flexible working shifts*  Do you have flexible working hours for parents with younger children? | O with effect on FS |  |  | **If no:** Flexible hours allow parents to create time to meet their children’s needs e.g. nursing, school pickups, school meetings, etc. Consider introducing flexible working shifts. |  |
| *Improving Equipment* |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Ergonomic equipment*  Is your farm machinery and equipment ergonomic? | FS |  |  | **If no:** Ergonomic work equipment enables easier operation by all employees, irrespective of specific physical capabilities. What access issues do you recognize in the equipment currently in use? How could they be improved? |  |
| *Women’s use of advanced technologies*  Do you use advanced technologies that enable women to work faster and in similar jobs as men, irrespective of physical capabilities? | FS |  |  | **If yes:** Is anything still hindering women from using those technologies (such as the fear of being judged, discouraging messages coming from colleagues, etc.)? If so, consider strengthening your staff sensitization (see suggestions in the Action Area “Capacity development”).  **If no:** Enabling access to advanced technologies for all employees can both help reduce the heaviness of certain tasks and challenge common gender stereotypes with regards to specific farm management activities. How could your technology portfolio be improved in this direction? This point is to be combined with an inclusive training offer on the same technologies. |  |

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| *Improving infrastructure* |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Gender-sensitive facilities*  Does your workplace provide adequate facilities to meet both women’s and men’s needs and privacy? | FS |  |  | **If yes:** Are they still adequate and well maintained?  **If no:** Gender-sensitive facilities such asdressing rooms, bathrooms and nurseries for nursing mothers provide for staff needs, including privacy, during working hours. Ensuring these services are available and well maintained can improve staff wellbeing and comfort at work, all of which contributes to reduce stress and to develop a positive work attitude. Consider providing. |  |
| *Overcoming architectural barriers*  Have you introduced or improved infrastructure that caters for men and women with physical disabilities? | FS |  |  | **If yes:** Are they still adequate and well maintained?  **If no:** Consider improving workspace layout and adding infrastructure that enables access and movement for all (e.g. ramps, elevators, disabled parking space, toilets, etc.) |  |
| *Capacity development* |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Gender trainings*  Are gender issues in breeding operations adequately considered and addressed in your general training offer? | FS |  |  | **If yes:** Are gender focal persons and women actively involved in training design and facilitation?  **If no:** Introducing reflection and discussion around common gender issues and stereotypes in your training offer is the most effective step towards gender equality in your workplace. Consider improving your training offer in this direction and make sure that women and gender focal persons are also included in its organization. Increasing staff awareness and sensitivity towards gender-related aspects in everyday interaction can have a much positive impact on your staff’s private life as well. |  |
| *Women’s inclusion in trainings on advanced technologies*  Have women been trained to use innovative agricultural technologies? | FS |  |  | **If no:** If you are planning to introduce advanced technologies such as automated farm equipment, GIS software, etc., make sure that women are not excluded from this opportunity. (See also action point “Women’s use of advanced technologies”) |  |
| *Training on conflict resolution and gender-sensitive matters for farm superintendents*  Have farm superintendents been trained in conflict resolution with a special focus on gender discrimination? | FS |  |  | **If no:** Trainings are supposed to help superintendents to learn how to handle critical situations in an unbiased and careful manner (without any employee fearing of being harassed or punished). Without a specific training on this subject, this can be very challenging for superintendents. Consider adding this to your training offer. |  |
| *Learning exchanges with gender-balanced institutions*  Have you implemented exchange programs for employees with more gender-balanced organizations? | O |  |  | **If yes:** Did this opportunity allow you to improve your own workplace? How?  **If no:** Do you know of any gender-balanced workplaces that might be open to an exchange with you? How could your organization benefit from it? |  |
| *Mentors and role models*  Does your organization identify women mentors and role models who can support and encourage women in agriculture? | O |  |  | **If yes:** Is this part of a structured mentorship program or maintained at an informal level?  **If no:** Who could be potential women-mentors and role models in your organization? How would a mentorship program look like and how could it be implemented? Is there a budget available for implementation? |  |

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| *Compliance* |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Compliance with gender and sexual harassment policies*  Have policies that promote gender inclusion been implemented and followed by your staff? | O |  |  | **If no:** What affects their implementation? How can their implementation be improved and monitored? |  |
| *Work-life balance policy*  Does your organization propose a work-life balance policy? | O |  |  | **If no:** How can this be made clearer to staff and managers? |  |

**Glossary**

**GENDER-SENSITIVE:** Approaches and interventions that recognize the social causes of inequality but do not address them. Building on awareness about the needs of their users, gender-sensitive interventions are designed to ease their users’ access and comfort while using the same services. Sanitation facilities can be an example.

**GENDER-RESPONSIVE**: Approaches and interventions that recognize the social causes of inequality and work to address them. For instance, a gender-responsive hiring process does recognize that the adoption of strong biases leads to an unfair recruitment. Training recruiters in strengthening their awareness about own biases and encouraging qualified women candidates to apply are examples of gender-responsive solutions towards an unbiased recruitment.

**GENDER-BALANCED:** Environments providing same opportunities and access to assets and services to all, irrespective of their gender. For instance, the adoption of gender-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches helps ensure balance in a work environment.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT:** Any form of verbal, written or physical messaging with a sexual content that is unwelcomed by its recipient. Sexual harassment can create much damage to the person affected and to an institution’s reputation and have a negative impact on staff’s daily interaction and work performance.

**ERGONOMIC:** Equipment designed to improve the safety, comfort and effective operation of users.

**ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS:** Infrastructures which design does not account for limits in accessibility for people with physical disabilities.