

REPORT OF THE GENDER AUDIT AT THE  
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR TROPICAL AGRICULTURE (CIAT)



# Executive Summary



**PRGA**

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CGIAR Systemwide Program  
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*SYSTEMWIDE PROGRAM ON PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND GENDER ANALYSIS FOR  
TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION (PROGRAMA PRGA)*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

Among the 15 CGIAR Centers, CIAT offered one of the best opportunities to carry out a comprehensive gender audit, as a first step to mainstream gender into its research activities and into its work place. CIAT has built priceless experience and knowledge on GA in agricultural research though learning by doing for decades, its successive senior and management staff have been supportive of GA and participatory approaches and many professionals in the organization are supportive and experienced in both issues. In parallel, CIAT has seen many actions aimed at promoting gender equity in the workplace expressed in internal norms, regulations and overseeing committees. However, CIAT has not yet gone through an institutional gender mainstreaming process, as it seemed to be the next step to consolidate CIAT's visionary manner to approach collaborative research in the tropics. The PRGA commissioned a gender audit at CIAT with the overall objective to contribute to the establishment of an institutional strategy for gender mainstreaming in research and in the workplace through a process that involves and builds on the experience of all staff. The gender audit resulted in an in-depth diagnosis, conclusions and recommendations, part of which are summarized below.

### Background

The PRGA Program acknowledged the importance of gender issues and the need to mainstream them in agricultural research and development during its first phase (1997–2002). During its second phase (2003–2007), the Program supported gender mainstreaming processes in eight national programs in Eastern and Central Africa (all part of ASARECA), Urban Harvest and CIP, and women's networks in Asia (mostly in the eastern Himalayas). The First External Review of the Program (Walker *et al.*, 2007) commended the work on gender mainstreaming and recommended that the Program “should accelerate its efforts to introduce gender analysis into the wider CGIAR System.” The PRGA Program Medium-Term Plan 2008–2010 builds on these experiences and on the External Review, and specifically contemplates five supporting actions for gender mainstreaming in the CG Centers; one of them aims at building advanced capacity within the PRGA's host Center, CIAT.

In parallel, in 2006, the CIAT Gender and Diversity (G&D) Committee proposed a gender audit to understand the perception and current knowledge of CIAT staff on gender and diversity issues, and to provide a baseline for future action. In May 2007, a meeting between representatives of the CIAT Board of Trustees, PRGA Advisory Committee and CIAT G&D Committee resulted in an agreement to carry out a gender audit in order to contribute toward a strategy for incorporating best-practice gender analysis into the development of projects and programs, and further the aims of the G&D Committee. A Gender Consultant was recruited in September 2007 to conduct the audit, which took place between October 2007 and June 2008.

### Objectives

The audit's overall objective was to contribute to the establishment of an institutional strategy for gender mainstreaming in research and in the workplace through a process that involves and builds on the experience of all staff.

Specific objectives divide into two components. Auditing *gender in research* seeks to assess the current situation of gender mainstreaming in CIAT research activities, and to provide guidelines

for designing and implementing a CIAT strategy for mainstreaming gender in research projects and programs. Auditing *gender in the workplace* seeks to assess the extent to which the CIAT G&D Committee has achieved its goals of gender equity in the workplace and the factors behind it, to show the current perceptions and knowledge of CIAT staff on gender issues, and to provide a baseline for future action.

## **Methodology**

The audit sought to answer four questions:

- To what extent is gender analysis incorporated into CIAT project and program development, research and research-for-development activities, and performance assessment?
- Where are the best opportunities for gender mainstreaming in CIAT's research activities?
- To what extent have the CIAT G&D Committee and Associates achieved their goals?
- What actions offer the best opportunities for CIAT G&D Committee and Associates to further their aims?

A wide consultation process involved CIAT personnel, research and development partners, former CIAT personnel and end-users. Main methodological tools were interviews, questionnaires, focus-group discussions and a documentation review. Consultations were held at CIAT Headquarters (Cali, Colombia) and at CIAT's most heavily staffed regional offices (Kampala, Nairobi and Vientiane); the audit also covered the Bangkok office, as it was en route to Vientiane.

Some 16% of CIAT personnel were interviewed, 20% completed the questionnaire, and 8% were involved in focus-group discussions. Of 200 questionnaires sent out to partners, about 15% were returned.

In assessing the status of gender in the workplace, gender-disaggregated data were also collected on staffing levels, recruitment, turnover and other staffing issues.

## **Main findings and recommendations**

### ***Gender in research***

Across the regions, CIAT offices integrate gender analysis in different extent, with projects in Africa and Asia being designed, implemented and evaluated with more regard for women's and men's differentiated roles and priorities. In general, GA is poorly integrated into CIAT research projects, mainly because of its done in an unstructured way.

Mostly, the inclusion of GA involves one of the following: use of disaggregated data in diagnosis and identification of the vulnerable population; active inclusion of women in diagnosis or evaluation meetings; and evaluation of differentiated impact of finished projects.

The implementation stage is the most critical for targeting the inclusion of GA, mainly because: (i) project design may include GA in diagnosis, but does not specifically include gendered objectives and/or indicators; (ii) the implementation phase typically involves partnerships and

participation of stakeholders, many of whom will not have participated in the design phase; and (iii) during the implementation phase, interdisciplinary teams tend to integrate tasks without a clear follow through strategy that ensures gendered priorities are taken to the projects' end. Lack of communication, confusing and mixed definitions of what GA is and what it entails, low profile of gender issues in research, time pressures and the need to show fast results appear to be associated with a lack of GA inclusion.

There is generally a positive attitude within CIAT towards gender mainstreaming (GM), which is perceived as fitting with the Centers' image and mission. However, scientists express that CIAT still needs to institutionalize GA in its policies and procedures and that many of them still do not see clearly how GA could add value to their particular projects. Cultural resistance still plays a role that is difficult to evaluate, although the last decade has seen a more open attitude as reflection of advances on the status of women worldwide.

CIAT has built valuable knowledge and experience on gender issues during more than 20 years, primarily linked to participatory approaches in research. However, these knowledge and experience need to enrich all research activities and to develop into human skills and methodological tools to tackle specific research challenges across all regions.

### **Main recommendations**

- Adopting a double path for GM in research. Path 1 needs to address CIAT institutional policy on gender mainstreaming in all research activities, and Path 2 requires that CIAT and the PRGA Program focus on projects identified as strategic or as offering the best opportunities for GA.
- Writing explicit policy statements that relate CIAT's mission and values to gender equality in research and research-for-development actions. Policy statements should acknowledge the role of gender inequalities in hindering the reduction of hunger and poverty in the tropics and CIAT's commitment to show impact on women's lives.
- Including clear definitions as part of the written policies.
- Providing incentives on GM in projects and programs as part of the GM policies. Strategies may include visibility and acknowledgment in professional records (including annual performance appraisals of staff). Visibility might include also highlighting the relation of projects to global policy and actions instruments such as the MDGs, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and guidelines on GM provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Bank, or other relevant actors. Dissemination of best practices on GM through ArcoNet and on weekly research seminars may be endorsed specifically by management.
- Establishing specific procedures to oversee gender mainstreaming in CIAT's research activities. The Research Committee, under the Deputy Director General for Research, would be in charge of reviewing projects in the pipeline and those in progress once per year, and providing suggestions to make sure that women's interests are integrated into the CIAT research process. To this end, the Research Committee would receive support from the PRGA Program, management grants office and the consultant on gender issues in research. Its comments and recommendations should be presented in written form to project leaders.
- Recruiting a consultant on gender issues until a critical mass of GA expertise is built and GM is institutionalized.

- Other actions include: (i) Establishing assessment forms at the Grants Management Office, assigning values to specific indicators on GA, among other cross-cutting themes; (ii) elaborating and disseminating a manual on gender mainstreaming in CIAT's R&D activities; (iii) recovering and communicating good practices on GM; (iv) elaborating general guidelines to influence R&D partners to be consistent with CIAT GM strategy, (v) supporting disaggregated data by gender; (vi) including GA capacity as part of job descriptions.

### ***Gender in the workplace***

CIAT's activities toward gender equity in the workplace are based on the goals set by its own G&D Committee and Human Resources Department and on strategies established by the CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program.

Achievements of the CIAT G&D Committee and Associates have been modest when considering the activities carried out thus far. Reasons for this include: (1) lack of economic and human resources devoted to undertaking research, advocacy and innovative actions; (2) there are conflicting views among CIAT management who, on the one hand, support (or do not oppose) goals set by the CGIAR G&D Program and CIAT G&D Committee and, on the other hand, are not all personally convinced of their priority among many other challenges.

Human Resources' records from 2002 to 2007 show that the proportion of female to male staff has been lower than 25% among senior staff, administration management and technical staff. Moreover, three worrying signals show the need to tackle the issue more directly: (1) CIAT has not had female representation at senior management level since 2006; (2) at the senior scientist level, male representation has increased while female representation has remained constant; and (3) in spite of female candidacies, among ten open postdoctoral positions during the period 2003–2006, only one was filled by a woman.

Male personnel see CIAT's environment as more conducive to gender equity than female personnel. CIAT contractors at HQ, men and women, have the most negative views on women's position at CIAT. However, they attribute discrimination as coming primarily from the low regard of the kind of work they perform.

The allegedly small number of actions taken following the Ethics Committee's recommendations to the Director, in some cases of work abuse and harassment, comprise a major setback, not only to the Ethics Committee but also to the G&D Committee. This is because both Committees, together with Human Resources, have built a strong synergy to elaborate and implement an Ethics Code.

There is a generalized perception that gender issues may not be as relevant as diversity issues. From the interviews, it was clear that this responds to two main issues: (1) discrimination is perceived as coming from other variables (such as inequalities between internationally and nationally recruited staff); and (2) lack of awareness on gender equity issues covered by cultural norms and tradition.

## **Main recommendations**

- Institutional policies derived from CIAT's acknowledgment of the relationship between its goals and values and gender equality should be stated in written form in English, Spanish and regional languages and disseminated as a first step to promote gender equity at CIAT. This, besides implications for GM in research, involves specific policies for a gender-sensitive human-resources management and a work environment free of harassment and discrimination. A monitoring mechanism should rest on both internal human-resources self-monitoring mechanisms and established institutional bodies (G&D and Ethics Committees).
- Re-organizing CIAT G&D Committee and Associates would re-invigorate their work. First, re-elaborating the list of members through a process of personal dialogue—fewer but more convinced and active members would be an asset rather than a disadvantage. Second, establishing strategic and practical objectives rather than carrying on with dispersed actions. Third, building internal capacity to reach a common understanding on gender equity in the workplace and what it implies.
- G&D focal points in the regions need to play an active role as part of the Committee in HQ. It is relevant to clearly set up roles of Committee Members in the regional offices and arrive at common understandings. Committee Members are not only an extension of the Committee at HQ, but may be active actors in promoting the G&D goals locally and in providing feedback to both human resources and the G&D Committee at HQ.
- The G&D Committee and Associates need to expand their informative means and awareness campaigns to reaching a wider public and avoid limiting them to only those immediately interested. Besides their current themes, others such as the diffusion of compelling evidence on the impact of gender equity in improving people's lives and institutional performance seem to be very relevant.
- Alliances with the CGIAR G&D Program can provide room for wide and cost-effective actions. Nevertheless, attention must be paid to replication mechanisms, so not only women and not only women in the higher positions get the benefits.
- In addition to search for alternative paths to bringing women on board, other topics remain relevant. For example, many complaints and reasons for high turnover respond either to what is perceived as lack of transparency on what a contract entails or to low career opportunities. Both examples mirror what was also said in Cali. These topics need to be included in the G&D agenda and their discussions with human resources and management.

In addition, the gender audit report includes an action plan towards gender-mainstreaming for both research and the workplace, which could begin as early as January 2009, with the dissemination of the audit's results.



## FUTURE HARVEST

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