

Gender plan of action for Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands



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Published by

International Livestock Research Institute

August 2014

www.africa-rising.net

The Africa Research In Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program comprises three research-for-development projects supported by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative.

Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three regional projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads the program's monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. <http://africa-rising.net/>



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This document was made possible with support from the American people delivered through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of the US Government's Feed the Future Initiative. The contents are the responsibility of the producing organization and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of USAID or the U.S. Government.

Citation: Mulema, A.A. 2014. Gender plan of action for Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands. Addis Ababa: International Livestock Research Institute.

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Cover photograph by Apollo Habtamu (ILRI)

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Introduction

Over the years, there has been an increase in recognition of the role of women in agriculture besides their reproductive and community development roles. The number of women engaged in agriculture is increasing as more men withdraw from farming in search of higher paying employment or migrate. However, the ability of women to realize their full productivity potential is constrained by numerous social, economic, political and environmental factors. Emergent evidence suggests that women's underdevelopment has adverse bearing on growth and development of agriculture. Given that women's representation in the agricultural labour force is increasing, gender concerns need to be addressed to support the continued growth of women's productivity in this sector. There is need to increase women's contribution to food production and improve their livelihoods by providing equal access to resources and opportunities (FAO 2011). Equalizing access to resources and opportunities for men and women helps achieve better development outcomes such as better health and nutrition for women and their families, greater investments in education for children and poverty reduction (IFPRI 2012).

In this context, understanding gender relations (roles, responsibilities, access to and control over resources and benefits) is of significant importance. The Feed the Future Initiative places great emphasis on empowering women to achieve gender equity, the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) by promoting interventions that enhance women's decision-making power about agricultural production; access to and control over productive resources; control over use of income; leadership in the community and efficient time use. The commitment towards gender equity is demonstrated by designing the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), an innovative tool to measure the empowerment, agency and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector and measure progress towards gender equity. Africa RISING, a USAID funded research program under the Feed the Future Initiative aims at providing support for social, technological and economic empowerment of women through intensification of farming systems.

Agricultural intensification in sub-Saharan Africa is crucial due to high population growth and environmental degradation which have contributed to land shortage and low productivity. A number of areas present themselves as potential but under-researched contributors to the intensification process. Livestock are critical to the development of sustainable and environmentally sound production systems through provision of draught power, manure and fuel. However, feed supply is a primary constraint in sub-Saharan Africa. Seasonal shortages are determined by the length of the growing period, cropping intensity and stock numbers. Although a range of research identifies important constraints in the agricultural supply chain of seeds and fertilizers, limited research has been conducted to establish the supply of other labour substituting inputs such as pesticides and herbicides (Wilson et al. 2009). Also less explored is the investment in high value crops including non-traditional high value crops. While sustainable intensification may generate immediate benefits for farmers, it also involves significant long term trade-offs (Headey et al. 2013). Therefore, there is need to generate an understanding of the role of mixed farming systems and how crop-livestock systems can be enhanced to promote effective land use and improve the efficiency of integrated farming systems among men and women farmers.

Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty by sustainably intensifying farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, while conserving or enhancing the natural resource base (IITA, IFPRI and ILRI 2012).

One of the important steps in this direction is integration of gender perspectives in Africa RISING's interventions in order to make women important partners in sustainable agricultural intensification.

Africa RISING recognizes the limitations of the traditional agricultural research and development practice to address the inequities and inequalities that constrain women's access to agricultural inputs, extension and markets. Therefore, both gender responsive and transformative approaches will be espoused to address the constraints, facilitate change in attitude, practices, and behaviour and change in norms which perpetuate gender inequalities.

This gender action plan has short and long term objectives of contributing to the attainment of transformative outcomes in order to increase women's opportunities as well as benefiting men, women, youth, children and other marginalized groups. This guideline will serve as a working document for Africa RISING in the Ethiopian Highlands with a view of narrowing the gaps of existing gender inequality in agricultural research for development.

The action plan is developed in line with the Feed the Future women empowerment guidelines which emphasizes the importance of achieving equality between women and men to ensure sustainable development.

Justification and rationale to integrate gender

Women play a vital role as agricultural producers and as agents of food and nutritional security. They comprise an average of 43% of the agricultural work force in developing countries, ranging from 20% in the tropical Americas to 50% in East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Yet relative to men, they have less access to productive assets (such as land and water), services (e.g. finance and extension) and tend to lack political voice. Only five per cent of agricultural extension efforts and resources are directed towards women, and women earn less than men for equivalent work (FAO 2011).

In mixed crop and livestock production systems, women play important roles in cultivating and marketing crops, managing dairy cattle, poultry and small ruminant. Women are often involved in feeding, watering and milking animals reared close to home, processing and marketing of livestock products. The system is labour-intensive, with dependence on capital and land (rented, share-cropped or owned), and is receptive to new technology. Although women contribute to improved household income and nutrition they are relatively poor compared to men. Besides women's productive roles in agriculture, they also carry out reproductive and community development roles and responsibilities which may influence their participation in research for development activities (Powell 1994; Tangka et al. 2000).

Furthermore, there are gender gaps in access to assets and markets, knowledge sources, decision-making power and ability to participate in profitable value chains to increase incomes and diversification of livelihoods opportunities for men and women (Rubin et al. 2009). These gender gaps influence technological choices, adoption pathways and investment in sustainable agricultural practices by both men and women. Adopting a gender perspective in designing and implementing project activities may increase the efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural research through better targeting and impact, ultimately promoting equitable access to benefits by men and women.

Women would benefit from opportunities that address their specific needs, preferences and aspirations. However, in most households in sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture is not only an economic activity, but rather a social enterprise that is influenced by family roles, inter-personal relationships and gender norms. These complex dynamics often drive agriculture and how individual household members (especially women) contribute to and benefit from agricultural-related activities, including their participation in programs designed to enhance smallholder productivity. The challenge experienced by development programs is to go beyond technical agricultural issues to also address the underlying gender-related norms, priorities and constraints that may prevent women farmers from reaching their full potential (Kanesathan 2013).

Often, there is limited commitment among project staff to conduct gender analysis and gender disaggregated data are often lacking. This is attributed to lack of knowledge and skills on how to conduct gender analysis and lack of gender scientists. This has negative implications on project design and implementation and the extent to which women and men benefit from development interventions (IFAD 2007). In addition, project staff and implementing partners lack capacity to collect and interpret sex/gender-disaggregated data and understand the local culture and sensitivity of the topic. There is a need to motivate, build capacity and empower researchers and other project implementers to actively mainstream gender into research.

This document is developed to facilitate integration of gender perspectives in all Africa RISING'S research for development activities in the Ethiopian Highlands to ensure that women participate in and benefit equitably from project interventions.

Gender-responsive goals and objectives

The overall goal of this gender action plan is to contribute to Africa RISING's development outcome of improving nutrition and welfare, particularly for women and children, but also empower women to have decision-making power about agricultural production; access to and control over productive resources; control over use of income; leadership in the community and efficient time use. Gender is a cross-cutting thematic area that will be integrated into all of Africa RISING's research and development interventions in the Ethiopian Highlands. This will be done through purposeful gender mainstreaming into on-going research interventions and through strategic gender research.

The gender work within Africa RISING has four primary objectives:

- I. To diagnose and characterize the most important constraints that hold back women from achieving full productive potential and income generation (including the types of gender relations, norms and structures) that influence these outcomes positively or negatively;
- II. To develop, test and evaluate approaches for increasing women's participation in and benefits from research in Africa RISING's research sites;
- III. To identify and analyse opportunities for technological, institutional and market innovations that improve women's access to and control of resources and benefits.
- IV. To enhance the capacity of researchers and local staff to collect, analyse and interpret sex/gender disaggregated data; understand the local culture and address gender based constraints in integrated farming systems.

Africa RISING's research outputs

The research component of Africa RISING is organized around four research outputs (IITA, IFPRI and ILRI 2012).

Research output 1: Situation analysis and program-wide synthesis

This research output will provide a foundation that will aid achievement of all the system level outputs identified by Africa RISING. Research output one will ensure that (i) best bet or best-fit interventions are aligned to priority constraints to improved livelihoods and to the prevailing livelihood and production environment conditions and (ii) a program-wide synthesis related to the lessons learnt across the various target areas is developed. The starting point is to understand the baseline conditions of the action research sites, the similarities and differences, generate information that will facilitate formulation of household typologies and the major constraints to improvement of livelihoods and opportunities for targeting sustainable intensification options.

Activities to be conducted will allow the project to target farmers with similar characteristics who might adopt similar technologies for the available options or combinations of system level technologies. The basis is to undertake a diagnosis of opportunities and constraints and a characterization of households in the intervention areas. Africa RISING recognizes the diversity and spatial heterogeneity of farming systems within the intervention areas. Hence farm typologies will be generated and this will aid targeting of farmers with similar characteristics. This will in turn provide the foundation for identifying specific needs and relating these to household typologies, prioritizing technological and other interventions and design of research for development platforms. Results from output one will facilitate identification of critical entry points that will be integrated into output 2.

Research output 2: Integrated systems improvement

Research teams within the research for development platforms will engage in testing, validating, and adapting specific interventions aiming at farming system improvements in terms of productivity, income and natural resource status. Modelling and gender responsive decision support tools will be employed to identify technological combinations, analyse trade-offs, and evaluate sustainability and resilience of technologies. New research challenges and opportunities for future research will be identified through the M&E framework but also with involvement of the research beneficiaries. Improved productivity and natural resource management can be sustained through continuous investment in farming hence the need for male and female farmers to be linked to profitable markets. Gender analysis of the value chain is worth undertaking in order to identify the nodes in the value chains where male and female farmers and other value chain actors could significantly increase their incomes.

Research output 3: Scaling and delivery of integrated innovation

Appropriate approaches for scaling out innovations will be developed taking into account the often complex nature of system interventions. Different approaches for scaling up and scaling out sustainable intensification approaches will be tested including market and institutional based approaches. Using the systematic monitoring and evaluation framework, these will be assessed to determine which approaches work, where, for whom and for how much. Ultimately the impact of interventions at household level (the functional domain for Africa RISING) will be evaluated including impact on productivity enhancement, maintenance of ecosystem integrity and sustainable income generation.

Research output 4: Integrated M&E processes

A participatory monitoring and evaluation framework will ensure that the outcomes related to the various outputs are clearly understood, that lessons learnt from one output are fed back into other

outputs, and that the linkages between the various outputs are operationalized. Through the on-going participatory M&E process, nutrition and other gender specific outcomes of sustainable intensification will be assessed. Performance indications will be identified to measure progress towards improvement of nutrition and well-being of women and children. The M&E results will aid identification of gender differentiated technology needs, choices, constraints, and test strategies that will enhance technology targeting, delivery, and equitable access in order to equitably benefit both men and women. Impact studies will be conducted to assess the key factors which influence farmers' decisions to adopt sustainable intensification technologies and practices.

Gender research activities in Ethiopia

Using the results from participatory community analysis (PCA), Africa RISING-Ethiopia prioritized seven research themes as intervention areas to improve production, income and reduce poverty levels amongst men and women smallholder farmers. These included farming systems integration; knowledge management, exchange and capacity building; integration of high value products in mixed farming systems; field crop variety selection and management, feed and forage development; land and water management and cross cutting problems and opportunities. Addressing these key research themes presents great potential for poverty reduction, increasing food security, and closing the inequity gaps between men and women smallholder farmers. Gender will be mainstreamed in all program activities and this will require adopting the practice of collecting sex/gender-disaggregated data, undertaking gender analyses of these data and operationalizing the principles of social inclusion within which women and men are equally represented. The research component of Africa RISING is organized around four research outputs. However, this gender action plan highlights the approaches to integrate gender within the intervention areas to contribute to three research outputs within the research framework, including capacity building in gender.

Situation analysis

Africa RISING concedes variation among households based on access to farming resources which subsequently affect the choices made towards intensification. Hence approaches to intensification need to consider the diversity and spatial heterogeneity of farming systems. To understand the prevailing situations of the action research sites, the similarities and differences, and the major gendered constraints to intensification, the following activities will be undertaken. Results from situation analysis will guide development of household typologies, priority setting, formation of inclusive innovation platforms and development of gender responsive technologies.

Activities

- i) Systematic literature review to understand intensification in Ethiopia, identify and characterize the most important constraints that underpin the 'gender gaps' and hinder women in integrated farming systems from achieving full productivity potential and income generation.
- ii) Document factors that hinder women's participation in and benefit from research in Africa RISING-Ethiopia's research sites.
- iii) Conduct gender analysis of innovation platforms to determine the involvement of men and women in research activities and the gender responsiveness of selected interventions towards system intensification.
- iv) Contribute to the cross CRP global gender, norms and agency studies to understand the role of gender, norms and agency in adoption of innovations toward system intensification.

Integrated systems improvement

Africa RISING acknowledges that intensification through the adoption of technologies and practices by farmers is a stepwise process. Gender relations are likely to change at each stage of intensification. Additionally, shifts in farming systems from subsistence to market orientated production may lead to change in gender relations, access to and control of resources. While agricultural innovation leads to the reallocation of family labour and time allocation, the assignment to men of complete control over outputs and income, without associated changes in the allocation of obligations may jeopardize the welfare and nutritional status of the family. Activities under this research theme will focus on generating an understanding of how gender relations, labour allocation, access to and control of resources and benefits change at different stages of intensification in order to improve the efficiency of crop–livestock farming systems amongst male

and female farmers. Results from this activity will inform scaling up of different technological combinations.

Activities

1. Generation of gender-disaggregated labour calendars, daily activity clocks to examine how men and women allocate productive and reproductive time, use of hired labour to meet labour demands, and identification of key labour concerns associated with uptake of different combinations of technologies considered important for increasing food production, income and nutritional needs of households.
2. Synthesizing results from value chain studies to identify value chains where men and women participate most, opportunities for participation of women and marginalized groups, and the constraints to the market opportunities identified for men and women in each Action Site.

Monitoring and evaluation

Africa RISING recognizes that farm households may follow different adoption pathways depending on the resources available to them to intensify production and take risks. One of the goals of sustainable intensification is to enhance household nutritional status and gender specific outcomes that benefit household members particularly women and children. Activities will be undertaken to enhance the understanding of change in household nutritional status and how gender relations affect technology choices, trade-offs and farmers' investments in sustainable intensification practices.

Activities

1. Identify gendered adoption pathways, gender related barriers and evaluate differentiated impacts of agricultural innovations on food security, nutrition, income and livelihoods for target groups.
2. Monitor change in partners' knowledge, attitude, skills and practice in relation in gender mainstreaming

Gender capacity development

To ensure that gender objectives are met, implementing partners and local staff need to have the right information, skills and tools to implement activities from a gender perspective. Field staff need to be able to diagnose gender related issues and facilitate the process of changing specific gender norms that tend to limit women's participation in research activities, trainings, workshops, meetings and other project related activities.

Activities

1. Strengthening gender awareness among Africa RISING's scientists, its partners and local staff
2. Collaborate with CRP 1.2 (Humidtropics Research Program) and CRP 3.7 (Livestock and Fish Research Program) to identify gender capacity needs.
3. Organize gender awareness and training workshops to enhance the capacity of partner organizations and local staff to collect, analyse and interpret sex/gender disaggregated data; understand the local culture and address gender based constraints in integrated farming systems.
4. Develop practical tools and evidence to motivate and empower scientists to actively mainstream gender into research. This will include design of guidelines for selection and implementation of gender responsive technologies.

Table 1 below shows how the gender research activities and outputs relate with the project outputs and outcomes.

Table 1. Relationship between research outputs, research outcomes and activities to achieve the Africa RISING-Ethiopia project outputs

Africa RISING research outputs	Gender research outputs	Research questions	Gender responsive outcomes	Activities and methods
Situation analysis	Gendered and sex disaggregated data collected Gender-related constraints, opportunities and household typologies generated and validated with innovation platform members Strategies to increase women participation in collective research and development activities identified	What factors hinder or enhance farm intensification among men and women farmers? What possible strategies could be used to enhance women's participation in and benefits from research for development interventions? How do the strategies reduce the under-representation of women in research activities? How do they enhance their access to and control of resources and benefits?	Priorities and targets for interventions identified or modified using gender-related constraint and typology information	Conduct systematic literature review to diagnose and characterize the gendered constraints Use PRA tools and semi-structured interviews to establish factors that hinder women participation in research and development activities Gender analysis of innovation platforms Comparative gender, norms and agency studies
Improved integrated farming systems	Establish change in gender roles, relations and labour allocation along the different stages of intensification Market opportunities for women and other disadvantaged people identified	How does labour allocation vary across different stages of intensification? How do gender relations affect value chain participation and performance?	Increased women's participation in profitable markets Increased access to and control of resources and benefits by women	Generate labour calendars, daily activity clocks using PRA tools Gather gender relevant data on gender norms, attitudes and behaviours Gender analysis of implications of intensifying farming systems
Monitoring and evaluation	Identify gendered adoption pathways Enhanced understanding on how gender relations and roles affect technology choices, trade-offs and farmers' investments in sustainable intensification practices	How do gender relations and roles affect technology choices, trade-offs and farmers' investments in sustainable intensification practices? How do technology adoption pathways differ across men and women farmers?	Enhanced household nutritional status and gender specific outcomes that benefit household members particularly women and children	Generate evidence of the gendered trade-offs between the market oriented value chain approach and household nutrition security and how these trade-offs can be minimized Gender analysis of adoption pathways

Capacity building	Increased gender capacity within Africa RISING and partner organizations to diagnose and overcome gender based constraints within intensified farming systems	How does enhancement of knowledge and skills on gender shape AR's staff and partner's attitudes, behaviour and practices?	Increased frequency and quality of gender integration efforts within Africa RISING	Identify gender capacity needs and conduct training workshops to raise gender awareness and enhance capacity of researchers and local staff to collect and analyse gender/sex disaggregated data Collaborate with CRPs 1.2 and 3.7 to enhance staff's gender-related capacity and track changes in knowledge, attitude and practices
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Integrating gender across the research cycle

In order to mainstream gender in the research process, gender research will be integrated across the research cycle from priority setting and targeting, through planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

Targeting and priority setting

Africa RISING is designed to reduce poverty, improve nutrition and empower women through intensification of cereal-based crop–livestock farming systems. The diagnoses and characterization studies and the gender, norms and agency studies carried out in situation analysis will aid identification of specific needs, entry themes/points and potential interventions. Key gendered constraints and opportunities in integrated farming system will be identified as well as men’s and women’s preferences for technologies, inputs and services, and access to and control of productive resources and benefits.

Research product discovery and development

Gender analysis will be key in all program interventions and this will be complemented with participatory and formal testing and evaluation of selected options in relation to the expressed benefits to and preferences of defined target groups.

Monitoring and evaluation

Africa RISING will assess progress towards enhancement of family nutrition, food security, income and other outcomes that benefit women, children and other disadvantaged groups. The monitoring and evaluation scheme will include gender-specific targets, outcomes and outputs; sex-disaggregated indicators and data collection tools. Gender specific indicators will be developed and monitored to track changes in these dimensions and as well as change in the dimensions of women empowerment. The specific outcome indicators will include a reduction in gender disparities in access to inputs, services and technologies; improved women’s empowerment for decision-making and income management, an increase in productivity, a reduction in the drudgery of female labour and increased income among men and women. The results will be helpful in identifying technology needs, choices, constraints and test mechanisms that will enhance technology targeting, delivery and equitable access by both men and women. Effort will be made to track women participation in value chain, factors that enhance participation, control of resources and benefits and the adoption pathways.

Guidelines for gender mainstreaming

For gender to be explicitly addressed in Africa RISING-Ethiopia, the checklist below presents the key gender issues to be considered throughout the project cycle and in major project activities to ensure that both men and women participate and benefit equitably.

Targeting and priority setting

- Conduct stakeholder analysis to identify the key stakeholders available, their activities, their roles and needs
- Identify gender-related goals and priorities based on available information and consultation with stakeholders
- Have men's and women's preferences for technologies, inputs and services identified along with opportunities for reducing gender inequities and inequalities?
- Gender analysis of activities, resources, constraints, implications and benefits needs to be undertaken using participatory approaches. This information should be taken into consideration during needs assessment and identification of appropriate interventions.
- Identify staff and stakeholders' capacity to integrate gender in project activities and have them undertake training in order to understand gender and the reasons for designing and implementing gender-sensitive interventions
- Have a budget and resources allocated to activities addressing gender issues.

Research product discovery and development

- Undertake participatory testing and evaluation of selected options in terms of expressed benefits to and preferences of defined target groups.
- Promote improved technologies that enhance labour productivity of women workers and reduce drudgery.
- Select and use appropriate and flexible participatory techniques giving due attention to the structural and deep-rooted cultural barriers and work burden of women.
- Give women farmers more access to meetings, trainings, exposure visits and demonstrations. Given that participation in project activities is an individual choice, women farmers need to be encouraged to join in. To enable more women to participate in the trainings, trainings should be organized at the convenient time for women farmers and at places that are in reach for women and men. Men and women from same households can be trained together.
- Active women in the communities can be selected, trained and provided with inputs and credit to experiment with and practice the improved technology. Their fields can be used as demonstration plots for training other women and to encourage adoption of technologies.
- Dissemination of approved and appropriate technologies must be made a regular feature. Use communication and training approaches that facilitate women's engagement. Suitable audio-visual aids can be used to put the message across. Visuals that are appealing and interesting improve the comprehension of the illiterate women and their capacity to retain the message disseminated.
- Organize field days, farmer-to-farmer trainings and site-to-site exchange visits for women and men to share experiences on agricultural intensification and impact on gender.
- Measures need to be in place to encourage nursing mothers and mothers of young children (2 years and below) to attend trainings e.g. onsite child care support for children under 2 years and meals for children.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Ensure that the benchmark survey or baseline survey is gender sensitive. Ensure that there are male and female data collectors and that they have received training in gender.
- Develop a gendered M&E framework and develop gender sensitive indicators for monitoring and these should be reported on.
- Collect gender-sensitive data based on the selected indicators. The indicators need to be identified/verified with stakeholders.
- Organize regular meetings to feedback to implementing partners and community members to encourage learning and change in behaviour.
- Conduct a gender impact analysis to assess the outcomes and impact of project interventions on women and men.

Innovation platforms

Innovation platforms (IPs) will be used as a tool to engage multiple stakeholders who play an important role in value chain development and sustainable intensification of mixed farming systems. For IPs to be effective instruments for generation, sharing and application of new knowledge and technologies that benefit men and women, gender will be integral to the process of establishing functional IPs and innovation clusters. Some of the guidelines that will foster establishment of inclusive innovation platforms include but not limited to:

- Raising awareness of IP members about gender to facilitate change in attitudes towards women, change in behaviour and gender norms that constrain women's mobility, access to and control of resources.
- Encourage women to take up leadership positions and actively participate in decision-making. Africa RISING will work towards the target of 3/5 ration of women/male representation in key positions within the IPs.
- Ensure inclusion/participation of female producers/marketers/processors in innovation platform meetings at all levels and ensure that women's voices are heard and taken into account. A ratio of 50:50 inclusion of men and women should be promoted. However, due to social-cultural factors which limit women's participation, the project will be expecting to see inclusion rates of at least 30% women.
- Increase the number of women in male headed households who will participate and benefit from the interventions. This could be achieved by inviting both husband and wife and adult children to trainings.
- Dissemination of information should be designed to take into account existing gender barriers e.g. women's literacy level, work burden, immobility etc.
- Ensure that the selection of women and men target beneficiaries is on an equal and fair basis.

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