The Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool

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Cover photo: Women learning about prevention and control of pests and plant diseases in Kyrgyzstan.
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Acknowledgements

Acronyms

ARD	Agriculture and rural development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRISP	The Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy
CSO	Civil society organization
FFG	Field Farmer Groups
FFS	Farmer field schools
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation
FSN	Food security and nutrition
FT	Farmer trainer
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
GRAST	Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool
HKI	Helen Keller International
ICT	Information and communication technology
IFDC	International Fertilizer Development Center
IEP	Institute of Peruvian Studies
KII	Key informant interview
INGENAES	Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MSC	Most Significant Change
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PO	Producers' organization
PRADAN	Professional Assistance for Development Action
RAS	Rural advisory services
RIMISP	Latin American Center for Rural Development
SHG	Self-help group
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SRLM	State Rural Livelihoods Mission

Rural women participating in the GRAST validation in India.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The role of rural women in food security and nutrition and poverty reduction: the gender gap

Rural women are a key asset in agricultural and rural development and make a fundamental contribution to food security, both in their families and in society at large. Women farmers represent on average 43 percent of the world's agricultural labour force. However, they face substantial barriers that limit their agricultural productivity (FAO, 2011). In many instances, women are considered to be unpaid family labour, and their contributions to agriculture go unrecognized in the household, in communities and in national-level data. Although gender relations and women's roles in agriculture are culturally and geographically specific, many of the major constraints faced by women farmers are similar worldwide (World Bank and IFPRI, 2010; Meinzen-Dick *et al.*, 2011; FAO, 2011; Manfre, C. *et al.*, 2013; Ragasa, 2013). These constraints include less access to productive resources, lack of decision-making power, inequitable division of household labour, limited access to rural advisory services (RAS)[1] and producer organizations, and discrimination through policy and legal frameworks.

These constraints, and the resulting gender gap, reduce agricultural and economic productivity and jeopardize food security and nutrition objectives. A 2011 FAO report finds that if women had the same access to productive resources – including information – as men, their yields would increase by 20-30 percent on average (FAO, 2011). This yield increase could translate into higher household incomes, better food security and nutrition, and more vibrant local and national economies. In addition, increasing women's ability to generate income can have a positive ripple effect on communities, as studies have shown that women invest proportionally more in children's nutrition, education and healthcare than men do (Smith and Haddad/IFPRI, 2000; FAO, 2011; World Bank, 2012).

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[1] The terms rural advisory services (RAS) and extension are used interchangeably in this document. For a definition of RAS, see the glossary on page 84.

The role of rural advisory services in closing the gender gap

Improving women's access to RAS can help close the gender gap in agriculture by making information, skills, knowledge, new technologies and other productive resources more accessible to women farmers. Increased access to RAS can empower women by providing new economic opportunities and enabling them to gain new skills and confidence. Knowledge is key for improving women's decision-making power, both in the household and in the community, and can have an effect on overall family well-being in terms of nutrition, education and health.

Nevertheless, evidence shows that women have less access to RAS than men and even when they do have access, the information, technologies and practices are usually tailored to the needs of men and may not be as relevant to women (Manfre *et al.*, 2013; ATA, 2015; Petrics *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, studies in sub-Saharan Africa found that rates of return of RAS are lower for women than for men, meaning that the information supplied by the advisory system is currently more beneficial to men farmers (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2014). Women and men often have different information needs and preferences, and the higher returns to men suggest that there is a gender bias in both the information supplied by RAS providers and in the way the information is delivered. Therefore, it is crucial to improve the access and relevance of rural advisory services to both women and men.

1.2. Contents of the Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool (GRAST)

Section 1 of this publication explains the rationale for and objectives of the GRAST, and who the potential users of the tool might be. Section 2 contains information on the structure of the GRAST, including the levels of analysis, key assessment questions and the justification for addressing gender in rural advisory services.

Guidance on implementing the GRAST is given in Sections 3 and 4. Section 3 provides methodological guidance with information on the overall process, how to select locations and informants for analysis, and a series of tools to aid in fieldwork. The assessment guide in Section 4 instructs users of the GRAST on how to carry out the assessment at three levels of analysis:

1. whether there is an enabling national policy environment to include women in development policy and programming;

2. to what extent the organization under review is committed to gender-sensitive RAS and whether a gender-sensitive organizational culture exists; and

3. to assess, at the individual level, the awareness and understanding of RAS field staff and managers of the differentiated needs and priorities of rural women and men, to assess their capacity to respond to these needs and priorities, and to identify and document challenges and successes that RAS providers have faced in working with rural women.

Finally, users of the GRAST should refer to the annexes in Section 5 for participatory activities to use during field work (5.1) as well as for additional questions for group interviews (annex 5.2.) A novel aspect of the GRAST is that in addition to the assessment methodology and guides, it also includes examples of good practices in gender-sensitive RAS. These examples can be very helpful in the action-planning stage, when the results of the GRAST are available and the areas of strengths and weaknesses of a specific programme and/or organization have been identified. They are included in annex 5.3.

Women and men working in the village trees nursery in Senegal.
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Women working in the field in rural Kyrgyzstan.
©FAO/Vyacheslav Oseledko

2. Rationale, objectives, structure and potential users of the tool

2.1. Rationale

In 2015, FAO carried out a literature review (Petrics *et al.*, 2015) of the major constraints that women face in accessing and benefiting from RAS, and of good practices for overcoming these constraints. The study found that RAS programmes often fall short in designing and implementing relevant services for rural women and that there was a clear gap between knowledge about good practice for gender-sensitive RAS and its implementation. The study also provided recommendations for the design and provision of demand-driven and gender-sensitive RAS for improved food security and reduction of poverty. This includes assisting RAS organizations to assess the gender sensitivity of their policies and programmes and identifying areas for improvement in terms of design, and delivery of services that respond to the needs and priorities of both rural women and men. The GRAST was created to respond to these recommendations.

A review of evaluations of gender-focused RAS programmes, which FAO conducted after the 2015 literature review, reinforced the need for the tool. The purpose of the review was to understand the methodologies and participatory activities that have been used to evaluate RAS programmes as well as to collect lessons learned from these programmes. The review found that evidence and analysis of how gender-sensitive good practices work in real RAS systems are limited, and the examples that do exist usually address a good practice in isolation, rather than considering them systematically. Similarly, most evaluations focus on a subset of the actors involved (typically either field staff or clients) which does not provide a complete picture of how or why the good practices work. The evaluation review further supported the need for a tool and a clear methodology to assist RAS organizations to analyse the gender sensitivity of their programmes and policies.

2.2. Objectives of the GRAST

The GRAST is an easy-to-use tool and methodology that helps organizations carry out an in-depth analysis of the gender sensitivity of their RAS programmes at policy, organizational and individual levels.

The GRAST has two main objectives:

1. To understand what works in designing and delivering gender-sensitive RAS. This information can then be used to facilitate dissemination of innovative good practices identified by the GRAST.

2. To shed light on the areas where organizations and their RAS programmes require improvement in order to increase the gender sensitivity of their services.

The purpose is to help those assessing RAS programmes to gain a better understanding of how rural advisory services can be improved to enhance its accessibility and relevance to rural women. Results of the assessment will help the formulation of recommendations for enhancing the gender sensitivity of RAS at policy, organizational and individual levels.

2. Rationale, objectives, structure and potential users of the GRAST

Applying the GRAST can also stimulate useful internal discussions and self-reflection processes at the organizational level. These processes are an essential step in facilitating change towards an organizational environment and culture that are more conducive to gender-sensitive service delivery.

The GRAST facilitates the identification of the practical changes needed to make equality happen. As such, the GRAST has the potential to help formulate policies and programmes that respond to the needs and priorities of both men and women. By contributing to enhancing the equitable access by women and men to RAS, it can be a useful tool in assisting countries to implement Article 14 on rural women of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)[2], the CEDAW General Recommendation 34 on the rights of rural women[3] and Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5 and 14.

BOX 1   **The GRAST is designed to:**

- comprehensively assess the gender sensitivity of RAS organizations and programmes, considering the interactions between the enabling policy environment, the organizational culture and policies, the staff capacities and experiences of clients;
- identify practices that work and areas that need improvement;
- generate internal organizational reflection;
- identify a course of action to follow for improving the gender sensitivity of RAS;
- facilitate knowledge sharing; and
- serve as a means of analysis for policy and technical advice.

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BOX 2   **Voices from the field**

"The [GRAST] allowed us to reflect on current gender-sensitive policies and practices and the degree to which these were operationalized or not… [and it] allowed us to consider internal organizational factors that support gender-sensitive programming".

RAS organization in Bangladesh

Woman working at her vegetable garden in Bangladesh.

2.3.   Structure of the GRAST

2.3.1. Justification

Over the last several decades, various approaches have been used to improve women's access to extension and RAS. However, while some initiatives have succeeded in improving such access, the overall gender gap in RAS persists and many of the constraints faced by rural women remain unchanged (Kingiri, 2013; Ragasa, 2014).

In the past, the focus has typically been on the product or process (i.e. implementation of an extension programme with farmers), rather than on addressing issues around access to RAS and the organizations that deliver or plan extension and RAS programmes

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[2]   To read the Convention, visit: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx.

[3]   To read the General Recommendation, visit: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_7933_E.pdf.

(Buchy and Basaznew, 2005). The continuing gender disparity in access to RAS has led to increased international, multisectoral efforts to find ways to provide truly gender-equitable services (Jafry and Sulaiman, 2013; GIZ, 2012; Farnworth and Colverson, 2014).

As a result of these efforts, it has been recognized that for systemic and meaningful change the larger societal context must be considered along with the specifics of the programme, and that a holistic approach is needed (GFRAS, 2012a). The entire extension system, including national and institutional policies, institutions (formal and informal) and extension staff members' attitudes and capacities, must be changed (Rao and Kelleher, 2003; GFRAS, 2012b). In addition, the perspective of gender equality and the empowerment of women need to become integral guiding principles within the enabling policy and organizational environment, and the organizational culture (GFRAS, 2012b; Jafry and Sulaiman, 2013; Meinzen-Dick, Quinsumbing and Behrman, 2014).

Lack of attention to these areas and the interactions amongst them is one of the key reasons why many previous attempts have failed to effectively address the specific needs of women farmers, and why women continue to be underserved by RAS (Benson and Jafry, 2013; Ragasa *et al.*, 2013b; Buchy and Basaznew, 2005).

2.3.2. Levels of analysis

The GRAST provides analysis at three levels: national policy, organizational and individual (including both service providers and users). Intervening at these three levels is crucial to achieving the systemic and meaningful change needed to make RAS policies and programmes more relevant to women farmers. These levels also correspond to the three dimensions of FAO's corporate strategy on Capacity Development,[4] which emphasizes a more integrated approach whereby the capacity of individuals, organizations and the enabling environment are considered in tandem. Figure 1 provides a brief guide to conducting the GRAST at all three interconnecting levels of analysis.

Level 1: National enabling policy environment

The enabling policy environment relates to political commitment and vision, policy and legal frameworks, national public sector budget allocations and processes (FAO, 2010). The effectiveness of RAS depends to a large degree on the conditions that prevail in the sociopolitical environment, where national policies shape the behavior of organizations (GFRAS, 2012a). Gender-blind agricultural policies or extension policies create a disabling environment with consequences for the gender sensitivity of RAS programmes. For this reason, the GRAST includes a dimension on national political commitment and the policy framework which aims to help users understand the extent to which the enabling environment promotes the improvement of rural women's situations in general, and the provision of gender-sensitive RAS in particular. Although political commitment and gender-sensitive policies do not guarantee gender-sensitive RAS, they provide the necessary conditions for it to occur, support the legitimacy of the goal of gender equality, and improve the likelihood that political attitudes and public opinion will support efforts to improve gender sensitivity in RAS provision.

The enabling environment level analysis has been adapted from the FAO Gender in Agriculture Policy Analysis Tool (GAPo).[5] The module also takes into account the Beijing

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[4] Available at www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Summary_Strategy_PR_E.pdf.

[5] To learn more about GAPo, visit: http://www.fao.org/3/i6274en/I6274EN.pdf.

Platform for Action[6] indicators for the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality.

Level 2: Organizational

The organizational dimension refers to systems, procedures and institutional frameworks that allow an organization to deliver gender-sensitive services to its clients. The organizational dimension has a major impact on how individual staff members develop their competencies and how they are able to use them within the organization (FAO, 2010). Having gender-sensitive processes, practices, and policies in place is crucial for setting expectations and shaping organizational culture. The culture of an organization is likely to influence employees' perception of gender roles and the importance of gender equality in their work: studies confirm that gender-blind organizations tend to deliver gender-biased services (Buchy and Basaznew, 2013). Therefore, at this level, the tool assesses the organization's stated commitments to deliver gender-sensitive RAS, its policies related to these commitments, and its implementation plans for putting such services into action. It also examines the degree to which the organizational culture supports gender-sensitive service provision.

Level 3: Individual

Analysis at the individual level includes the perspectives of both programme staff and women and men clients. It is important to account for clients' perspectives on service provision when assessing the way the organization works.

Perspectives of programme staff

At the individual level, the GRAST explores the skills, behaviours, attitudes, motivation and values of programme staff members. To be able to tailor advisory services to gender-specific demands, RAS advisors (often referred to as extension agents) need to have the sensitivity and capacity to understand these demands and respond to them with adequate content and appropriate methods of delivery.

At this level, the tool helps to assess RAS advisors' awareness and understanding of the different needs and priorities of rural women and men, as well as the advisors' capacities to respond to them. The tool also assesses to what extent RAS managers are implementing gender-sensitive human resource policies and organizational culture, and explores their awareness of why these policies and culture are important. Interviews with RAS advisors provide a means to gain additional insight on the challenges and successes that staff face in working with rural women and men.

Perspective of women and men clients

In the second part of the individual-level section, the tool considers clients' perspectives. Analysis at the level of RAS clients helps validate the responses of the providers, as well as identify what the organization does that works for rural women and what could be improved. This helps RAS organizations understand how policies and programmes are implemented on the ground, what areas need improvement, and how users perceive the impact of the programme on their livelihoods.

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[6] The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The Platform for Action promotes and protects the human rights of women and girls. Area H of the BPfA called 'Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women' defines strategic objectives with the aim to support governments in promoting and supporting gender equality. For more information, visit: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/.

FIGURE 1   **Using the GRAST: a brief guide**

OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE GRAST: to assess the gender sensitivity of rural advisory services (RAS) programmes, highlighting the areas that work well from a gender perspective and those needing improvement.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT LEVEL

LEVEL OBJECTIVE: to assess the national policy environment and legal, social and economic conditions that allow or limit the capacity of RAS organizations to provide gender-sensitive services.

HOW TO DO IT: **desk analysis** of national gender, agriculture, rural development and RAS policies and other documents, supplemented by interviews with key informants on policy implementation.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

LEVEL OBJECTIVE: to understand the stated commitment of the RAS organization to and orientation towards gender-sensitive service provision through an assessment of their written policies, procedures and training materials.

HOW TO DO IT: **desk analysis** of the organizational policies, staff training materials, monitoring and evaluation documents and human resources guidelines, supplemented by interviews with RAS managers and staff on organizational culture.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

This level of the GRAST focuses on two types of individuals: staff and clients

STAFF

LEVEL OBJECTIVE: to assess staff members' understanding of the organization's gender policies and their capacity to implement them; to learn from staff what has and has not worked well in practice; and to understand the gender sensitivity of the organizational culture.

HOW TO DO IT: **interviews** with women and men field staff and managers, supplemented by observation of RAS activities.

CLIENTS

LEVEL OBJECTIVE: to validate staff responses and to learn from RAS clients what has and has not worked well in practice.

HOW TO DO IT: **interviews** with women and men RAS clients (in separate groups), which can include participatory activities.

2.3.3. Key assessment questions

The GRAST assesses the gender sensitivity of RAS based on seven key questions formulated in accordance with the findings of a literature review carried out by FAO (Petrics *et al.*, 2015). The seven assessment questions are asked at the organizational and individual levels. At the enabling national policy environment level, the tool includes a separate guide for policy analysis.

It is important to emphasize that gender-sensitive RAS does not mean focusing on only women. However, considering that women farmers are the ones who in most cases experience discrimination in access to advisory services, these assessment questions focus on the accessibility and relevance of RAS to women. Both women and men should be identified and treated as clients, however, and RAS should respond to the needs of both men and women. In communities where men have considerable household decision-making power and control over the time and labour of their wives and daughters, it is particularly important to also engage men and work with them to show how women's increased access to RAS can benefit the entire household.

BOX 3   **The seven key GRAST assessment questions**

1. Are rural women included as legitimate clients in RAS programmes?
2. How are the time and mobility constraints of rural women addressed?
3. How are the literacy and education constraints of rural women addressed?
4. Does the programme facilitate the ability of rural women to represent their interests and voice their demands?
5. Are RAS programmes designed and delivered in a way that allows rural women to effectively participate and benefit?
6. Does the organizational culture enable women to become and effectively function as RAS agents and managers?
7. Are there institutional mechanisms in place to ensure the effective implementation of gender-sensitive RAS and hold to staff accountable?

2.4. Potential users

The users of the GRAST can be any type of organization (including government, non-governmental organizations, private sector providers, international development agencies and producer organizations) that is interested in assessing and enhancing the gender sensitivity of the design and delivery of advisory services with the objective of identifying good practices and areas for improvement.

FAO validated the GRAST through case studies of selected RAS programmes in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India and Peru. As the validation exercise[7] showed, the tool can be

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[7] The selected cases were Haku Wiñay, a government programme in Peru; PRADAN, a national NGO in India; Technoserve, an international NGO in Ethiopia; and World Fish, International Development Enterprises, International Fertilizer Development Centre, the Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Helen Keller International and Practical Action in Bangladesh. The case studies were conducted in partnership with Mekelle University in Ethiopia, the Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP) in India, the Latin American Center for Rural Development (RIMISP), the Institute for Peruvian Studies (IEP) in Peru, and the USAID- funded programme on Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services (INGENAES) in Bangladesh. The feedback received from implementing partners and the lessons drawn from the case studies have been incorporated into this report. The GRAST tool and the validation outcomes were presented at a side event of the 7thAnnual Meeting of the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) in Cameroon, in 2016. The results of the discussion and the valuable feedback from the participants have also been incorporated into this report. For more information, see Petrics *et al.* (forthcoming).

used both for external programme analysis and for organizational self-assessment by the service providers themselves. Therefore, the potential users of the GRAST can be either RAS organizations that are interested in carrying out a self-assessment to improve the gender sensitivity of their services or independent organizations commissioned to carry out an external assessment at the request of a RAS organization.

FAO can also use the GRAST to define the type of support to be provided to countries to ensure that women and men are equal participants in and beneficiaries of rural advisory services.

IN SUMMARY, THE GRAST CAN BE USED IN TWO WAYS:

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT of RAS organizations and programmes carried out by an external assessment team.

SELF-ASSESSMENT by RAS organizations, which could be led by the organization's monitoring and evaluation team. Care should be taken to ensure impartiality and reliability of the answers when an organization's staff interview its own clients.

Two participants of the GRAST validation group interview in Peru drinking their home-made yoghurt.
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3. Methodological guidance to implement the GRAST

At the policy and organizational levels, the GRAST assessment guides outline the objectives of the GRAST, and give directions to conducting the desk research. It suggests types of documents to consult and also include tables with the information required as well as possible sources of verification.

The assessment guide at the individual level is divided into two parts: provider and client. Both parts include information on how to carry out the assessment, a chart with the information required and interview guides for managers, field staff and clients. The interview guides are organized around the seven key assessment questions.

Text boxes with examples of findings from the countries, programmes and organizations that participated in the validation of the GRAST illustrate good practices in gender-sensitive RAS provision and give a quick understating of the type of evidence that can be gathered by applying the GRAST.

The annexes include additional questions relevant to assessments at the client level.

3.1. Overall assessment process and methods

3.1.1. Overall process

As mentioned in Section 2.4., the GRAST can be used either for self-assessment by a RAS organization or for a programme assessment by an independent external team. The choice will depend on the needs of the RAS organization, the time-frame and the available financial resources and human capacities. The RAS organization can also decide to carry out the policy and the organizational-level analysis internally and to hire an external team/seek external funding and support for the individual-level analysis (in particular, if they are concerned about the reliability of the answers). In cases where data collection is conducted by an external team, the staff of the RAS organization would not be present during interviews to avoid influencing the responses of interviewees. Both scenarios will require the establishment of an assessment team tasked with carrying out the analysis.

The GRAST does not assign scores or ratings. Instead, the results of the analysis are descriptive, detailing what works well and what needs improvement in terms of the enabling environment, organizational policy and culture, and staff skills and service delivery.

The GRAST uses qualitative research methods to carry out the assessment. The assessment team, whether internal or external, should represent a range of disciplines and have expertise in qualitative research methods and tools. It is recommended to include the following skills set in the team:

- a gender expert, capable of capturing the impact of the RAS programme on gender relations and the lives of rural women and men;

- a social scientist (e.g. sociologist, anthropologist, political scientist, etc.) with the capacity to contextualize the RAS intervention within the framework of the economic, political and social dynamics of communities where the GRAST is implemented; and

- an agronomist or someone with a general agricultural background, who can capture the innovations and contributions to improved agricultural practices introduced by the RAS provider. Expertise in business development and management to assess organizational, business and management advice provided through RAS programmes from a gender perspective would be an asset.

3. Methodological guidance for implementing the GRAST

Depending on the needs and resources of GRAST users, the different elements of the tool can be implemented separately. For example, an RAS organization can decide to carry out only the organizational-level assessment, or opt for a full GRAST implementation. When the full GRAST is implemented (i.e. assessment occurs at all three levels), it is recommended to do so in the following order: enabling policy environment level, organizational level and, finally, the individual level. This is important because each level provides the context needed for the subsequent level. For example, understanding the national policy environment will support the assessment of organizational policies; a good understanding of both the enabling environment and organizational policies is necessary to ensure that staff and clients are asked the right questions.

Participants of the GRAST validation group interview in India, including rural women, PRADAN staff and members of the CRISP research team.

BOX 4   **Voices from the field**

"It was good to have done the organizational assessment at the beginning. It gave us a fair understanding of the RAS organization prior to starting the fieldwork. It helped us avoid the initial questions about the activities of the RAS organization. By undertaking the policy and organizational assessment first, we carried out the fieldwork with a much deeper understanding of the broader context. This helped us to revise questions asked during fieldwork, and focus on information that was not available from the desk review. However, it would be prudent to revisit the desk review after completing the fieldwork because much of the written information starts making sense after having interacted with the clients and the staff".

Research Team, CRISP, India. Source: CRISP, Final Report. September, 2016.

Before starting any interviews, it is essential to conduct basic desk research on the context of the country and programme where the GRAST will be implemented. The review should include an overview of the national and local socio-economic and political situation and the situation of the RAS system (including major providers).

The review should also examine:

■ the smallholder agricultural sector;

■ men's and women's typical roles in agriculture;

■ the culture and how it defines gender relations, norms and values and roles of men and women in society, as well as access to and control over resources and decision-making;

■ data on poverty levels, literacy levels, livelihood activities, demography, agro-ecology and infrastructure; and

■ recent development interventions in the study location.

It is also important to conduct background research on the organization(s) that is/are to be assessed/studied, including how the organization delivers RAS, the geographic area covered by the RAS programme, and its focus in terms of crops, value chains, or other content.

3.1.2. Methods for collecting the information

The GRAST is designed to be implemented through desk analyses and key-informant and group interviews with RAS staff and clients.

■ Desk analyses, complemented with key informant interviews (KIIs), are used at the enabling policy environment and the organizational levels to understand the context in which the RAS programme is implemented as well as the relevant national and organizational policy frameworks.

■ Key informant interviews and group interviews help the assessment team to learn about the perspectives of both the RAS programme staff (managers and field staff) and clients. The interviews are semi-structured. See Section 4 for the interview guides.

The interview guides and suggested questions are a resource, and users are encouraged to adapt them based on their own analysis of the local context, the characteristics of the RAS programme, and discussions with the assessment team. If the suggested questions are found to be relevant, users are encouraged to use them for the sake of cross-country comparability or comparability over time.

3.1.3. Selecting region and communities

The desk review of the enabling policy environment and the organizational level provide a good basis for selecting regions, districts and communities for group interviews because it identifies the context in which the RAS study programme operates. Therefore, it should be completed before the fieldwork.

GRAST implementers are encouraged to select regions and specific communities that represent the diversity of the area covered by the RAS organization(s) or programme(s) being assessed. The number of regions and communities sampled will depend on the size of the programme and the resources available for the study.

Factors to consider when selecting regions and communities, include:

- number of regions covered by the assessed RAS programme;

- number of clients in the different regions;

- diversity of predominant livelihood strategies in programme regions;

- diversity of socio-cultural context, especially as this relates to gender roles and agro-ecological conditions and predominant agricultural activities;

- communities that have benefitted from the RAS programme for a long and short amount of time;

- communities that are more and those that are less connected to major markets; and

- socio-economic diversity.

3.1.4. Selecting groups for interviews

Interviews should be conducted separately with men and women groups. It is important to understand some of the basic social differences in a community before deciding which people to select for group interviews. It is also important to involve groups of people who might not normally be asked for their opinions, such as the poorest people, young and elderly women, widows, and minority ethnic or religious groups.

If RAS targets particular groups, interviewees can be selected on that basis. For example, if RAS is provided to women's self-help groups, the self-help groups should be interviewed. If RAS works with only a few groups in a given community, the research team should interview all of these group members and ensure that it samples a diverse selection of communities. If the programme works with mixed-sex groups, these groups should be separated by sex for the interviews. According to the context, core interview groups can be further stratified to include different ethnic groups, people of different ages, or people with different socio-economic experiences.

3.2. Fieldwork

3.2.1. Fieldwork roadmap

The individual-level analysis should be carried out through fieldwork. The fieldwork schedule should include time for a piloting exercise, KIIs and group interviews and team debriefings, as well as additional debriefings and analyses after each phase of research. If possible, the interviewees should also be debriefed and have an opportunity to give their feedback.

It is suggested that the assessment team investigates at least two communities in each of at least two to three districts. If the assessment team is large enough, fieldwork at the community level can be conducted simultaneously in several beneficiary communities. This would mean that in each district the team will split into two sub-teams covering each community for four days. If logistically possible, the sub-teams should reunite for the debriefings.

Approximately 20-21 days are needed for the fieldwork if the assessment is carried out in three locations. The key tasks to cover during this period would include:

- preparatory days (research team and in-country research partners): review of study design, questions, participatory tools and pilot activity (days 2-4);

- interviews with RAS headquarters and district managers (days 5-8);

- community fieldwork at first research site (days 9-11);

- community fieldwork at second research site (days 12-14);

- community fieldwork at third research site (days 15-18); and

- team consolidation, preliminary analysis and debriefing with the RAS organization (days 19-21).

To facilitate planning, an example of a fieldwork schedule is provided in Table 1. This should be adjusted according to the geographic reach of the programme and number of RAS staff and clients to be interviewed.

TABLE 1   **Example of a fieldwork schedule**

(DATE)	DAY	
	1	Research team arrives in main town of research district
PHASE 1: PREPARATION		
	2	Preparatory session (assessment team/local research partners)
	3	▪ Discussion of study design, questions and participatory tools ▪ Review of fieldwork schedule; finalization of logistics
	4	Pilot activity
PHASE 2: MANAGEMENT INTERVIEWS		
	5	Interviews with the headquarters management of the RAS organization
	6	Travel to district HQs
	7	Interviews with the district management of the RAS organization
	8	
PHASE 3: COMMUNITY FIELDWORK		
	9	COMMUNITY 1: KIIs with RAS staff (interviews with 5-7 field advisors per district)
	10	Group interviews with RAS clients (2 group interviews; 1 with men, 1 with women)
	11	Debriefing and feedback with staff and communities, team analysis; results recorded for draft report
	12	COMMUNITY 2: KIIs with RAS staff (interviews with 5-7 field advisors per district)
	13	Group interviews with RAS clients (2 group interviews; 1 with men, 1 with women)
	14	Debriefing and feedback with staff and communities, team analysis; results recorded for draft report
	15	COMMUNITY 3: KIIs with RAS staff (interviews with 5-7 field advisors per district)
	16	Group interviews with RAS clients (2 group interviews; 1 with men, 1 with women)
	17	Debriefing and feedback with staff and communities, team analysis; results recorded for draft report
	18	Travel back to central location (e.g. main town of the research district)
PHASE 4: TEAM ANALYSIS		
	19	Team debriefing, preliminary analysis
	20	Debriefing of the RAS organization on interviews with clients Draft report preparation
	21	Travel home

3. Methodological guidance for implementing the GRAST

3.2.2. Fieldwork guide

Section 3.3.2 provides general guidelines on how to plan and implement the GRAST fieldwork and more specific guidance on conducting the RAS staff and client interviews. It is adapted from the qualitative research guide developed in the framework of the FAO From Protection to Production (PtoP) programme's Social Protection and Rural Women's Economic Empowerment research programme by Pavenello, Pozarny and de la O Campos (2015).

Before fieldwork begins, it is advised that the assessment team participates in a two-to-three-day preparatory session. This is especially important if the team is external to the RAS organization being assessed. This is an opportunity to gain an overview of the RAS programme, the objective of the assessment, the three levels of analysis of the GRAST, and the tools and methods that will be used. If possible, a representative of the RAS programme can be invited to provide a briefing. In addition, the assessment team can begin to familiarize itself during this phase with the questions in the interview guides. The preparatory session will also provide an opportunity to finalize fieldwork logistics, including scheduling, and to decide how the team will adapt the fieldwork guide to the local context.

If possible, the preparatory phase should include a one-day pilot exercise, to be held in a nearby community. The pilot will enable the team to practice their interview skills and to further refine and contextualize the assessment methodology. Lessons learned from the pilot should be incorporated into the fieldwork plan and the question guides. During this phase, the team can also discuss issues related to respect, confidentiality and the independence of the assessment team.

BOX 5   **Key steps to follow before starting the fieldwork**

- Carry out a desk review of the national context, including the enabling environment and organizational dimensions (the first two levels of analysis of the GRAST).
- Identify locations to carry out the fieldwork.
- Review and select questions and participatory tools that will be the most useful in the context of the RAS programme under review.
- If necessary, translate selected questions and tools into local languages.
- Establish travel logistics.
- Identify interviewees using staff and client lists.
- Contact communities to schedule visits.
- Establish a fieldwork schedule.

General conduct during interviews

Whether the fieldwork is carried out by an external or and internal assessment team, it is important to follow good practices for interviewing RAS staff and client groups. These include:

- ensuring that participants understand the objectives of the interviews and how the information will be used;

- reassuring interviewees that the information they provide will be treated confidentially and that they will not be named in the assessment report;

■ taking care not to offend participants' dignity in any way;

■ not raising community or interviewee's expectations in any way;

■ answering their questions honestly;

■ ensuring that participants do not feel under pressure to respond in a particular way. For external assessments, ensure that interviewees understand that the assessment is independent and impartial. In this case, it is preferable that the staff of the RAS programme are not present at the interviews;

■ scheduling the interviews in times and in places that are convenient for all interviewees, especially women;

■ guaranteeing that participants understand what is happening at all times, for example by ensuring that the appropriate language is being used (language, dialect, community terminology, etc.); and

■ making arrangements for childcare during the interviews, if necessary.

It is recommended to have at least two facilitators for each interview session.

BOX 6   **Ethical guidelines**

- Ensure that cultural and community norms are understood and considered in the selection of the interviewees.
- Ensure that permission for the interviews is obtained through consultation with community leaders and members, both women and men.
- Ensure that demands on participants' time are not excessive (maximum two hours, for example) and that participants are aware of their right to decline to participate or to withdraw at any time.
- Ensure that the interviews are respectful of all participants.
- Ensure the safety and protection of participants by confirming that the environment where the interview takes place is physically safe.
- Ask for participants' permission to record the interview.
- Make respondents feel at ease and encourage them to ask questions of the assessment team.

Childcare during GRAST validation group interview in Peru.
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3.2.3 Provider-level analysis

The provider-level analysis is conducted through KIIs at the national and district level headquarters of the RAS organization and with staff members at different levels, e.g. national headquarters management, district-level programme staff and field advisors.

The assessment team interviews a broad sample of the RAS staff (i.e. senior managers, junior employees, men, women, different types of advisors, etc.) in order to get a full perspective. However, as one of the major aims of this assessment is to understand women's experience as RAS staff and clients, the team should oversample women staff and staff members that work primarily with women.

The type and number of staff members interviewed will depend on the size of the programme and the resources available. There are several additional guidelines on the selection of interviewees:

- Both women and men staff should be interviewed.

- Staff members from different levels (senior and mid-level management, and programme staff; and field advisors) should be interviewed.

- A diversity of specialists should be interviewed.

- Ensure a range of years of experience.

- Farmer-to-farmer advisors should be interviewed.

- Staff that are subcontracted from a different organization should be interviewed.

- If possible, following the interviews, the research team should debrief the interviewees and give them an opportunity for feedback and final comments.

3.2.4. Client-level analysis

3.2.4.1. Group interviews

Prior to embarking on the fieldwork, the assessment team will need to contact leaders in the selected communities to brief them on the assessment. In the case of an external assessment, the RAS organization can introduce the team to community leaders and groups, and help to schedule the interviews.

The following guidelines should inform all group interviews.

- Conduct separate discussions with men and women in order to allow both to speak openly about their experiences with RAS. Same-sex interview groups are important because women may not feel comfortable or able to speak freely in mixed-sex groups.

- Group interviews should include at most eight to 12 participants. With larger groups, it becomes difficult to ensure that all participants can contribute freely and meaningfully. Compare the discussions from different groups to increase the trustworthiness of the findings.

- After introducing the assessment team, describe the purpose of the assessment. Use the question guides to provide an overall direction for the discussion.

- GRAST users can select the questions they feel will be most appropriate given the context, and add additional questions based on the 'Information needed' table. While the questions can be adapted to the context under review, users are

encouraged to use at least some of the suggested questions for the sake of cross-country comparability or comparability over time.

■ Although all topics in the interview guide should be covered in group interviews, they do not have to be followed in strict order. Refer to the list of information needed, and try to proceed logically from topic to topic. If a topic comes up in discussion, you may decide to explore it at that stage or else ask participants if you can talk about it later. You may also decide to include the most important/relevant assessment questions early in the discussion, when you still have the group's full attention.

■ If the interviewees don't speak the national language and the assessment team is not familiar with the local language, an interpreter must be hired to translate questions and answers.

■ If necessary, make arrangements for childcare during the interviews.

Name tagging of participants of the GRAST validation group interview in Peru.
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BOX 7   **Tips for carrying out group interviews**

■ Use probing questions to collect accurate, deep and rich information as well as to validate responses. Rephrase interview responses to confirm that the information is accurate. The questions provided in the guidelines can also be used in conjunction with participatory tools (see Annex 5.2.) to help probe issues when useful and appropriate.

■ Ask the respondents to illustrate their answers with examples whenever possible.

■ Try to keep the discussion focused on the subject, but allow flexibility for participants to lead the discussion in new directions if relevant. Give participants the time and opportunity to express their opinion and talk about their experiences. This may bring new information to light.

■ There are a number of strategies to ensure that quieter members of the group are heard.
  – Write down everyone's name, prepare nametags and use participant's names to address them directly.
  – Directly ask quieter members for their opinion.
  – Ensure that there are no tasks that embarrass participants because they cannot do them – e.g. reading/writing.
  – Explain in advance to the group that you would like a conversation that includes everyone.
  – Explain that there is no correct answer to the questions – you are interested in hearing everyone's different views and opinions.

■ When the discussion comes to a natural end, ask whether there is anything else that the participants wish to share or discuss. Thank them for their time and participation.

■ After the interviews, it can be useful to review the questions guide and make any changes to content or order to improve future discussions. Any changes should be discussed with the entire assessment team during the debriefing session.

3.2.4.2. Using participatory tools in group discussions for client-level analysis

Various qualitative tools can be used to facilitate the collection of information during group discussions for analysis at the individual level. Annex 5.2 describes participatory tools that can be used in combination with the interview guides. However, none of the tools can gather information on all of the research questions, so they must be accompanied by a facilitated discussion. The participatory tools will generate different types of information, which can be used to enrich the results obtained from the group interviews.

The use of different participatory tools during the interviews ensures that the analysis focuses on the research themes and that visual materials can be produced. It also provides a different way to engage interview participants. If used, the participatory tools should be tested during the pilot exercise.

Given the time-intensive nature of participatory activities, a maximum of two tools should be used in each group interview. Information collected from the use of participatory tools may be relevant to a number of assessment questions. The interactions and debate during the participatory activity need to be captured, as this will enrich the assessment.

3.2.5. Data recording, debriefings and analysis of findings

Data recording

Preferably, each assessment team and sub-team should include at least two facilitators with analytical skills. During the interviews, one of the facilitators will take notes and the other will help the discussion.

Each KII and group interview will need to be documented with comprehensive field notes, photographs and any drawings or diagrams produced by participants. If appropriate and once permission is given by the participants, the interviews should be digitally recorded as well. It is important to transcribe quotations of what people say that are particularly illustrative of the information and experiences that they are sharing. Interviews – including direct quotes – and discussions should be transcribed and documented on a daily basis.

All notes, maps, timelines, etc. that are used and produced during the interviews should include the following information:

- date;

- location, e.g. region, district, community;

- start and finish times;

- name of interviewers;

- type of method and tools used;

- language;

- whether the interview was digitally recorded;

- KII names and positions or occupations;

- information on group interview participants: name, sex, age range, ethnicity, clan, etc.; and

- any other relevant information.

It is recommended that the assessment team keeps a diary to record activities, meetings, problems encountered, useful observations and recommendation during the fieldwork.

Debriefing

This section outlines the debriefing process, which should take place following both KIIs and client group interviews.

Discussion/interview data check

After a KII or group interview, the assessment team(s) should ensure that they have an accurate picture or record of any visual outputs. They should also check that the notes taken by the facilitator are an accurate record of the discussion, including any important quotes and comments from respondents. Team members should discuss the highlights for each key assessment question of the GRAST and major points and issues raised during the group interviews. This discussion will form the basis of the daily team debrief.

Assessment team internal debriefing

At the end of each day, each team/sub-team will hold a debriefing session to synthesize the findings from that day's fieldwork and organize their notes. If there is time available, the team(s) can discuss how the lessons from the day correspond with what was learned previously (from desk reviews, etc.). This is a key stage of the assessment, which will be used to develop participant debriefing and feedback sessions as well as to inform the final report.

It is important to organize data from the day's fieldwork around the key assessment questions. This will make it easier to draw conclusions and reduces the risk of losing or misplacing critical information.

The main purpose of the daily debriefings is to identify the principle findings of the day, review stories and information and identify trends. The sessions will also reveal gaps, which can be addressed during the next days' fieldwork. The output of these sessions can be a living field note document, organized around the GRAST assessment questions, which will capture the key points emerging from the discussion as well as pertinent contextual factors.

Assessment team members can use the following questions to guide the debriefing sessions:

- What went well, and why?

- What didn't work as well, and why?

- Are there issues that are still unclear, or groups that still need to be included in the discussion?

- What information needs further exploration, and what is the best way to do this? With whom and using which tools?

- What can be done differently tomorrow?

- How can tools and questions guides be adapted to best capture important issues?

Participants' debriefings and feedback session

If possible, the team should hold a community debriefing session to report its findings to the community. This feedback session is both a critical aspect of an ethical approach to research and important for validating findings and preliminary conclusions. It offers community members an opportunity to offer comments and corrections, increasing community ownership of the assessment.

Finally, the research team should debrief the RAS organization on the conclusion of fieldwork to validate their findings and preliminary conclusions and to offer staff members an opportunity to provide any additional information, and to provide the organization with valuable information about how the communities experience their programmes.

Analysing and presenting findings

Following the fieldwork, the entire assessment team will convene for one or two days to consolidate and synthesize all of the fieldwork findings. The synthesized findings will be compared with the desk review results in order to gain a full picture of how gender-sensitive RAS is being planned, implemented and experienced. Triangulating information gathered from different sources enables GRAST users to capture different dimensions of the RAS programme and the perspectives of different actors. It is also useful to gain more insight into RAS operations and verify and validate data. The results of the fieldwork and the desk review will be shared with the RAS organization to discuss the analysis and provide recommendations.

Participants of the GRAST validation group interview in India.
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Self Help Group meeting discussing responsible land and natural resources management in Kenya.
©FAO/Petterik Wiggers

4. Assessment guide

4.1. Enabling national policy environment

Objective

The enabling policy environment-level analysis is a desk study of secondary data, supplemented by interviews. The desk study aims to understand whether high-level political commitments to including women in development planning and programming exist in terms of written policies and/or strategies. The analysis examines whether national agriculture and rural development, food security and nutrition (FSN) or poverty reduction policies or strategies recognize the important contribution of women to agriculture and rural development and FSN, and whether they include an explicit objective to ensure that women and men can equally access and control productive resources, services and income-generating opportunities, particularly RAS. The study also examines whether the study country's Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has a policy for gender equality, whether there is an extension/RAS policy or strategy and whether it explicitly addresses women's interests and needs. The interviews aim to understand the extent to which written policies have been implemented, as well as to explore recent changes or trends in the enabling environment.

How to do it

A *desk study* of relevant national policy and/or strategy documents, and *key informant interviews* to discover the extent to which gender equality policies exist and are being implemented.

Sources of information

National agriculture, extension, rural development, food security and nutrition, poverty reduction policies and strategies; Ministry of Agriculture strategic documents; policy and strategy evaluations, State Party Reports on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Country Team Alternative CEDAW Reports, CEDAW shadow reports prepared by civil society organizations, CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations for the State Party, etc.

Information to look for in documents

- Evidence concerning the extent to which the country has implemented CEDAW, in particular Article 14 on rural women.

- National political recognition/statements that rural women play an important role in agriculture and rural development and FSN.

- Evidence of national-level commitment to ensuring that rural women's access to productive resources, services and opportunities, particularly RAS, is equal to that of men. Such commitment might take the form of a dedicated gender policy in agriculture; mainstreaming gender equality in agriculture; gender related aspects in the RAS/extension policy; or broader agricultural policy/strategy-relevant policies and strategies.

- Whether gender equality and women's empowerment-related policy objectives have adequate budgets.

- Whether gender expertise, oversight and accountability structures are found in the Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant institutions.

- Evidence that inter-institutional coordination mechanisms exist for gender equality objectives in agriculture.

- Whether there is gender balance in staffing of the MoA and related institutions.

- Evidence on the extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment related policy objectives have been implemented.

Information to look for in interviews

- The interviewee's awareness of policies and/or strategies for gender equality.

- The degree to which policies and commitments about enabling women's access to RAS and other services are implemented.

- Major barriers that prevent the enabling environment from being gender-sensitive.

- Whether the gender unit in the MoA is adequately staffed and budgeted.

- Whether and how gender is integrated in activities of the MoA outside of the gender unit.

- Any changes in the enabling environment in the past five years that have affected gender sensitivity in RAS.

Refer to Table 2 for a more complete set of information to look through for evidence of gender equality policies and possible sources of verification.

4. Assessment guide

TABLE 2   **Information to look for and possible sources of verification**

Country has ratified CEDAW and makes efforts to implement Article 14 on rural women.

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
■ The country has ratified CEDAW without reservations. ■ The country regularly reports on CEDAW implementation, including on the situation of rural women. ■ The CEDAW Committee's observations show that the government is making considerable efforts to improve the situation of rural women. ■ Shadow and UN Country Team reports show that the country is making considerable efforts to improve the situation of rural women.	■ CEDAW Committee's website: list of countries that have ratified CEDAW: http://indicators.ohchr.org/; ■ country CEDAW reports: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=3&DocTypeID=29; ■ list of CEDAW committee's concluding observations assessing country performance: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=3&DocTypeID=5; ■ UN Country Team Alternative CEDAW Reports: available at the office of the UN resident coordinator; ■ state Party CEDAW Reports (filter by country): http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=3&DocTypeID=29; ■ shadow CEDAW Reports prepared by civil society organizations.

A national policy/strategy for gender equality and women's empowerment in agriculture and rural development exists, together with an implementation plan.

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES

■ The Ministry of Agriculture has a gender equality policy for agriculture and rural development.
■ The gender equality policy has an implementation plan with clear goals and objectives.
■ Budgetary resources are allocated and actually spent for the implementation plan.
	■ gender equality policy of the Ministry of Agriculture or national gender equality policy (agriculture section):
	  – e.g., Rwanda's Agriculture Gender Strategy: www.minagri.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Publications/Agriculture%20Gender%20Strategy%20Final.pdf
	  – Institutional Gender Policy and Strategic Implementation Framework of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala 2014-2023: http://web.maga.gob.gt/download/politica-institucional-igualdad-genero.pdf;
	■ Ministry of Agriculture budget and budget performance.

The perspective of gender equality and women's empowerment is integrated in the national agricultural/food security and nutrition/poverty reduction policies/strategies.

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
▪ Gender equality and/or women's empowerment are included as key objectives in the national agricultural, food security and nutrition, poverty reduction policies/strategies. ▪ Women's roles as farmers, processers, and entrepreneurs are recognized in the policies/ strategies. ▪ Policy differentiates between the needs, priorities and constraints of rural women and men. ▪ Rural women are identified as a target population in the policies. ▪ There is a target for women's participation (percentage of women that will benefit from programmes, etc.) in the policies/strategies.	▪ agriculture, rural development, food security and nutrition, etc. policies/strategies: – e.g., the National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy of Liberia, Goal 3: http://www.foodsecurityportal.org/sites/default/ files/National%20Food%20Security%20and%20 Nutrition%20Strategy_Mar08_0.pdf; ▪ national development and poverty reduction policies.

BOX 8   **Good practice: gender equality strategy of the agricultural sector, Ethiopia**

Ethiopia's National Agricultural Sector Policy and Investment Framework, 2010-2020 acknowledges that men and women have distinct needs, priorities and interests and that women have an additional unpaid home and care work burden that men do not. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development also formally recognizes that gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to agricultural growth. While the Ministry of Agriculture has no specific gender policy, a gender strategy is an integral part of its agricultural growth programme. The gender equality strategy, while acknowledging gender inequalities in the agricultural sector, notes that "removing gender disparity and ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment is key to accelerating economic growth and social development (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2011)". The strategy seeks to adapt agricultural programmes and technical and vocational trainings to the specific needs of women.

Petrics *et al.*, forthcoming.

4. Assessment guide

Gender equality and women's empowerment are included as key objectives in the national agricultural extension/RAS policy/strategy.

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES

▪ Women's roles as farmers, processors and entrepreneurs are recognized in extension/RAS policy.
▪ Gender equality and/or women's empowerment are included as key objectives in the national extension/RAS policy.
▪ Rural women are specifically identified as a target population for extension/RAS.
▪ The policy includes strategies to address rural women's specific needs and constraints.
▪ The extension/RAS strategy recognizes key relevant gender issues and contains appropriate activities to address them.
▪ Extension/RAS policy includes clear measures to strengthen women's capacity to access RAS and adopt new technologies.
	▪ national agricultural extension policy/strategy documents:
	  – e.g., https://www.g-fras.org/en/countries.html?download=546:national-agricultural-extension-policy-of-uganda;
	▪ national agricultural policy;
	▪ gender policy of the Ministry of Agriculture:
	  – e.g., Institutional Gender Policy and Strategic Implementation Framework of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala, Strategic Axis 5: http://web.maga.gob.gt/download/politica-institucional-igualdad-genero.pdf.

Gender equality and women's empowerment feature in national agricultural investment plan.

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES

▪ Adequate resources are allocated to gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives.
▪ The goals of gender equality and women's empowerment are reflected in the outputs and outcomes of the agricultural investment plan.
▪ The national agricultural investment plan includes specific mechanisms or provisions for the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment objectives.
▪ The investment plan requires the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and earmarks resources to do so.
	▪ national agricultural strategy/investment plan:
	  – e.g., Rwanda's Agriculture Gender Strategy: https://gender-gap.net/sites/default/files/documents/agriculture_gender_strategy_final.pdf;
	▪ monitoring and evaluation documents from the national agricultural strategy/investment plan:
	  – e.g., Rwanda's Agriculture Gender Strategy, Section 4.4: https://gender-gap.net/sites/default/files/documents/agriculture_gender_strategy_final.pdf;
	▪ results documents or annual reports about the national agricultural strategy/investment plan:
	  – e.g., Annual Report, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare of India, Section 18: http://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/Annual_rpt_201617_E.pdf;
	▪ Ministry of Agriculture Budget.

The Ministry of Agriculture or other national agricultural institutions have gender-sensitive budgets.

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES

■ There are explicit provisions for allocating adequate resources to gender equality and women's empowerment activities and programmes.
■ There are budgeted work plans for gender equality/women's empowerment activities and programmes.
■ Gender targets are incorporated into budget guidelines and instructions.
■ Formal mechanisms for gender-sensitive budget monitoring and auditing are in place.
■ There is an established minimum level for budget allocation to gender activities.
	■ Ministry of Agriculture Budget;
	■ Ministry of Agriculture budget guidelines and instructions
	  – For an example, see Republic of Rwanda, Gender Budgeting Guixdelines: www.migeprof.gov.rw/fileadmin/_migrated/content_uploads/GENDER_BUDGETING_GUIDELINES-2.pdf);
	■ programme-specific budgets for gender programmes and activities:
	  – e.g., India gender budget cells: http://krishivistar.gov.in/Ngrca.aspx
	  – and Bangladesh, Ministry of Finance, Gender Budgeting Report, Chapter 9: https://mof.gov.bd/site/page/3bb14732-b5b1-44df-9921-efedf1496295/Gender-Budget;
	■ policies related to budget allocations;
	■ gender programme and activity work plans;
	■ budget auditing guidelines.

4. Assessment guide

BOX 9   **Good practice: gender budgeting, India**

In 2005, the Ministry of Finance of India gave a mandate to all ministries to establish gender budgeting cells.[8] Eighteen ministries and departments were asked to submit annual reports and performance budgets highlighting their budgetary allocations for women. A gender budgeting cell was established in the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW) to look at the budgetary commitments of various schemes of DAC in order to bring gender concerns to the centre stage in all aspects of public expenditure and policy and to ensure an adequate flow of public expenditure to activities benefiting women farmers. Gender coordinators in various divisions have been sensitized to the concept of gender budgeting.

Source: CRISP, 2016. For more information visit: http://krishivistar.gov.in/Ngrca.aspx.

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[8]   A gender budgeting cell is an institutional mechanism (usually a team of senior staff) whose objective is to influence policies and programmes to tackle gender imbalances, promote gender equality and ensure that public resources are allocated and managed accordingly.

There are oversight and accountability mechanisms for planning and monitoring the implementation of gender equality objectives in agriculture and rural development.

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES

■ The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has a gender unit, or a gender task force or committee.
■ The gender unit/task force/committee is at the same level as other topical units/task forces within the MoA's structure.
■ The gender unit/task force/committee has an institutional mandate to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the MoA's gender objectives.
■ The gender unit/task force/committee has clearly articulated responsibilities for:
  – communication and advocacy;
  – oversight for gender resources;
  – quality assurance;
  – accountability of management;
  – knowledge management; and
  – capacity development.
■ If there is no dedicated gender unit/task force/committee, there are gender experts or focal points in MoA units/departments.
■ MoA has established provisions/mechanisms for effective collaboration and coordination with other ministries and agencies on issues related to gender equality and rural women's empowerment.
	■ list of MoA gender units/task forces/committees;
	■ MoA organigram;
	■ gender unit/task force/committee's mission, statements, strategy documents and policy/procedure documents;
	■ gender unit/task force/committee's webpage;
	■ gender unit/task force/committee's annual reports
	■ MoA staffing directories;
	■ formal or informal partnership agreements between the MoA and other ministries and agencies working on gender issues;
	■ ministerial or government act establishing a gender unit.

BOX 10 **Good practice: National Gender Resource Centre in Agriculture, India**

A National Gender Resource Centre in Agriculture (NGRCA) was established in the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, in 2005-2006. The Centre is located in the Directorate of Extension. The NGRCA is responsible for all gender-related activities and issues in agriculture and the allied sectors, both within and outside of the Department. The Centre is tasked with integrating gender dimensions into agriculture policies and programmes, providing advocacy and advisory services to the states, undertaking and supporting training, research and advocacy around mainstreaming gender issues in agriculture and natural resource management. The purpose is to ensure that the policies and programmes in agriculture are fully gender responsive and reflect the national commitment to the empowerment of women.

Source: CRISP, 2016. For more information, visit: http://krishivistar.gov.in/Ngrca.aspx.

The Ministry of Agriculture's monitoring and evaluation system is gender-sensitive, and tracks the gender-differentiated impacts of agricultural policies, strategies, and programmes.

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
▪ The MoA requires the collection of sex-disaggregated data. ▪ The MoA monitoring and evaluation system uses gender-sensitive indicators. ▪ The MoA produces regular reports on gender. ▪ Staff performance reviews evaluate staff contribution to gender equality objectives. ▪ Budgetary resources are allocated to gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation.	▪ the MoA monitoring and evaluation protocol; ▪ the MoA monitoring and evaluation system; ▪ annual reports of the MoA; ▪ the MoA gender reports; ▪ annual reports on the national RAS system; ▪ staff performance evaluation criteria; ▪ the MoA budget.

Women are represented at the managerial levels of the country's major agricultural institutions.

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
▪ There is gender balance at the management level of the MoA, the directorate of the extension system and in major national agricultural research organizations.	▪ staff directories of the MoA, extension division, and major agricultural research organizations in the country; ▪ reports showing changes in staff over time.

4. Assessment guide

Supplemental interview questions

The enabling environment assessment of the GRAST involves a document review of national policies, strategies and governance mechanisms. However, it is often difficult to understand from merely a document review the extent to which policies are effectively implemented. The GRAST therefore recommends that users carry out two or three interviews with key informants (e.g. Ministry heads of departments) to gain a fuller understanding of the conditions that influence policy implementation in a particular location. The interviewees should be familiar with the national policy environment. Suggested interview questions are listed below. These questions can be adapted and refined based on what is learned during the desk review (for example, if the MoA does not have a gender equality policy, it does not make sense to ask how it is implemented).

Suggested interview questions:

- What policies does your country have around gender equality? Are there any policies specifically concerning women in agriculture? Are there any local (state or regional) development policies that impact women in locations where the RAS programme works?

- To what extent are the policies and commitments related to gender equality in agriculture implemented in practice? Are there specific policies or measures related to ensuring women's access to RAS? How are these implemented?

- If these policies are not fully implemented, what are the main barriers? Does the MoA (or other relevant ministry) have plans or strategies for overcoming these barriers?

- What changes have occurred in the national policy in the past five years that have led to changes in gender sensitivity in the provision of RAS?

4.2. Organizational level

Objective

At the organizational level, the GRAST assists users to understand to what extent the organization under review is committed to gender-sensitive RAS as seen in its written policies and procedures, and whether a gender-sensitive organizational culture exists.

How to do it

Organizational-level assessment requires a desk review of selected documents concerning the organization's mission, strategy, policies and processes and human resources procedures. The GRAST lists the information to look for based on the seven assessment questions and describes the types of documents where the information may be found. As there are important aspects of organizational gender sensitivity that cannot be fully captured through documents, the desk analysis needs to be complemented by individual interviews with RAS staff and managers. Suggested interview questions can be found in the 'managers' and 'field staff' interview guides in Section 4.3. The combination of desk analysis and interviews will help GRAST users to gain a good understanding of the organization's approach to promoting gender equitable service design and delivery.

Sources of information

Organizational mission statement, organizational policies, strategies, action plans, operating procedures, staff training materials, internal and external monitoring and evaluation documents, annual reports, human resources documents, training materials for clients, etc.

What to look for

RAS organizational culture

- Gender parity in staffing is a stated goal, and there are policies in place to encourage the recruitment of women as RAS advisors and to retain women who are hired.

- Women are represented at the management level of the organization.

- Both women and men work as RAS advisors in all capacities (i.e. women are not only 'home economics' advisors).

- The organization has a gender equality policy/strategy.

- The organization has anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.

- The organization allocates part of its budget to specific efforts to reach women farmers and to provide gender training for staff.

- The organization provides gender training to staff at different levels (managers, field staff, sub-contracted staff from other organizations or lead farmers who provide farmer-to-farmer extension).

- Women portrayed in training materials are shown undertaking productive activities on an equal basis with men, rather than depicted only in homemaking or caregiving roles.

Provision of services

- The RAS organization has a stated mission to provide advisory services to both women and men, and women are specifically included as clients.

- The organization deliberately provides advisory services that are inclusive and does not limit participation based on landholdings, position in the household, marital status, production practices, etc.

- The RAS client selection process is written, transparent and does not directly exclude women.

- Organizational policy makes specific mention of efforts to reach women, including:
  – by considering women's time and mobility limitations (schedules and workloads, etc.);
  – by considering women's literacy and educational levels;
  – by considering women's ability to represent their interests and voice their demands for RAS; and
  – by prioritizing methods of delivery, topics and technologies that are of interest and most beneficial to women.

Table 3 provides more details on information to look for and possible sources of verification to assess an organization's commitment to gender-sensitive RAS.

TABLE 3 **Information to look for and possible sources of verification**

Assessment question 1: **Are rural women included as legitimate clients in RAS programmes?**	
INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
■ The organization has a stated mission to provide RAS to women. ■ The organization's written definition of RAS clients specifically includes women (and recognizes different categories of women: women who head households, women in households headed by men, landless women; young women, elderly women, etc.). ■ There are no formal criteria for receiving advisory services that could exclude women's participation (i.e. landholding, being head of household, growing certain crops, literacy, etc.). ■ The RAS beneficiary selection process is written and transparent. ■ The organizational budget dedicates resources specifically to reaching women. ■ If the organization uses farmer extensionists, it has a policy or quotas in place to ensure that also women are recruited for this role. ■ Photos in training materials used by the organization portray women not only in homemaking and caregiving roles, but also as farmers.	■ Women are explicitly mentioned as one of the target client groups for the organization's activities: – e.g. Basix home page: *BASIX mission is to promote a large number of sustainable livelihoods, including for the rural poor and women*: http://www.basixindia.com/ – e.g. Annual report of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission of India: https://aajeevika.gov.in/content/annual-report-nrlps-2015-2016-english. ■ Gender equality and women's empowerment are part of the organization's strategy: – e.g. PRADAN: www.pradan.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=211&Itemid=132. ■ There is a written policy about RAS beneficiary selection. ■ The budget of the organization shows that dedicated resources are available to provide adequate services to rural women (e.g. Helen Keller International-Bangladesh's budgets include specific resources for women as a target population). ■ Developing the identity of women as farmers is specifically mentioned as part of the project: – e.g. PRADAN's gender equality project: www.pradan.net/images/news/mid_term_review_report_revised_17.10.13.pdf. ■ The training materials used by the organization show women farming on an equal basis with men; women are not only pictured in their traditional roles: – e.g. Haku Wiñay's (Peru) training materials: http://centroderecursos.cultura.pe/sites/default/files/rb/pdf/CARTILLA%201HAKU%20WINAY.pdf. ■ TechnoServe 's materials show both men and women doing all agricultural tasks: www.TechnoServe.org/blog/three-keys-to-engaging-women-farmers. ■ TechnoServe 's gender policy: www.TechnoServe.org/files/downloads/gender-policy.pdf.

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BOX 11   **Good practices: Women-centered and gender-equal organizational missions, India and Ethiopia**

PRADAN, India

"Our mission is to enable the most marginalized people, especially rural women, to earn a decent living and take charge of their own lives. We focus primarily on women because we believe that even if they are considered to be the most disadvantaged in society, they are capable of driving the change they need. Our aim is to stimulate and enhance the sense of agency of poor communities, especially women's collectives, who being at the bottom of the cross sections of class, caste and gender, are the most vulnerable".

PRADAN, 2017; PRADAN, ND.

The Coffee Initiative, TechnoServe, Ethiopia

The Coffee Initiative (CI) specifically identified men and women as their target clientele and set quotas for the minimum number of women they wanted to participate in the programme as trainers (30 percent), service users (30 percent), cooperative members (30 percent) and leaders. The project had no criteria for participation and was open to all coffee producing households in the target area. The decision to work with individuals within the household, rather than to treat the household as a unit, was critical for including women as service users. This focus enabled men and women to express their individual needs and priorities, rather than having the male household head speak for everyone. From the start, the CI sensitized village leaders, district officials and cooperative leaders to the importance of women's participation. These leaders were then responsible for educating men in the community about the household level economic benefits of having their wives participate in the training.

Petrics *et al.*, forthcoming.

Assessment question 2:
How are the time and mobility constraints of rural women addressed?

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES

▪ The organization requires the analysis of men's and women's seasonal and daily schedules, and their roles in agriculture, at home and in the community (i.e. the gender division of labour) in order to address time constraints.
▪ The organization has a policy that advisors should plan training and other interactions with women based on their schedule and availability.
▪ Organizational policy states that training/activities should be modified as needed (i.e. split up into modules) to work for women.
▪ Organizational policy states that training locations should be selected so that women can safely, comfortably, and easily attend.
▪ Resources are earmarked to enable women to attend training courses (by supporting childcare, transportation, etc.) or the state of these services and infrastructures are assessed to understand if and how they affect women's time and mobility.
	▪ the organization's annual report or gender policy:
	  – e.g. PRADAN's annual report: www.pradan.net/images/documentation/annual_report_2013_14.pdf;
	▪ the organization's training policies;
	▪ results from the organization's analyses of women's schedules;
	▪ budget allocations for women to attend training:
	  – e.g. IFDC Accelerating Agriculture Productivity Improvement (AAPI) Walmart Foundation Activity. Semi Annual Report.

Assessment question 3:
How are the literacy and education constraints of rural women addressed?

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES

■ The organization has a policy of analyzing women's education and literacy levels in order to tailor training appropriately.
 	
■ The organization has a policy that non-written communication material should be used to share information and in training (e.g., photos, drawings, recorded voice messages, videos, etc.).
 	
■ The organization has a policy that training and information should be provided in local languages.
 	
■ The organization links less literate, less educated women (and girls) with education and literacy programmes.
	■ the organization's annual report provides information on how they use training methods that are tailored to local education and literacy levels:
	  – e.g. PRADAN's annual reports: www.pradan.net/images/documentation/annual_report_2013_14.pdf
	  – www.pradan.net/images/news/mid_term_review_report_revised_17.10.13.pdf.
	■ rural advisor training materials for working with low-literacy populations;
	■ training and extension materials designed for low-literacy audiences, using mainly pictures;
	  – e.g. TechnoServe : www.TechnoServe .org/blog/three-keys-to-engaging-women-farmers.
	■ the results of the literacy and educational analyses of target communities;
	■ policy on languages to be used in training.

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BOX 12 **Good practice: overcoming women's literacy constraints, Peru**

Many women in intervention zones of the Haku Wiñay Programme, particularly over the age of 40, are unable to read or write and never completed primary school. The programme was designed with this in mind. The Yachachiq, farmer-to farmer advisors, who are from the communities they work in, speak and use the language of their local area in all of their activities and training courses generally do not require literacy. Staff members often read aloud to illiterate participants, or allow literate family members to join the trainees at sessions where reading is required.

Petrics *et al.*, forthcoming.

Assessment question 4:
Does the RAS programme facilitate rural women's ability to represent their interests and voice their demands?

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
■ The organization has a written policy detailing how it supports women's equal participation in meetings and in rural organizations (e.g. producer organizations), especially if RAS is disseminated through such organizations. ■ If the organization disseminates information through rural organizations, it requires staff to analyse barriers to women's participation in these organizations. ■ The organization does awareness raising and advocacy work with rural organizations to change membership requirements if they discriminate against women. ■ The organization has a written policy stating that they help organize women to receive or demand RAS. ■ If the organization provides services to women's groups/ organizes women into groups, it has targets for the percentage of women that are members and in leadership. ■ The organization works with women clients to increase their abilities to represent their interests and voice their demands, for example through providing gender or leadership training.	■ The organization's activities include working with women to increase their participation in public meetings of local social and political institutions: – e.g. PRADAN: www.pradan.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=211&Itemid=132 – e.g. TechnoServe 's work to include women in coffee cooperatives: www.TechnoServe .org/our-work/stories/ encouraging-women-coffee-farmers-participation. ■ Results of analyses of women's participation in rural organizations. ■ Training materials for rural organizations which focus on the importance of including women: – e.g. IFDC: Gender Sensitization Through Mobile Cinema: https://ifdc.org/2016/04/12/gender-sensitization-through-mobile-cinema/. ■ There are sex-disaggregated group membership and leadership targets or quotas: – e.g. TechnoServe uses a quota of 30 percent women in their coffee projects. ■ Organizational policies on working with rural organizations. ■ Results of analyses of changes in women's input in agricultural production, decision-making, control over resources, and leadership as a result of organization's services: – e.g. Hellen Keller International's (HKI) gender training: www.hki.org/our-impact/stories/bridging-gap – e.g. PRADAN's gender and leadership training promote and track women's input in decision-making, control over resources, and ability to advocate for themselves – e.g. PRADAN's special report on women's ability to drive change: www.pradan.net/images/documentation/pradan_annual_report_2016_1.pdf.

BOX 13   **Good practice: PRADAN enhances women's capacities to represent their interests, India**

PRADAN has found that women are more powerful and better able to voice their interests and demands (for RAS and other things) when they are part of a group. When women gain self-confidence and self-esteem in all-women groups, they are more successful at making their voices heard than in mixed-sex groups. PRADAN helps women organize into self-help groups as part of their approach to mobilizing poor communities and improving their livelihoods. The self-help groups function as women's collectives and facilitate women's ability to bargain to claim their rights and entitlements. The self-help groups have helped many women to see that they are not alone in facing challenges. PRADAN also supports setting up producer organizations, village level councils and federations of self-help groups.

Petrics *et al.*, forthcoming.

Assessment question 5:
Are RAS programmes designed and delivered in a way that allows rural women to effectively participate and benefit?

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
The organization delivers information in ways that are inclusive of and effective for women farmers (approach).	

■ The organization carries out livelihood analyses, uses tools to understand knowledge/information flows for men and women, and uses this information to design programmes.
■ The organization has policy and training materials about how to use participatory methods, plans training sessions with women's input and structures training to enable women to participate.
■ The organization does gender analyses of ICTs in its region and seeks to address and resolve gender-related constraints to access/use ICTs.
■ There is a client feedback mechanism on RAS methods and the means for considering this feedback in future decisions and planning.
■ The organization has a policy to address social and gender inequalities and build women's identities as farmers.
	■ results of information flow/social network analyses:
	  – e.g. social network analysis reported in A Gender Analysis of the Reconstruction, Economic Growth, and Livelihoods/REAL Project, Helen Keller International, 2010;
	■ organizational policies, annual reports:
	  – e.g. use of participatory planning and methods, PRADAN Annual Report 2015-2016: http://www.pradan.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/pradan_annual_report_2016-1.pdf;
	■ gender analyses of ICTs:
	  – IFDC: USAID/Fertilizer Sector Improvement Project Gender Assessment: https://ifdcorg.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/2-fsi-burma-gender-assessment.pdf;
	  – Grameen Bank's results: www.grameenfoundation.org/closing-gender-digital-divide;
	■ policies on ICT use in projects;
	■ organizational monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policies:
	  – e.g. PRADAN's special report on women's ability to drive change: www.pradan.net/images/documentation/pradan_annual_report_2016_1.pdf;
	■ examples of M&E, adoption statistics from completed projects.

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INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
The organization delivers information and services that are relevant and useful to women, as determined by women clients (content).	

■ The organization analyses the differentiated needs and interests of women and men and develops the content of RAS based on this information.
■ The organization analyses the roles that women and men play in agriculture and in the household to inform the design of its programmes.
■ The organization analyses men's and women's access to resources, control over assets, intra-household resource allocation, etc. to inform the design of its programmes.
■ There are mechanisms in place whereby RAS clients can provide feedback on content as well as means for considering this in future decisions and planning.
■ RAS staff collect sex-disaggregated data on technology and agricultural practices adoption rates and gather feedback from women on reasons for adoption or non-adoption.
■ Sex-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation data is used in organizational reports and incorporated into planning.
	■ The organization's mission states that inclusive and gender-aware participatory content selection methods will be used.
	■ The organization provides content on topics of interest to women or links clients to appropriate organizations dealing with those topics:
	  – e.g. PRADAN annual report: www.pradan.net/ images/documentation/annual_report_2013_14. pdf.
	■ Gender-sensitive resource access and control analyses:
	  – e.g., World Fish: http://pubs.iclarm.net/resource_ centre/WF_3348.pdf
	  – IFDC: How gender analyses of value chains improve project interventions: http://catalist2. tumblr.com/post/124142557558/how-gender value-chain-analyses-improve-project.
	■ Advisor training materials which include methods for learning about participant content demands and soliciting feedback on training content:
	  – e.g. World Fish's participatory action research to identify women's priorities and get them involved in the research process: http://blog.worldfishcenter. org/tag/participatory-action-research/.
	■ M&E system and indicators showing tracking of sex-disaggregated adoption rates, qualitative information on reasons for adoption.
	■ Annual reports which include sex-disaggregated results:
	  – e.g. PRADAN's Annual Report www.pradan. net/images/documentation/pradan_annual_ report_2016.pdf.

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INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
The organization promotes the adoption of technologies that are relevant and accessible to women.	
- There is a policy that a gender division of labour analysis should be conducted before introducing a new technology. - The organization states that it takes into account women's and men's different technology needs, including maintenance needs. - The organization states that women have a role in selecting which technologies will be introduced and should participate in their development. - The organization prioritizes technologies of interest to/ requested by women. - The organization collects sex-disaggregated data on adoption rates and gathers feedback from women on reasons for adoption or non-adoption.	- policies and training materials on participatory technology selection; - gender analyses of the impact of current and future technologies on women's work burden; - organizational training and technology policies; - organizational reports: – e.g., World Fish: Gender integration in aquaculture research and technology adoption processes. Lessons learned in Bangladesh: http://pubs.iclarm.net/resource_centre/2015-17.pdf; - sex-disaggregated data on technology adoption rates.

Assessment question 6:
Does the organizational culture enable women to become and effectively function as RAS agents and managers?

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
- Gender parity in staffing has been achieved or it is a stated goal and the organization is making demonstrated progress in increasing the number of women staff at all levels. - The organization has policies or mechanisms in place to recruit more women staff (for example, through quotas).	- staffing directories (sex-disaggregated); - human resources policies: – e.g. NRLM's Model Human Resources Manual, which states "NRLM would follow the principle of gender equity in selection of its staff": http://aajeevika.gov.in/; - quotas or other measures used to increase the number of women staff;

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INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES
▪ Number of women and men RAS advisors by seniority, position (management and field level). ▪ Both women and men work in all aspects of RAS. ▪ Women are represented in RAS organizational management. ▪ The organization has antidiscrimination and anti-harassment policies in place. ▪ The organization's human resources policy specifically promotes career development for women RAS advisors. ▪ The organization has policies or mechanisms in place to address the specific barriers that women advisors face in carrying out their work and advancing in their careers (e.g. childcare facilities, transport, separate boarding and sanitary facilities, etc.). ▪ The organization's publications (training materials for staff and clients, publicity, etc.) depict women as farmers on an equal basis with men.	▪ human resources documents: – e.g. NRLM's Model Human Resources Manual: "SRLM[9] is committed to a gender friendly and a socially inclusive workplace, with equal opportunities for men and women without any discrimination. All Staff are expected to be gender sensitive and adopt non-discriminatory work practices, through their behaviour, beliefs, values and attitudes mainstreaming gender in the organization culture:" https://aajeevika.gov.in/sites/default/files/nrlp_repository/17Model_HR_Manual_2014_15.pdf – TechnoServe 's gender policy: www.TechnoServe.org/files/downloads/gender-policy.pdf; ▪ anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies: – e.g. Hellen Keller International's (HKI) policy: "HKI is committed to protect and ensure the safety and wellbeing of its staffs by promoting an environment free of harassment – sexual, physical or verbal from colleagues, partners, and program recipients. As per the HKI's Whistleblower policy, Compliance Officer/HR Chair is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints concerning the violations and/or suspected violations of the Code." ▪ lists of resources (groups, networks, etc.) dedicated to supporting women staff (e.g. PRADAN's Women's Caucus); ▪ polices on childcare, maternity and paternity leave, safe transportation, etc.; ▪ training materials: – e.g. BRAC's list of gender materials: http://brac.net/gender-justice-diversity/item/849-publications – e.g. BRAC technical manual: an action-learning approach to gender and organizational change.

BOX 14   **Good practice: gender-sensitive recruitment practices of TechnoServe's Coffee Initiative, Ethiopia**

To identify and recruit women as farmer-to-farmer trainers, the Coffee Initiative made an effort to post job notices in locations frequented by women (e.g., churches, community centres, market areas, shops) and to distribute them through channels that target women (e.g., women's groups, school associations, agricultural cooperatives). TechnoServe used formal interviews as well as practice training sessions as during the process of interviewing job applicants. They observed that women perform better during practice training than in formal interviews.

Petrics *et al.*, forthcoming.

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9   State Rural Livelihoods Mission.

4. Assessment guide

Assessment question 7:
Are there institutional mechanisms in place to ensure the effective implementation of gender-sensitive RAS and to hold staff accountable?

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERIFICATION AND EXAMPLES

■ The organization has a corporate gender policy that mandates gender-sensitive service provision or there is evidence that gender mainstreaming has been institutionalized through concrete steps, mechanisms and processes throughout the organization.
 	
■ All job descriptions include a requirement for gender sensitivity and basic gender knowledge and capacities.
 	
■ The organization's M&E system is designed to capture how well staff provide gender-sensitive services.
 	
■ The organization measures the capacity of its staff to reach and provide services to women.
 	
■ All RAS advisors and managers must receive gender training, including in the use of gender analysis tools and methodologies.
 	
■ The organization allocates part of its budget to gender training for staff.
 	
■ The organization encourages the documentation of best practices in addressing women's needs and the learning and exchange of knowledge.
 	
■ Sub-contracted staff (including farmer-to-farmer advisors) receive gender training, including in the use of gender analysis tools and methodologies, as well as on the organization's gender policies.
	■ organizational gender policy:
	  – e.g. TechnoServe 's gender policy: www.TechnoServe.org/files/downloads/gender-policy.pdf
	  – World Fish Center, gender strategy brief: https://www.worldfishcenter.org/content/gender-strategy-brief-gender-transformative-approach-research-development-aquatic-0;
	■ staff vacancy announcements;
	■ monitoring and evaluation policies;
	■ staff performance evaluation tools and criteria;
	■ human resources policies:
	  – e.g. NRLM's Model Human Resources Manual, which states that all staff will be trained on gender within their first six months of employment https://aajeevika.gov.in/sites/default/files/nrlp_repository/17Model_HR_Manual_2014_15.pdf
	  – World Fish Center: *Gender capacity development and organizational culture change in the CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems: a conceptual framework*: http://pubs.iclarm.net/resource_centre/AAS-2014-45.pdf;
	■ staff training manuals
	  – e.g. NRLM's Model Human Resources Manual training outlines: https://aajeevika.gov.in/sites/default/files/nrlp_repository/17Model_HR_Manual_2014_15.pdf;
	■ project reports documenting staff training on gender:
	  – e.g. PRADAN's gender equality project report: www.pradan.net/images/news/mid_term_review_report_revised_17.10.13.pdf
	  – BRAC's Gender Equality Action Learning Programme: http://brac.net/gender-justice-diversity/item/846-programme-intervention and http://brac.net/gender-justice-diversity/item/847-gender-training-unit;
	■ organizational budgets;
	■ organizational policy and procedures manuals or examples of documenting good practices:
	  – e.g. World Fish Centre: Research in development: Learning from the CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems: https://www.worldfishcenter.org/content/research-development-learning-cgiar-research-program-aquatic-agricultural-systems;
	■ any policies about gender training for subcontracted or external staff (i.e. farmer trainers).

BOX 15   **Good practice: PRADAN's Apprenticeship Programme, India**

PRADAN selects and trains people who are motivated to work for women's and community empowerment and who aspire to create an atmosphere of mutual support and learning around fostering social change and gender equality. PRADAN professionals are catalysts of change, who are groomed by the organization and are committed to its mission and values at all levels. One of the major institutional mechanisms that supports this commitment is PRADAN's Development Apprenticeship Programme, a year-long initiation for new staff. The Development Apprenticeship Programme emphasizes the importance of self-reflection on whether the individual's aspirations and motivations match the mission and vision of PRADAN, including the empowerment of women and the creation of a just society.

Petrics *et al.*, forthcoming.

Albanian woman engaging in conservation and management of endangered locally adapted crop varieties.
©FAO/Gent Skhullaku

4.3 Individual level

4.3.1 Provider level

The research at the service provider level is conducted through *key informant interviews* (KIIs) with RAS managers and field staff, including farmers who serve as farmer-to-farmer advisors. Many RAS organizations use farmers to provide advisory services, either as paid staff or volunteers. Although these farmer advisors are also clients of the RAS programme, it is their role as RAS providers that is most important for the GRAST, and they should be interviewed using the field staff section of the tool.

Objective

Conducting the GRAST at the individual level has three major objectives:

1. To assess the awareness and understanding of RAS field staff and managers of the differentiated needs and priorities of rural women and men,

2. to assess the capacity of field staff and managers to respond to these differentiated needs and priorities, and

3. to identify and document challenges and successes that RAS providers have faced in working with rural women.

At this level, the GRAST also assesses the extent to which RAS managers understand the need for and implement gender-sensitive human resource policies in a gender-sensitive organizational culture. Finally, this level of the assessment aims to discover how staff apply the organization's official policies about gender-sensitive RAS provision, and how they experience the organizational culture.

How to do it

A field level analysis should be carried out through KIIs. The GRAST includes a set of 'information required' with a detailed list of questions that can be used to collect this information. There are questions for managers and questions for field advisors in Tables 4 and 5, respectively. The assessment team should carefully review this list, and then select or adapt the questions that they believe will be most effective in obtaining the necessary information, given the local context. Whenever possible, users are encouraged to use the suggested questions (or slight variations) for the sake of cross-country comparability or comparability over time.

Both men and women managers and men and women field staff should be interviewed. Some RAS programmes may sub-contract field staff from other organizations (for example, an NGO may work with government extension agents, or visa-versa). It is important to include a sample of these sub-contracted staff in the interviews in order to understand whether they receive the same training as regular staff. The field staff section of the interview guide is organized around seven key research questions, while the management section focuses on a subset of these questions where managers may have specific insights.

If the assessment is done internally, the organization may wish to develop and use formal questionnaires based on the assessment questions to collect anonymous information from managers and staff.

Information to look for

RAS organization

- how managers are working to promote a gender-sensitive organizational culture;

- how staff experience the gender sensitivity of organizational culture;

- staff insights on barriers to women's ability to work as RAS advisors and advance in the organization; and

- the training staff receive on gender issues and women's empowerment.

Service provision

- the extent to which providers are implementing organizational policies on gender-sensitive service provision;

- the challenges and constraints of working with rural men and women; and

- success stories.

Interview guide for managers

Since managers can give significant insight on organizational culture and institutional mechanisms, questions on these topics should be asked towards the beginning of the interview to ensure they are fully explored. Therefore, after the first assessment question, the interview focuses on questions 6 and 7 and ends with questions 2 through 5. See Table 4, Information required and suggested questions for interviewing managers (men and women).

TABLE 4   **Information required and suggested questions for interviewing managers (men and women)**

Assessment question 1:
Are rural women included as legitimate clients in the RAS programmes?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
- The organization's target audience (women/men farmers, types of farmers, etc.); - Whether the organization is reaching its goal concerning number/percentage of women farmers; why or why not; - Criteria used to select clients; and - Reasons the organization wants to work with women (if they do).	- What percent of the farmers you work with are women/men? Is your target, or is it above or below your target? - Do farmers need to meet certain criteria to receive services from your organization? If yes, what are they? Do these criteria apply equally to men and women? - If women are a target audiences, why do you think it is important to specifically work with them?

Assessment question 6:
Does the organizational culture, including staffing and other human resource policies, enable women to become and effectively function as RAS agents or managers?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
- The organization's targets and strategy for the recruitment of women staff, and methods that have been most successful; - Retention rates for men and women staff, and managers' thoughts on reasons for any differences between these rates; - Major reasons that women and men employees (field staff and management) leave the job; - The range of positions open to women in the organization; - Whether the organization considers women staff needs and gender-specific challenges of working with farmers; - Whether the needs of women RAS agents are addressed through family-friendly and gender-equality workplace policies (i.e. maternity and paternity leave, breast feeding facilities, child care, etc.); - The extent to which organizational values are non-discriminatory based on gender equality; - Whether there is a support network for women RAS advisors, and how this network functions;	- Does your organization use any specific strategy or approach to encourage recruitment of women (e.g. quotas.)? - How easy is it to recruit and retain women staff? What are the major challenges? What strategies have you found to be successful? - What are the main reasons that men field staff leave this job for? What about women field staff? - What roles do women staff play in the organization? - Do women staff face any gender-specific difficulties in going to communities or working with farmers? What are they? How does your organization address these difficulties? - Does your organization have policies about gender non-discrimination in the workplace? What are they? How are these policies implemented/enforced? - Does your organization have a gender equality policy? What kind of training do staff members receive on these policies? - Does a support network for women RAS staff exist in the organization? - Have you faced any barriers in becoming a manager because of your gender? What have those been? - What challenges do you face as a manager? Are any of these challenges related to being a man or being a woman?

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INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
■ Whether women managers perceive sexual discrimination or barriers to their career advancement that do not affect men colleagues; ■ Whether men and women advisory staff are treated equally by the organization and areas for improvement; and ■ Changes in organizational culture related to gender and triggers for these changes.	■ How do you promote a gender-sensitive organizational culture? What has worked well? ■ What are the major barriers to improving the gender sensitivity of your organizational culture?

Assessment question 7:
Are there institutional mechanisms in place to ensure the effective implementation of gender sensitive RAS and to hold staff accountable?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
Staff capacity development ■ Existence and content of staff training on gender analysis and gender-sensitive RAS planning and delivery; ■ Eligibility for training; ■ Availability of additional training or mentoring as needed; and ■ Availability of good practices in gender-sensitive RAS.	*Staff capacity development* ■ Does your organization provide gender training to your staff? Which staff? With what frequency? Do sub-contracted staff/farmer advisors receive this training? Do you attend these trainings? What did you learn? ■ In your opinion, what has been most effective in increasing the capacity of your staff to plan and deliver gender-sensitive RAS? ■ If staff members find something that works well for reaching women clients, is there a way they can share this information with the rest of the organization? How?
Institutional mechanisms ■ Whether the organization requires the collection of sex-disaggregated data by all staff; ■ How evaluation data on gender impacts is used in programming decisions and how this has changed the organizational approach; ■ If performance reviews look at whether and how staff reach and provide services to women; ■ Whether there is an adequate budget for gender training for staff; and ■ If basic gender knowledge is a requirement for recruitment.	*Institutional mechanisms* ■ Does your organization require that staff members collect sex-disaggregated data? How do you analyse this information and use it in making programme decisions? ■ How is the performance of staff evaluated by your organization? Are your staff evaluated on their efforts to reach out to rural women? How do you assess this? ■ Is there budget allocated to work with women farmers? ■ Is there budget allocated to enable woman advisors to carry out fieldwork (for transportation, teaming up with other woman advisors, etc.)? ■ In your time at the organizations, what changes have you seen in the organization's work with women clients? ■ Does your organization requires basic gender knowledge when recruiting new staff?

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Assessment question 2-5:
Are the constraints of rural women addressed and are rural women able to voice their demands and fully benefit from services?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
■ Major barriers that prevent women from accessing services, in the organization's experience. These barriers can relate to: – time and mobility constraints; – education and literacy constraints; – ability to express their demands and represent their interests; – delivery methods/approaches that work for women (group based, farmer-to-farmer); – access and adoption of technologies/how new technologies are selected; – access to financial services; – membership in rural and producer organizations; and – the type of information women farmers need and how the organization ensures its relevance. ■ Practices found to be effective in addressing barriers to women's RAS access. ■ Changes the organization has made to processes, policies, training, client feedback mechanisms, etc. to improve their work with women clients. ■ Challenges the organization faces in enabling women farmers to access and benefit from their services.	■ What do you think are the barriers for women and men to participate in in RAS/extension activities? ■ What strategies or practices have been found to be the most effective in making training/RAS activities accessible to both men and women, in terms of addressing the major barriers they face? ■ Why do you think these strategies have worked? Is there anything you had to change in terms of organizational policies and mechanisms to achieve results? ■ What are the challenges your organization faces in responding to the barriers women face to access and benefit from RAS? What would help to overcome these challenges?

BOX 16   **Good practice: women-friendly workplace polices for retaining women staff, PRADAN, India**

At PRADAN, resources are available to provide childcare facilities and build or improve bathrooms or housing for women staff, if appropriate facilities do not exist. There are also flexible working arrangements available for parents of young children. PRADAN has policies in place to address the different conditions that men and women may face when working in communities. Funds are available to cover costs of women's transportation needs, for example to upgrade to a better train class. Women staff can also hire cars for evening field visits if they wish. Women can also request that a co-worker accompany them to the field if they are traveling a distance in the evening, or otherwise feel uncomfortable.

Petrics *et al.*, forthcoming.

TABLE 5 **Information required and suggested questions for interviewing field staff (men and women)**

Assessment question 1: **Are rural women considered legitimate clients of the RAS programmes?**	
INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
▪ staff perceptions of women's role in agriculture; ▪ how RAS clients are defined by staff; ▪ staff opinions on who should receive RAS; ▪ how RAS clients are selected, criteria used, who makes the selection/sets criteria; ▪ good practices, successful strategies, approaches applied to include women as clients; and ▪ challenges that hinder staff members' ability to include women as clients.	▪ What kind of agricultural and rural advisory services do you provide? *Options include: crop production, marketing, livestock, organizing farmers, nutrition, post-harvest/processing, fish farming, input supply, etc., rural finance, entrepreneurship, weather insurance, etc.* ▪ What types of farmers participate in RAS? *Possible options include large commercial, medium-small commercial, farmers growing a major export commodity [specify], small-scale subsistence farmers, women farmers, young farmers (adults), landless farmers, rural youth, etc.* ▪ What percentage of the farmers you work with is women? What percentage is men? Are these your targets or above or below your targets? ▪ If the percentage of men and women is significantly different than your targets, why is this? ▪ Does the relative number of men and women clients differ by the type/focus of services you are providing? ▪ If so, what type of service involves more men and what involves more women? Why? ▪ Are there any types of farmers that your organization does not work with? If so, why? ▪ Do farmers need to meet certain criteria to receive services from your organization? ▪ If yes, what are the criteria? Do these apply equally to men and women? ▪ How would you define a farmer? Which member of a household that includes a married couple would you consider to be the farmer? ▪ Who selects the farmers for your RAS? ▪ What selection criteria do you use to identify the farmers you work with?

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Assessment question 2: How are the time and mobility constraints of rural women addressed?	
INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
- field staff awareness of women's time and mobility constraints; - field staff awareness of tools (seasonal and daily activity calendar, etc.) that can help them understand women client's time and mobility constraints; - extent to which staff use these tools; - if field staff plan their services at times and in locations that are suitable for women; - good practices, successful strategies or approaches used to overcome women's time and mobility constraints; and - challenges that hinder staff ability to respond to women's time and mobility constraints.	*Time* - In your opinion, what are the difficulties that hinder women's participation in extension/advisory activities? *For interviewers: share options below only if needed to facilitate discussion* - workload; - male migration; - bad roads; - lack of child care services; - socio-cultural norms (women need to ask for permission from their husband); - lack of time; and - others, please specify. - What do you consider when scheduling RAS activities (meetings, field days, trainings, demonstrations, etc.) with women and men farmers? - How do you make sure that you involve women in making decisions about scheduling activities? - Have you ever prepared a daily or seasonal calendar with women to see when they are available? Have you used other methods, tools? If so, please explain. - How do you decide the duration of an RAS activity for women? - How do you make sure you involve women in these decisions? *Mobility* - What do you consider when deciding the best venue for carrying out RAS activities for women and men farmers? - How do you make sure that you involve women in venue decisions? - Can women in this community easily travel from their homes to the venue? - Do you ever have RAS activities that require women farmers to travel more than five km from their home? How do women and men usually travel to these activities? If there are restrictions on women's movements, how do you ensure that they can attend activities that require leaving their household/community? - What strategies or practices have you found to be effective in making training/RAS accessible to both men and women, in terms of time and location? Why do you think these have worked? - Are there any challenges in responding to women's time and mobility constraints? What would help you to overcome these challenges?

Assessment question 3:
How are the literacy and education constraints of women addressed?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
■ field staff awareness of women's education, language and literacy constraints; ■ awareness of the tools that can help them understand or address education and literacy constraints; ■ extent to which they use these tools; ■ whether services are accessible to women, considering any education, language and literacy constraints; ■ good practices, successful strategies or approaches to overcome education and literacy constraints (pictures, songs, theatre, stories, video, radio, etc.); and ■ challenges that hinder the ability to respond to women's education and literacy constraints.	■ What language(s) do people in this community speak? ■ In what languages are RAS activities conducted? Can all participants understand this language? ■ Can most of the people you work with read and write the main local language? Can most of the people you work with read and write the national/official language? ■ Are there major differences between men and women's literacy levels in the local and national languages? ■ Do any of the extension methods you use require farmers to read and write? ■ What do you do to ensure that people who cannot read can understand what is going on? ■ Do you use printed materials to provide information to farmers? If so, what kind of materials do you use (brochures, posters, handouts, etc.)? ■ How is the printed material you use presented (mostly written, mostly pictures, combination of both)? ■ Do you use the same types of extension materials for all categories of farmers you work with, or do you use certain materials for certain groups (younger generation/older generation women, literate/illiterate women, etc.)? Why? ■ Who decides what kinds of materials to use? ■ Are draft materials pre-tested with women and men farmers? How do you make sure you have both women and men farmers' feedback on the draft materials? ■ What strategies or practices have you found to be most effective in providing information that overcomes women's literacy and education constraints? Why do you think these have worked? ■ Are there challenges to responding to women's literacy and education constraints? What would help you overcome these challenges?

Assessment question 4:
Does the program facilitate rural women's ability to represent their interests and voice their demands for RAS?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION

■ awareness that women have challenges in making their voices heard and representing their interests;
 	
■ knowledge of what these challenges are, and the reasons behind them; and
 	
■ strategies to overcome these challenges (e.g., encouraging women to form self-help groups, producer organizations; advising producers' organizations how to become more inclusive and gender-sensitive; working with women to help them increase their confidence about speaking in public).
	■ How do you learn about women and men's needs/demands for RAS?
	
	■ What do you think are the main barriers to women in this community making their voices heard about their needs/demands for RAS?
	
	■ Do you work with or encourage women to form/participate in any of the following types of groups? What strategies do you use to do this?
	  – producer organizations/cooperatives,
	  – self-help groups,
	  – savings, credit groups, or
	  – others, please specify.
	
	■ If you work with producer organizations (PO), what specific measure have been taken by your organization to enable women to represent their interests in the POs? Have these efforts been successful? Why? Or why not?
	
	■ In your opinion, to get women's demands for services heard, is it more effective to work through women-only groups or mixed groups?
	
	■ What strategies or practices have you found to be effective in helping women to express their needs and interests and to voice their demand for RAS? Why do you think these have worked?
	
	■ What kinds of challenges do you face in helping women represent their interests and make their voices heard in terms of their demands for RAS?

BOX 17 **Good practice: mechanisms to enhance women's ability to represent their interests, TechnoServe 's Coffee Initiative, Ethiopia**

Social norms in the Jimma region of Ethiopia discourage women from voicing their demands and expressing their opinions in mixed-sex public settings. This created a challenge for the Coffee Initiative (CI) to increase women's capacity to advocate for their interests. One strategy that CI used to give women leadership experience, build their confidence and change perceptions about their abilities was to establish quotas for women farmer to farmer trainer (FT) and coop leaders. The project also promoted women as farmer field group (FFG) leaders by requiring that each group select a woman as either the 'focal farmer' or 'deputy focal farmer'. Within FFGs, the staff encouraged women to express their needs for services and information.

Petrics *et al.*, forthcoming.

Assessment question 5:
Are RAS programmes designed and delivered in a way that allows rural women to effectively participate and benefit including: i) the approach used e.g. group based, farmer to farmer, ICTs, etc., ii) content provided and iii) the technology introduced?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION

Approach/information delivery method
■ field staff awareness of participatory approaches for RAS delivery and the extent to which participatory methods are used;
■ ability to respond to women's demands in terms of what delivery methods are used;
■ awareness of any constraints women face due to the type of extension approach used, and their ability to respond;
■ understanding of what methods women prefer and why; and
■ awareness of the need to address social and gender inequalities and help women develop their identity as farmers.
	Approach/information delivery method
	■ How do you share information/knowledge/ technologies related to agriculture with farmers (demonstrations, farmer field schools, etc.)?
	  – Do you use the same methods for men and women?
	  – What kind of participatory methods do you use?
	  – If ICTs are used, who in the community has access to ICTs?
	■ Do you know what methods of information delivery are preferred by women farmers? By men farmers? How do you know this?
	■ Who decides on the methods to use? If it is you, how do you make your decision *(for the interviewers: do they consult farmers?)*?
	■ What do you do to help women overcome gender and social inequalities and to build their identity as farmers?

Content
■ awareness that women may need different agricultural information than men (given their different roles and also additional tasks and responsibilities to those of men);
■ tools used to assess women's and men's needs, control over resources and assets; and
■ how providers incorporate women's preferences and needs in the selection of topics covered by RAS.
	Content
	■ In your experience, what kind of information/ services do men and women farmers in this community need with regard to agriculture/rural livelihoods?
	■ What approaches or methods do you use to find out what information women and men farmers want?
	■ How do you design the content of your services?
	  – Who develops the content of training, farmer field school curricula, radio programs, etc.?
	  – Which staff are involved?
	  – How much attention is paid to the different information needs of women and men farmers?
	■ What do you do if you realize that you don't have knowledge about the information/technology/skills that are demanded by the farmers? (Follow-up: do you team up with another provider organization?)
	■ How do you collect feedback from women and men farmers on the relevance of the content of your services?
	■ In your experience, what has worked well in selecting content that is useful for women?
	■ Is there anything that makes it difficult for you to respond to women farmers' needs? What would help you to overcome this challenge?

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INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION

Technologies introduced
■ awareness that the best way to ensure a technology meets needs is to involve users in the selection and development of the technology from the beginning. Are women involved in this process?
■ whether providers carry out a gender analysis before introducing a new technology;
■ use of participatory approaches (participatory innovation development, participatory evaluation of technology) in developing or selecting new technologies;
■ whether the needs of women and the results of the gender analysis are considered or prioritized when the organization discusses new technologies; and
■ whether gender disaggregated data and gender-related constraints to adoption are explored.
	Technologies introduced
	■ What new agricultural practices/technologies skills, and information has the organization introduced in the communities in the past five years?
	■ Who are the main users of these practices/technologies? (men, women, elderly/young, etc.) What groups are using which practices?
	■ Were any of the new technologies or practices introduced specifically to meet the needs of women farmers? If so, describe.
	■ What is the process used by your organization to select a technology to disseminate to farmers? (examples below, if needed)
	  – criteria? needs analysis?
	  – gender analysis?
	  – user input?
	  – on-farm trials?
	  – participatory evaluations?
	  – others? Please specify.
	■ Who decides which technologies will be promoted? Do you have a say in which technologies will be introduced?
	■ What do you think are the main barriers that keep men from adopting new technologies, and what are the main barriers for women?
	■ How do you ensure that a technology meets the needs of users? What have you/your organization done to get women involved in selecting and evaluating potential new technologies? What worked well? Less well?
	■ Before introducing a new technology, do you assess how it will impact women's work burden?
	■ What have been the main challenges in encouraging women to identify and evaluate technology?
	■ What have been the main challenges in identifying and introducing technologies that are useful to women?
	■ After introducing a new technology, what does your organization do to learn about adoption rates and get feedback from farmers?
	■ How do you ensure that you obtain feedback from women?

Assessment question 6:
Does the organizational culture, including staffing and other human resource policies, enable women to become and effectively function as RAS agents or managers?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
▪ proactive strategies applied to recruit women RAS field agents; ▪ the extent to which the needs of women RAS agents are addressed through family-friendly and gender-sensitive work place policies, such as maternity and paternity leave, breastfeeding facilities, child care, etc.; ▪ retention rates of women and men RAS advisors, and the primary reasons that men and women advisors leave the job; ▪ whether organizational values and beliefs discriminate based on gender; ▪ women RAS agents' access to support networks; ▪ women RAS agents' perceptions of sexual discrimination in the office (i.e. whether they are treated equally or taken seriously by their colleagues/management); ▪ whether managers often verbalize the importance of targeting women and inspire staff in the organization to be gender sensitive; ▪ whether gender issues are ever trivialized by leaders and other staff; ▪ whether gender responsiveness is incentivized in the organizational reward and promotion system; and ▪ whether gender champions exist in the organization.	▪ How did you find out about the job you have now? Does your organization make any special efforts to hire women advisors? ▪ Did you face any difficulties in becoming a RAS advisor because of your gender and, if so, what were they (If the respondent is a man, ask whether they think women face any specific barriers in becoming advisors)? ▪ What roles do men and women staff play in the organization (i.e. are there generally certain types of advisors? Are there women in leadership positions?)? ▪ What difficulties, if any, do women and men advisors in your organization face in carrying out their work? Have you faced any challenges specifically because you are a woman/man? ▪ How does your employer/organization try to help you overcome these difficulties (probe about any gender-based difficulties, and what action is taken)? Can you team up with other women advisors or use cars when you are concerned for your physical safety? ▪ Are there any support networks for women staff members in your organization? ▪ Are there people at work you can turn to for advice? Do you feel you are treated the same as your (opposite gender) colleagues? ▪ What is your office's policy on sexual harassment and gender discrimination? Have you experienced either at work? ▪ Which types of farmers do you mainly work with: men, women, both? Can you work with both men and women effectively? Why or why not? ▪ Does your organization have policies that enable you to balance private life responsibilities with professional duties? What are the policies (e.g. maternity and paternity leave, breast feeding facilities, and child care, etc.)? Are you able to benefit from these policies? (if facilities exist, ask about their quality). If not, why not? ▪ In this organization, what are the barriers to women's career advancement that do not affect men (Alternatively, what characteristics does a successful person in this organization possess?)? ▪ Does your organization give you the chance to participate in training/professional development opportunities? Are there any factors that make it difficult for you to take advantage of such opportunities?

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INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
	▪ How can women/men staff ensure they are able to contribute to meetings (make their voices heard and opinions known in office meetings)?
	▪ Do you feel that your managers take gender issues seriously? Do they incentivize staff to be gender sensitive?

Assessment question 7:
Are there institutional mechanisms in place to ensure the effective implementation of gender-sensitive RAS and to hold staff accountable?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
Staff capacity development ▪ existence and content of staff training on gender analysis, tools and gender-sensitive RAS planning and delivery; ▪ frequency and participation in this training (i.e. only women? only field advisors? everyone?); ▪ staff ability to request additional training or mentoring if they feel they need to further improve their skills; ▪ whether gender training has prompted staff to change their attitude or behavior; and ▪ mechanism or structure by which good practices in gender-sensitive RAS/in addressing women's needs are shared within the organization; frequency with which this sharing happens.	*Staff capacity development* ▪ Have you received any specific gender training or capacity development on working with women? What did you learn from this training? ▪ Did you receive this training when you started work or is it held periodically? Does everyone participate in this training, or only certain staff? If you want to learn more about gender, could you request additional training? ▪ Have you made any changes in your personal life as the result of what you learned in the training? ▪ Are there any formal or informal ways that you and your colleagues share practices or approaches to reach women and address their needs? ▪ What has been most effective in increasing your personal capacities in planning and delivering gender-sensitive RAS? ▪ What have been the major challenges in increasing your capacity to deliver gender-sensitive RAS? How have you tried to overcome them?
Institutional mechanisms ▪ RAS staff's knowledge of their organization's gender policy (if one exists); ▪ RAS agents' knowledge of organization's monitoring and evaluation requirements (for example, sex disaggregated data collection, etc.); ▪ whether RAS staff are assessed (in performance reports) on whether they reach and provide services to women; and ▪ whether staff can use extra budget for specific efforts to reach women farmers, if needed.	*Institutional mechanisms* ▪ Does your organization have a gender policy? ▪ When you collect data about a project, do you collect separate data for men and women? When did you start doing this? Has anything about your evaluations changed since you started collecting disaggregated data? ▪ How is your performance reviewed at work? Follow up questions: Are you evaluated on the numbers of women/farmers that you work with? Are there any policies in place that reward you for working with women? ▪ Is there any budget that you can access for working with women farmers specifically? Or to team up with other women advisors for field work? Would management be receptive to spending additional money to reach women farmers? ▪ When you applied for this job, did you have to have a minimum gender knowledge?

4. Assessment guide

4.3.2. Client level

The assessment at the client level should be conducted through *group interviews* with single-sex groups of women and men clients of the RAS programme. The corresponding tool, found in Table 6, compiles the information needed, organized by the key assessment questions and question guides that can be used and adapted.

Objective

The objective of the exercise is to understand clients' perspectives on the services they have received. Analysis at this level will help validate the providers' responses and elucidate what the RAS organization is currently doing that works for rural women and men, and what could be improved. This will help GRAST users to understand how official polices are implemented on the ground, what does and does not work for RAS clients and their perceptions of how the programme impacts their lives and livelihoods. Client-level analysis aims to elicit evidence on rural women's and men's access to and benefits from RAS. It also seeks to develop an understanding of the extent to which rural women are able to access RAS, and how RAS organizations address the constraints that impede access, such as: education and literacy limitations; time and mobility constraints; method of delivery and type of content; and the extent to which women are able to voice their demands for adequate RAS.

How to do it

The client-level analysis is carried out through *semi-structured single-sex group interviews* of eight to 12 clients of the RAS organization/programme being assessed. Interviews should address the topics listed in Table 6.[10] In addition to the guides provided with the GRAST, the assessment team can develop their own instruments based on the assessment questions and the chart of information needed. From these guidelines, GRAST users can for example develop formal questionnaires to collect more detailed information. Interviews should last for two hours maximum. Questions 6 and 7 of the GRAST key assessment questions are not relevant to clients; therefore, these questions are not included in the client-level interview guides.

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[10] See methodological note in Section 3 for information on how to select clients for group interviews and the number of groups to interview

TABLE 6 **Information guides for client-level interviews**

Assessment question 1:
Are rural women included as legitimate clients of the RAS programmes?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION

▪ which community members can and cannot access information from the programme (classified by gender and age; by location; by enterprise; etc.);
▪ process for accessing RAS (how clients are selected, what they need to do to access RAS);
▪ any criteria that must be met to access RAS;
▪ how and by whom criteria were determined, if known; and
▪ approach applied by RAS programme to include women as clients.
	▪ Where did you hear about the programme?
	▪ Who can participate in the programme? Did you have to meet any selection criteria to participate, e.g.
	  – land ownership;
	  – land size;
	  – cultivating certain crops;
	  – marital status;
	  – literacy;
	  – age;
	  – income level;
	  – head of the family;
	  – part of an ethnic group; or
	  – member of a group/producer organization.
	▪ How did you express your interest in participating in the programme?
	▪ How and by whom were you selected?
	▪ How did you decide whether you or your husband/wife should participate in the programme?
	▪ Are there any groups of the community who were not able to participate in this programme (e.g. single mothers)?

Assessment question 2:
How are the time and mobility constraints of rural women addressed?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
▪ how clients find out a training event will happen; ▪ typical training locations and times; ▪ which community members are able to attend; ▪ how easy it is for participants to attend (location/schedule); ▪ how clients get to training events; ▪ whether programme staff have done a scheduling/calendar activity with clients, or asked for feedback on training location/timing; ▪ how much mobility women have; ▪ who (men, women) can attend training events located outside of the community;	▪ How often do the programme advisors visit your community? ▪ How often do programme activities take place? ▪ When are programme activities scheduled (what time of day, which days, how often, duration)? ▪ Where do programme activities take place (your plot, neighboring plot, closest urban area, etc.)? ▪ Who schedules these activities and chooses the venue? Are these days, times and locations convenient for you? ▪ Were you consulted about the time and venue for the activities? How (e.g. did advisors draw daily or monthly activity calendars with programme participants?)? ▪ Were you allowed to bring your children to the programme activities / did the programme organize child care so that you could attend activities?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
■ factors that make it difficult or prevent women from attending training events; ■ client preferences about timing and locations; and ■ changes desired, if any.	■ Have any of the programme activities require you to stay away from home overnight or for several days? ■ If so, what type of transportation did you use to get to programme activities? ■ If you could not use transportation, why not (cultural factors, lack of funds, etc.)? ■ How easy has it been for you to attend programme activities in general? ■ Did the programme help you attend activities? ■ If so, what factors enabled you to participate?

Assessment question 3:
How are the literacy and education constraints of rural women addressed?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION

■ language(s) used to deliver training/ materials;
 ■ language(s) spoken by clients;
 ■ the programme's inclusion of and accessibility to illiterate community members;
 ■ use of materials or methods that don't require literacy (which materials/methods?); frequency of use of such materials;
 ■ how illiterate people participate in training events; and
 ■ innovative approaches used to make training accessible to clients who cannot read and write.
	■ How is information is shared in the RAS programme, e.g. through:
	   – written materials;
	   – videos;
	   – radio;
	   – songs;
	   – pictures; or
	   – stories/theatre?
	 ■ Which methods of information sharing do you find the most useful (rank your top three)? Did the programme ask you about your preferences?
	 ■ Do you need to be able to read and write to participate fully in programme trainings and activities?
	 ■ Is printed material used? In which language is it presented? Can all programme participants read this language?
	 ■ Which language is used in trainings?
	 ■ Can you easily understand the language used in training events?
	 ■ If not, what language would you prefer?
	 ■ What has the programme done to make information available to participants that cannot read/write?

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Assessment question 4:
Does the programme facilitate the ability of rural women to represent their interests and voice their demands for RAS?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
- whether the RAS organization/ programme provides information primarily to individuals or through groups; - Is RAS provided to mixed or single sex groups? – Is it easy for women to participate in mixed-sex groups? – How do RAS staff facilitate women's participation? – What do these groups need to do to access the programme? - Process for joining and participating in training groups: – criteria, rules of entry; – how decisions are made in groups; – how leaders are selected; and – how RAS staff encourage all group members to participate. - whether women feel their ability to participate in public has changed as a result of being in these groups.	- Does the programme primarily deliver information to individuals or to groups? - Are you member of any group, e.g. – self-help/ savings and loan group; – faith-based group (church, mosque, temple, etc.); – producer organization; – other? Please specify. - Did the programme help you to join or organize a group? How? - Did the programme help you to become member of a farmers' organization/group? How? - Are the groups you belong to only women/men, or mixed sex? In mixed sex group meetings, do women and men participate equally? Why or why not? - Do you feel comfortable speaking up and expressing your opinion in mixed sex groups? What about single-sex groups with people of different ages? Why or why not? - Has your level of comfort with expressing your opinion changed as the result of this programme? - Could you take on a leadership role in a farmers' organization? Why or why not?

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Assessment question 5:
Are RAS programmes designed and delivered in a way that allows rural women to effectively participate and benefit, including i) the approach used e.g. group based, farmer to farmer, ICTs, etc.; ii) type of information provided; and iii) the technology introduced?

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION

Approach
 ■ methods used to share agricultural information and provide services (e.g. formal training, flyers, lectures, ICTs, demonstrations, farmer field schools etc.);
 ■ which ICTs are used (cell phone, radio, TV, computer, videos, other) and how (listening groups, individually);
 ■ which members of the community have access to the ICTs used;
 ■ whether participatory methods are used, and which ones;
 ■ how participants are selected;
 ■ how decisions are made in a participatory training, and by whom;
 ■ how participatory methods are implemented;
 ■ client preferences about materials and methods used to provide information; and
 ■ changes desired, if any.
	Approach
	 ■ Do you receive information from both women and men advisors?
	 ■ Do you feel comfortable interacting with both women and men advisors, or do you prefer one or the other? Why?
	 ■ What type of methods does the programme use to share information, practices, and technologies?
	   – lectures;
	   – group meetings: single or mixed sex groups;
	   – farmer field schools;
	   – farmer to farmer exchanges;
	   – demonstration plots;
	   – theatre, puppet shows, market day promotions; or
	   – other, please specify.
	 ■ Which of the above methods do you prefer and why (rank them)?
	 ■ Does the programme use information and communication technologies to share information? Which ones?
	   – Radio,
	   – mobile phone (call or text?),
	   – internet, or
	   – TV, video.
	 ■ If the programme uses ICTs (radio, mobile phone, computer, and television):
	   – Do you own/have access to a mobile phone and know how to use it?
	   – Do both women and men own/access mobile phones in your community?
	   – Are there any factors that make it more difficult for women to own/access ICT? What are they?
	   – Were any ICTs provided by the programme? If so, were they provided on an individual, group, or community basis?

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4. Assessment guide

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUGGESTED QUESTION
Content ■ the type of information and new practices provided by information sources, i.e. production, postharvest processing, marketing, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, nutrition, gender, etc.; ■ crops and livestock that RAS provider advises on; ■ information, knowledge or practices considered most helpful by clients; ■ who decides which topics will be covered, and how do they decide? Is the process participatory? ■ mechanisms that providers use to get client feedback on content; ■ how programme/agent ensures that topics covered meet both men's and women's needs; ■ client satisfaction with the information and technologies provided; ■ content, timeliness, perceived quality; and ■ information clients want from the programme but don't currently receive.	*Content* ■ What topics does the programme cover? ■ Which topics are the most relevant for you? Rank your top three. ■ By whom and how are training topics selected? ■ Were you consulted on your main agricultural challenges and the type of information you need? How? Were women and men consulted separately? ■ Are you able to give feedback to RAS staff about the content offered by the programme (information, technologies, and practices) or how this information is shared? How do you give this feedback? ■ Have you noticed whether the programme has considered your feedback and incorporated your suggestions into their services? ■ Do you have other agricultural challenges or information needs that are not addressed by the programme? What are they? ■ Where do you get information to address these challenges currently?

Technologies
■ new agricultural technologies introduced by RAS:
  – how they are selected;
  – which have men and women adopted, and why;
  – usefulness to men and women and why;
  – whose work burden the technologies have reduced/increased;
  – which technologies men and women have rejected, and why; and
  – who was involved in testing and selecting technologies.
  – technologies desired by clients; how these preferences are shared with provider.
	Technologies
	■ What technologies (e.g. adoption of new seed varieties, line to line sowing, safe and improved cooking stoves, water treatment for safe drinking water, irrigation, etc.) have been introduced by this programme?
	■ How was this technology selected? Were you consulted about what technologies you need?
	■ Did you find the technologies introduced by the programme useful? Why or why not?
	■ Have the introduced technologies increased or reduced your workload?
	■ How have the agricultural information/technologies/practices you learned about through the programme impacted your life?
	
	Closing questions:
	■ What could be done to enable women to participate better in programme activities and meetings?
	■ What would be your suggestions to the programme on how they could contribute more to improving the livelihoods of the people in the community; particularly those of women?

BOX 18 **Good practice: farmer-to-farmer advice in the Haku Wiñay Programme, Peru**

Haku Wiñay uses a farmer-to-farmer approach. Trained farmers called *yachachiq* provide RAS to the communities. The yachachiq may provide RAS by coming to individual homes (for example, for cooking and family garden training), or by holding meetings or group sessions on business development. Since the yachachiq regularly coordinate with participants, women have become comfortable with having the yachachiq in their homes. In addition, the yachachiq are often from the same or surrounding community and thus are familiar with the culture and the local language. They are readily available to the community and can follow up with programme participants on a regular basis. Training events and activities are generally hands-on and participatory.

Petrics *et al.*, forthcoming.

Interview with a farmer-to-farmer advisor (yachachiq) in Peru.
©FAO/Hajnalka Petrics

Participants of a rural diversification project in the tomato powder production unit in Tunisia.
©FAO/Nikos Economopoulus/Magnum Photos

5. Annexes

5.1. Additional questions for group interviews with clients and service providers regarding the use of farmer field schools, ICTs and printed extension materials

If the research team would like to gather more detail on specific methods of delivery, Table 7 below provides some of the potential questions to ask clients.

TABLE. 7   **Supplemental questions for clients on methods of RAS delivery**

Farmer field school (FFS) (can be modified for farmer participatory research).	
Decision-making/participation.	▪ How are decisions made in the FFS group about which topics to study? For example, if the group is testing a 'typical' practice, how do you decide what is typical, since men and women, may do things differently on their farms? ▪ Can women participate to the same extent as men in making decisions (e.g. deciding on the special topics)? ▪ Are there any factors that make it difficult for women to participate in decision-making in the FFS? ▪ Does the facilitator encourage women to play an active role in the FFS? If so, explain.
If the women being interviewed are farmer-trainers.	▪ How were you selected to be a farmer-trainer? Did you have to meet any criteria? ▪ How many women are farmer-trainers? How many men? ▪ How long was the training course you had to attend? Where was it? (Ask scheduling and location questions) ▪ Did you face any gender-specific difficulties in becoming a farmer-trainer?
ICTs (ask specifically about any ICTs mentioned by the group previously: cell phone, radio, TV… If multiple ICTs were used, ask for details on all of them).	▪ How do farmers get access to information provided through ICTs (e.g. through group training, organized group meetings such as radio listening clubs, on their own)? ▪ What topics do farmers learn about through ICTs? ▪ Who are the main target groups? ▪ What language is used? Is this the most spoken language in the area? ▪ Which farmers are the targets/intended users of the information disseminated through the ICTs (women, men, youth)? ▪ What difficulties do farmers face in getting information through ICTs (e.g. time of broadcast, language, literacy)? Do women face specific difficulties with getting information through ICTs?

Where the programme does not assist farmers to access ICT- disseminated information (i.e. people must access the ICT-delivered information on their own).	▪ In cases where women/men don't own ICTs, can they easily access them (e.g. by borrowing them from household members, friends, neighbours)? ▪ Radio/TV specific: What time of day is the extension programme on radio or TV? Who is able to listen/watch at that time?
Printed extension material (e.g. posters, fliers, guidebooks, pamphlets, etc.).	▪ Are printed material distributed to the community clear and easy for community members to understand? ▪ Do pictures/drawings on fliers/posters show both men and women farmers? ▪ How are these materials distributed? (e.g. posted in community, left at a central location, delivered to people's houses, etc.) To whom are they distributed? ▪ Who in the community has access to printed extension materials? Who does not have access? Why not? ▪ Does the programme use other ways to get information about agriculture to farmers (theatre, puppet shows, market day promotions, etc.)?

5.2. Potential participatory activities

Using participatory tools in group interviews

This section includes information and guidance about participatory activities that can be used to answer the questions outlined in the GRAST, in combination with group interviews, given the time, interest and facilitation skills of the research team. These activities provide fresh, interactive ways to gather information on several of the research topics through a single activity. They ensure that the analysis focuses on the research themes, and that visual materials are produced. In fact, the activities will result in different types of data, which can be used to enrich and triangulate the results. However, none of the activities can gather information on all of the research questions, and so they must be accompanied by facilitated discussion.

Given the time-intensive nature of participatory activities, only one of these should be used per group interview. The participatory activities should be reviewed during the training/piloting session. Information from one activity may shed light on a number of research questions. As such, that activity should provide a helpful guide to researchers when asking questions on a range of thematic areas. More importantly, it is critical to understand that the discussions and sharing involved in participatory approaches are as important, if not more important, than the results of the participatory activity. The interaction, debate and/or consensus must be explored, given time, and recorded, as this will bring rich data to the study.

5.2.1. Participatory force field analysis, with scoring

Materials needed: Flip charts, pens (enough for everyone), two different colors of index cards, tape.

Topics covered: This will vary depending on the group – the facilitator will need to be very familiar with the GRAST assessment questions and the 'information needed' tables, and be prepared to probe for more detail or ask additional questions, depending on what participants decide to include in the activity.

Overview

A force field analysis examines positive and negative forces for change in either the current situation, or a future desired situation. It can help participants visualize the factors influencing the desired change. The change or state is written or depicted in a box in the centre of a flip-chart. Negative forces are listed on arrows on one side of the centre box, and positive forces are listed on arrows on the other. Depending on literacy levels, the forces can either be written or represented through pictures. The length of the arrows typically denotes the strength of the force (i.e. long arrows show a stronger force) (Kumar, 2001; MEAS, 2014; Ramalingam, 2006).

In the group interviews, force field analysis is combined with group discussion, because a force field analysis alone will not draw out all of the information needed for the GRAST. However, the analysis can serve as a good starting point for discussion. Depending on the group size, it may be better to have small groups work on their own force field analyses, then report back to the entire group.

The facilitator will introduce the concept of the force field analysis. The future desired situation in this analysis could be that women have access to the agricultural information that they need. The facilitator asks participants to imagine this situation as a balance between positive forces (which will make it happen) and negative forces (which will try to prevent it from happening) (Kumar, 2001). Participants will then be asked to list the positive, then the negative forces. These can either be written on small cards, or drawn on the cards if not everyone is able to read and write. The positive forces will go on cards of one color, and the negative forces on cards of another color. The group should discuss the cards, and eliminate any duplicates. They can post them on the wall with tape, and decide if anything is missing. The group will then decide the strength of each of the forces, by moving the cards close to or away from the desired situation box (with further away being a stronger force).

Following the activity, the facilitator will lead a discussion on the diagram. They will need to probe the topic areas that show up in the diagram, and ask the group questions about areas are not included. This may lead to some additional forces being added to the initial diagram, if the group feels that important areas have been missed. (Kumar, 2001; MEAS, 2014; Ramalingam, 2006).

5.2.2. Most significant change

Materials needed: paper, pens, tape recorder.

Topics covered: Effectiveness of the study programme in improving women's access to RAS.

Overview

Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory monitoring and evaluation tool that asks stakeholders to share their stories of the most significant change or impact resulting from a project or programme. These stories are reviewed by a selected group of stakeholders (community members and/or other stakeholders) who discuss the stories, and identify the ones that they feel are most significant. This process is typically repeated on a fairly regular basis as a form of monitoring, and the most significant stories are often collected in a document for evaluation. This document should also include the reasons for collecting these specific MSC stories. The programme may choose to quantify some of the story impacts (Serrat, 2009).

Given time constraints, we suggest a modified MSC activity, rather than a full M&E process. However, it may be valuable for the staff members of the study organizations to review and discuss the MSC stories, which can be used in programme evaluation. For this activity, groups will be asked to think about the RAS programme, then asked the following question: "Looking back over the last (time period), what do you think was the most significant change in women's access to useful agricultural information/ technologies in this community due to the programme?" Depending on the literacy levels and preferences of the group, they can either write their story, use pictures or share stories orally. If written or drawn, the stories will be shared and discussed with the group. In addition to describing the change, the storyteller should be asked why the change was important.

The MSC will not capture all of the aspects covered by the GRAST, but nonetheless can provide valuable information about women's access to RAS that will complement data on how best practices are implemented. It may also shed light on innovative practices that the provider is using. If a research team uses MSC, it is suggested that they conduct MSC activities with one or two groups of women, and then use group interviews to answer the rest of the questions suggested by the GRAST.

5.2.3. Social network analysis, with scoring

Materials needed: 10-20 black markers, various colored markers, flip chart, and a large piece of paper (for map of network).

Topics directly covered: Information sources, clients, methods (including group, participatory, methods tailored to women's literacy and education, ICTs), content.

Related discussion topics: timing and location of training, feedback mechanisms, training processes, how information is used.

Overview

Social Network Analysis (SNA) is a tool that can be used to understand connections and information flows between different individuals and organizations. SNA can be fairly complex and is often used to gather statistical data on characteristics of actors and their relationships (Springer and de Steiguer, 2011). For our purpose, we suggest using a simplified, participatory SNA based on mapping and focused on RAS information flows in the community. SNAs on agriculture and natural resources have been used with farmer groups in Colombia (*Douthwaite et al.*, 2006), women's groups in Nepal (Gibbon and Pokhrel, 1999) and watershed groups in the United States (Springer and de Steiguer, 2011), among others. In Colombia, participatory SNA was found to increase the ability of farmer groups to visualize their networks, and to build their capacity to strengthen them strategically (Douthwiate *et al.*, 2006).

In this activity, participants are asked to brainstorm sources of agricultural information in their community. The sources can be both formal (government, NGOs, groups, etc.) and informal (neighbors, family members). Using a large piece of paper, we collectively map out the sources of information, and which participants are connected to them. The facilitator can also ask participants about other information sources they know about but do not use. Once the connections are drawn, the participants can brainstorm the main methods that the different sources use to provide information (i.e. verbally, flyers, training, etc.). Using colored markers, participants code the connections based on the methods used by that providers. Some providers may use multiple methods of

information, which can be demonstrated by the use of multiple colors. The facilitator should pay particular attention to and encourage discussion on group-based methods (probing for how the groups work, etc.), use of methods that are accessible to people with limited literacy (raising the topic, if it does not come up), the use of ICTs (asking who has access to the different ICTs) and the use of participatory methods. Participants can also state whether they work primarily with men or women advisors from the different points on the social networking map. A scoring exercise could also be done, either relating to preferences on methods or preferences for information sources.

Once the map is drawn, the facilitator can focus the discussion on the provider being evaluated, asking in-depth questions about their RAS provision (drawing an enlarged version of the provider and their connections, as shown on the initial map). The participants can then add in the topics and technologies covered by the provider (drawing pictures on the enlarged map). The facilitator should also probe for more details about the training provided by provider, including language used, timing and location of training; use of feedback mechanisms to encourage client input; and client use of the information they have received. At the end of the session, the facilitator can ask the group to reflect on the map, including any major gaps that remain and connections they would like to strengthen.

5.2.4. Direct observation

Researchers can also observe programme staff conducting RAS activities with clients. Using the GRAST's information-needed chart as a guide, researchers can observe the methods used, how staff and clients interact, women's ability and willingness to participate and express their opinions, and more. After the observation, the researcher can discuss the activity with the staff members and ask questions for clarification. Direct observation can be a very valuable way to assess how RAS is delivered in practice.

Rural women engaging in a participatory activity during GRAST validation group interview in Ethiopia.
©FAO/Kelsey Barale

5.3. Recommendations for gender-sensitive RAS and examples of good practice based on the GRAST validation results from three case studies

FAO led three case studies to validate the GRAST and capture good practices for gender-sensitive RAS at the individual and organizational levels. The selected cases were Haku Wiñay, a government programme in Peru; PRADAN, a national NGO in India; and TechnoServe, an international NGO in Ethiopia. The case studies were conducted in partnership with the Institute for Peruvian Studies (IEP) and the Latin American Center for Rural Development (RIMISP) in Peru, the Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP) in India and Mekelle University in Ethiopia, respectively.

The findings from these cases suggest practical solutions to apply after the GRAST has been carried out and the areas of selected organizations or programmes that need improvement have been identified. The solutions are grouped into five core areas, which reflect the key assessment areas of the GRAST. These solutions aim to help RAS providers ensure that their services serve all farmers, including women.

1. Recognize women as legitimate clients in RAS programmes

RAS services are often not tailored to women's needs when women are not seen as legitimate farmers. The work done by women can be obscured by the view that they are 'helpers' on a family farm rather than farmers, which minimizes the diverse and critical roles that women play in agriculture. Possible actions to take:

- Target RAS provision to individual farmers, both men and women, rather than to households. Often, RAS is targeted towards the "head of household," usually male. The "head-of-household" approach is premised on a number of assumptions. One assumption is that the information provided to the household head will reach the rest of the household. This depends on intra-household dynamics which can vary widely. In many cases, this information does not reach all household members who need it. Further, the same information is not always equally useful to different members of the same household. Often, men and women tend different crops, care for different livestock, take on different forms of labour within the household, and face different constraints. This often runs counter to ideas about family farms or household crops in which all family members are assumed to contribute to and benefit from. A carefully conducted gender analysis will reveal a more nuanced perspective on how men and women spend their time in each context. By designing RAS provision for individuals rather than household heads, the work of women in agriculture is made more visible, and can be better supported through RAS.

- Use the results of the gender analysis and gender-sensitive needs assessment to identify both shared and divergent needs of men and women farmers, as well as needs that may vary across other socioeconomic characteristics. The needs of both men and women farmers should be built into RAS programme design and implementation.

- Invest time in getting to know target communities and build trust with local people, particularly community leaders. Building trust with target communities can help RAS providers overcome barriers to women's participation by

demonstrating that the programme is legitimate and beneficial. This is especially important in contexts in which women may not be able to participate without the consent of their husbands, family or other community members.

■ Everyone has a role in gender equality: even if a programme focuses mainly on women, sensitize both men and women on the importance of women's involvement to maintain community support and understanding.

■ Adopt multiple approaches to encourage women's involvement in activities.[11] By engaging in multiple strategies, staff are more likely to overcome the barriers women face in accessing RAS.

■ Conduct home visits to follow up with participants individually if it is difficult for women to access services directly or fully participate in advisory activities. Home visits may help staff to better understand the constraints of potential RAS participants, to solicit feedback in a way in which the potential participant feels more comfortable and to gain the understanding and support of family members for women's participation in RAS.

■ Be accountable: use gender-related indicators, such as the number or proportion of women members and leaders, as criteria for measuring success and in selecting and rewarding partner organizations.

2. Address women's time, mobility and educational constraints

Women's roles and responsibilities often mean that they face time and mobility constraints participating in RAS activities that take place far from home or when these activities conflict with other responsibilities, such as caring for family members. There are many ways that RAS staff can help women farmers overcome these barriers to participation.

■ Work with women and men to collect information on their daily and seasonal schedules, and ensure that field staff have that information. This should be used to schedule RAS provision, in consultation with women, at a time that is convenient and possible for women to attend.

■ To ensure the cultural context is well understood, hire local women and men as advisors. Engage local experts who best understand how to identify and navigate barriers to women's participation in RAS that may not be visible to staff.

■ Take seriously concerns about safety, as well as the financial and cultural obstacles posed by different forms of transit for women as these challenges may restrict them from participating in advisory activities. To overcome these constraints, producers may be organized in groups in more accessible locations, or staff may plan activities with individual households depending on feasibility and context. RAS staff may consider providing transportation.

■ Care responsibilities are a major constraint to women's ability to participate in RAS activities. Allow women to bring children to advisory activities or provide child care.

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[11] In Ethiopia, TechoServe staff solicited women's participation in the coffee training programme by going directly to their homes, by engaging women leaders, and by inviting women through their husbands. For more information on specific good practices from the three case studies, see Petrics *et al.* (forthcoming).

- Advocate for investments in infrastructure and technologies that reduce women's work burden, freeing their time to attend RAS activities.

- Offer off-site exposure visits at multiple times to accommodate different schedules.

- Be accountable: establish a minimum quota for women's attendance at each training session to encourage advisors to schedule activities where and when women are available.

Despite progress, women still experience lower average literacy rates than men as well as language barriers that may limit their participation in RAS activities.

- Take literacy rates into consideration during programme design. Use a combination of advisory methods that include experiential learning approaches such as demonstrations, verbal communication, face-to-face discussion and visual tools to reach low-literacy service users. Useful visual tools include posters, pictures, videos and community theatre.

- Women in rural areas may be less likely than men to speak the national, rather than local, language. Conduct advisory activities in the local language and, where possible, engage local people as advisors. Staff should speak the local language.

- Build connections: partner with organizations that focus on education and/or literacy to connect clients with services beyond the scope of RAS provision.

3. Adopt RAS methods and content that address women's specific needs

Women and men often grow different crops, have different production priorities and face different constraints in production and marketing. The content of RAS should be appropriately tailored to address women farmer's specific needs.

- Select and propose technologies, enterprises and content based on local conditions and women's needs as identified through in-depth gender analysis. Develop mechanisms to ensure women can articulate their needs and demands and feel comfortable providing regular feedback on interventions.

- Where possible, utilize the feedback provided by clients and respond to requests for new services or interventions, especially from women. Bundling services with other providers, such as financial institutions or input suppliers, may help women clients to overcome the gender-based constraints they may face in different domains.

- Use hands-on, experiential advisory methods so women can participate and learn even if they are not comfortable speaking up.

- Challenge prevailing ideas about women's abilities and encourage transformative changes in gender roles and responsibilities in the approaches to providing RAS and the content of services. In some cultural contexts this may involve providing the same training to mixed-gender groups regardless of the gender division of labor. In other situations, it may be more appropriate to work with men- or women-only groups.

5. Annexes

4. Foster women's ability to represent their interests and voice their demands for RAS

Fostering women's ability to represent their own interests and provide feedback to RAS staff can facilitate women's advocacy on their own behalf for the provision of services appropriate to their needs.

- Solicit feedback from both women and men farmers after every advisory activity. Engage clients in regular self-reflection sessions on how to improve programs so that they empower women.

- Use multiple strategies to encourage and enable women to speak up and express their concerns in mixed-gender groups. Allow women who may not feel comfortable speaking up to provide written or one-on-one feedback to staff.

- Provide gender and leadership training to both women and men to facilitate reflection and discussion on gender roles in society and how these roles impact their lives. Provide clients with the tools and information to challenge these roles in their households and community.

- Provide opportunities for women to take on leadership roles by promoting the setting of quotas for women, and providing them with the leadership training and the support to succeed.

- Support women to organize themselves into groups or associations, including producer organizations, cooperatives, and federations of self-help groups. Further, encourage women to participate in local government meetings.

5. Develop a women-friendly organizational culture that promotes women as RAS professionals and includes institutional mechanisms which ensure the effective implementation of gender-sensitive RAS provision

Organizations with procedures, institutional frameworks and an organizational culture that promote gender equality enable the delivery of gender-sensitive RAS.

- Ensure that the organization has gender equality policies in place including policies against harassment, as well as policies that support maternity and paternity leave and child care provision. These policies should be transparent and accessible in human resources materials and understood by all staff.

- Institutionalize a system for staff to actively discuss and reflect on organizational culture and how to make it more gender-sensitive. Furthermore, facilitate gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation so that staff can consistently improve the process of providing gender-sensitive RAS.

- Recruit women advisors and put in place concrete strategies to recruit and retain more women staff members. These strategies may include the targeted recruitment of women, a minimum quota for the number of women working at various staff levels, support systems for women, and budgets dedicated to helping women staff succeed, to be spent on training, secure transportation, infrastructure and other identified needs.

- Ensure that individual managers and advisors are knowledgeable about gender. Staff should be capable of determining the needs and priorities of both rural women and men through gender analysis and needs assessment in order to design and deliver gender-sensitive RAS.

These three case studies each generated specific examples of good practice in gender-sensitive RAS across the seven key GRAST assessment questions. Examples at the organizational and individual levels can be found in Table 8 below.[12]

TABLE 8   **Examples of good practice in gender-sensitive RAS across seven GRAST assessment questions**

1. Are rural women included as legitimate clients in RAS programmes?		
HAKU WIÑAY (PERU)	PRADAN (INDIA)	TECHNOSERVE (ETHIOPIA)
▪ The local farmer-trainers (yachachiq) are proactive in including women as clients, and reach out to and include women whose husbands are registered for the programme. ▪ Two of the programme components require that at least one member of the group must be a woman.	▪ PRADAN works exclusively with women, as it was determined that this was the best way to reach women in this cultural context. ▪ At the start of community activities, PRADAN staff members invest as much time as needed to get to know the community and build trust. ▪ Even if the program focuses on women, PRADAN involves men at some level to get their buy-in and trust and show both men and women that the programme is legitimate and beneficial.	▪ TechnoServe 's client definition identifies both women and men as clients. ▪ TechnoServe targets service provision to individual farmers, both men and women, rather than to households, and encourages individuals, rather than households, to register as cooperative members. ▪ TechnoServe uses multiple approaches to invite women to trainings, and follows up with them individually after sessions through home visits. ▪ Organization works with men to sensitize them to the importance of women's participation in the training. ▪ Cooperatives are rewarded for their work in increasing the number of women members and leaders. ▪ Staff use gender-related indicators as criteria for selecting and rewarding partner organizations, such as coops.

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[12] For more information, including information on the national enabling environment, see Petrics *et al.* (forthcoming).

5. Annexes

2. How are the time and mobility constraints of rural women addressed?

HAKU WIÑAY (PERU)	PRADAN (INDIA)	TECHNOSERVE (ETHIOPIA)
▪ Trainings are primarily held at participants' homes and farms, which are locations that are accessible to both female and male clients. ▪ Yachachiq are familiar with women's schedules and work burdens, since they work closely with the women and visit them at their homes. ▪ For many trainings, yachachiq schedule based on women's availability. ▪ Women are allowed to bring their children to training sessions and staff organizes child care.	▪ Staff members are aware of women's daily and seasonal schedules. ▪ PRADAN recruits and grooms dedicated staff who are willing to accommodate women's schedules. ▪ Staff offer off-site exposure visits multiple times, so those who are not free for one may be able to attend another. ▪ Women may bring children to training sessions and other activities. ▪ Staff provide transportation to events.	▪ Trainings are scheduled based on women's availability and in consultation with them. ▪ Trainers are required to have a minimum number of women at trainings, which incentivizes them to schedule activities when women are available. ▪ Trainings are held in demonstration plots in the community, so locations are easily accessible to participants. ▪ Cooperatives are encouraged to invest in community infrastructure that reduces women's work burden. ▪ Women are allowed to bring their children to training sessions or staff provide child care.

3. How are the literacy and education constraints of rural women addressed?

HAKU WIÑAY (PERU)	PRADAN (INDIA)	TECHNOSERVE (ETHIOPIA)
▪ Local languages are used in most trainings and activities. Yachachiq speak the local language, and use it in trainings. ▪ The programme is designed on the assumption that users have low literacy levels. ▪ The majority of the trainings delivered by Haku Wiñay do not require literacy, and use primarily hands-on methods.	▪ Training materials do not require literacy, such as visual materials, exposure visits to show new practices, videos, and community theatre. ▪ PRADAN partners with other organizations to connect clients with services that are outside of PRADAN's mission (for example, education and ICTs). ▪ Local resource people are hired to provide trainings, which can be delivered in the local language. ▪ Staff learn the local language.	▪ Local literacy rates are taken into consideration during programme design. ▪ RAS trainings use a combination of methods including experiential learning such as demonstrations, verbal, face-to-face communication and visual tools such as posters, pictures, and diagrams. ▪ Trainings are conducted in the local language and, where possible, use local people as trainers. ▪ To effectively reach all education groups, staff adopt culturally appropriate emblems to express gender equality goals.

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4. Does the programme facilitate the ability of rural women to represent their interests and voice their demands?

HAKU WIÑAY (PERU)	PRADAN (INDIA)	TECHNOSERVE (ETHIOPIA)
▪ There is a quota for women in leadership in the executive groups. ▪ The programme promotes men and women's interaction around the achievement of a common business goal, which is something that has not previously been common in this culture. ▪ Field staff proactively implement micro-strategies to encourage and enable women to speak up and express their concerns in mixed-sex groups.	▪ Gender and leadership trainings are offered which ask women to think about gender roles in society, and how these roles impact their lives. They also give women the tools to begin challenging these roles. ▪ Staff engage in regular organizational self-reflection on improving the programme to empower women. ▪ PRADAN supports and encourages women's groups to participate in local government meetings and join other organized groups in the community.	▪ Farmer trainers follow up with women individually during home follow-up visits and encourage them to ask questions or seek advice. ▪ Clients are asked for their feedback after trainings. ▪ Staff provide opportunities for women to take on leadership roles in training through setting quotas for women.

5. Are RAS programmes designed and delivered in a way that allows rural women to effectively participate and benefit?

HAKU WIÑAY (PERU)	PRADAN (INDIA)	TECHNOSERVE (ETHIOPIA)
▪ Participatory processes were used to select the content and technologies covered by the programme, although these processes need to be made gender-sensitive. Some of the content provided was specifically aimed to meet the needs of women. ▪ The advisory methods used are accessible to women: they are participatory and hands-on, and involve trainers from the local community.	▪ PRADAN uses methods of RAS delivery that work for women: these include hands-on trainings that do not require literacy, delivered to single-sex groups. ▪ Women can choose whether or not they are interested in training topics proposed by PRADAN. There is also a mechanism for them to express demand for specific topics through community meetings. ▪ Technologies and content proposed by PRADAN are selected based on local conditions and women's needs. ▪ PRADAN bundles services by linking clients to other service providers.	▪ Staff provide training to mixed-sex groups and provide the same training and services to both men and women regardless of the gender division of labour to change both men's and women's perceptions about women's abilities and roles and encourage changes in gender roles and responsibilities. ▪ TechnoServe staff solicit and respond to requests for new training topics or interventions, especially from women. ▪ TechnoServe uses hands-on, experiential methods so women can participate and learn even if they are not comfortable speaking up.

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6. Does the organizational culture enable women to become and effectively function as RAS agents and managers?

HAKU WIÑAY (PERU)	PRADAN (INDIA)	TECHNOSERVE (ETHIOPIA)
■ Employs women yachachiq to provide services not only on healthy home topics but also on improving agricultural productivity.	■ PRADAN invests in meeting female staff members' gender-specific needs, which enables women to do their jobs successfully. ■ PRADAN staff actively discuss and reflect on improving their organizational culture. ■ PRADAN has strategies in place to recruit and retain more female staff members: targeted recruitment of women, a women's support system (caucus), maternity and paternity leave policies, and budgets dedicated to helping female staff succeed. ■ PRADAN management has expectations of gender equality and gender-sensitive organizational culture implemented through policies, mechanisms and processes.	■ The organization has gender equality policies in place including policies against harassment and for maternity/paternity leave, and child care provision. ■ TechnoServe makes specific efforts to recruit female trainers and adopts a selection process that mitigates some of the gender-specific challenges women face. ■ The organization has established a minimum quota for the number of female staff at various levels.

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7. Are there institutional mechanisms in place to ensure the effective implementation of gender-sensitive RAS and hold staff accountable for?

HAKU WIÑAY (PERU)	PRADAN (INDIA)	TECHNOSERVE (ETHIOPIA)
▪ The ministry where Haku Wiñay is housed has begun a gender mainstreaming process, which includes the creation of gender indictors and performance targets. ▪ Staff training materials use images showing women and men as farmers. ▪ The programme allows staff members the flexibility to adapt their foci and ways of working to meet the needs of clients.	▪ PRADAN's "Development Apprenticeship" supports dedicated gender-sensitive staff members. ▪ Staff members meet regularly as teams to reflect, share challenges and successes, and talk about how to improve their work. ▪ PRADAN has a self-assessment based performance evaluation system that asks staff members to think about their work. ▪ PRADAN has an internal newsletter enabling staff to document and share lessons learned and successful approaches. ▪ PRADAN invests in selecting and training staff who believe in and are motivated to work for women's and community empowerment.	▪ Staff carry out a detailed gender analysis at the project planning and design stage and use the findings to design key project interventions. ▪ The organization provides gender training directly to service users and partner organizations at all levels. ▪ TechnoServe has a separate budget for gender-related interventions even if gender is mainstreamed in all project activities. ▪ Staff formulate an exit strategy at the start of any project and implement it.

5. Annexes

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Glossary and terminology

Advisor/extension agent: A trained employee of an extension/rural advisory services programme who provides farmers with rural advisory services, including agriculture-related information and technologies. The extension/advisory programme could be run by the government, an NGO, a private company, farmer organization, etc.

Agricultural information and technologies: Information, practices and technologies related to the agricultural value chain and rural livelihoods; this includes growing, pest management, harvesting, postharvest handling and marketing of agricultural or horticultural crops, fish or livestock. It can also include information on nutrition, health, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, etc.

Extension methods: Include sessions between advisors and groups of farmers (training and visits), field days, farmer field schools (FFS), farmer participatory research, workshops, demonstrations, printed extension materials (brochures, factsheets, posters, guidebooks, comics, etc.), farmer to farmer extension, theatre, market day promotions, plant clinics, information and communication technologies (ICTs), for example, radio, video, television, mobile phone, social media, etc.

Gender: Refers to the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to the relations between women, and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialization processes. They are context- and time-specific and changeable. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in terms of responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as in decision-making opportunities.

Gender equality: Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys, independently from whether they are born male or female. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Gender equality as a human right is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other international human rights instruments.

Gender budgeting: The application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It involves a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality.

Gender-sensitive rural advisory service: Takes into account the differentiated needs, constraints and opportunities of women and men. It designs and delivers relevant content in a way that women and men can equally access and benefit from it.

Organizational culture: It is central to the beliefs, inter-personal behaviours, expectations, philosophy and attitudes that determine how an organization functions. Organizational culture is expressed in self-image, internal and external interactions and future expectations. It is a key factor in achieving organizational goals, attracting and keeping desirable employees. Organizational culture is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time and are considered valid. Its main characteristics include: a shared understanding of the mission of the organization, values that guide decision-making and activity at all levels, the focus and management style of senior officers, how employees think of their relationship with management, one-another, partner organizations and clients, and how an organization conducts its day-to-day business (Desson and Clouthier, 2010; Business Dictionary).

Rural advisory services (RAS): The different activities that provide information and advisory services needed and demanded by farmers and other actors in the agro-food system and rural development. These include technical, organizational, business and management skills and practices that improve rural livelihoods and well-being. They imply inclusive, demand-driven and participatory approaches that focus on facilitating interaction and learning, and the sharing of knowledge. This definition recognizes the diversity of actors in advisory service provision (public, private, civil society and farmer organizations) and the broad support to rural communities, which goes beyond conventional technology transfer and dissemination of information.

Users: The users of the GRAST include those organizations that implement it in the framework of a self-assessment, or independent organizations that are commissioned to carry out an external assessment of the rural advisory services of an organization.

Glossary and
terminology

Women are a key asset for agricultural and rural development and make important contributions to food security and nutrition. Yet, they face many gender-specific barriers, including limited access to productive resources and services, which keep women farmers from reaching their full potential and hinder their agricultural productivity. Gender-aware rural advisory services can close the gender gap in agriculture by making information, new technologies, skills and knowledge more relevant and accessible to both women and men farmers, with positive effects on household incomes, food security and nutrition.

The Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool (GRAST) is designed to support providers of rural advisory services in their efforts to develop gender-sensitive programmes. By undertaking a gender assessment of rural advisory services at policy, organizational and individual levels, the GRAST provides entry points for improving the gender-responsiveness of the design and delivery of advisory services in a truly transformative manner. Its ultimate objective is to ensure that rural advisory services respond to needs and priorities of both rural women and men and that, as a consequence, they can equally access to and benefit from these services.