



# Gender Policy

of IICA



**Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture**  
(IICA), 2016



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This publication is also available in electronic (PDF) format from the Institute's Web site: <http://www.iica.int>

Translation: IICA Language Service Unit  
Layout: Karla Cruz  
Cover design: Karla Cruz  
Printed: IICA Print Shop

San Jose, Costa Rica  
2016



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## Introduction

Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit 1992), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has given greater attention to topics related to women, gender and development in its institutional work. This has been reflected in the Institute's establishment of priorities and the emphasis it has placed on these topics in specific programs and documents, resolutions regarding the gender perspective and sustainable development in agriculture and rural development, Medium-term Plans (MTPs) and institutional technical cooperation instruments.

The present gender policy has been established in an effort to formalize, institutionalize and consolidate efforts to address gender matters in IICA's work. The policy was created by means of a documented and participative process, which allowed for capitalizing on lessons learned about this topic and consolidating the Institute's commitment to gender equality and equity.

The implementation of this policy is of great institutional importance. In order to be able to demand equal rights and opportunities for men and women in rural communities, IICA must guarantee the same equality at the internal level.

## Background

### ***Gender situation in agriculture and rural areas***

The improvement of agriculture and rural well-being plays a fundamental role in the achievement of sustainable development. Rural women are not only one of the leading forces of the agricultural sector and dynamics in rural areas; they are also jointly responsible for the

sustainable development, stability and survival of their families and communities, through their work in productive, economic, environmental, political and family spheres.

Despite the progress made by IICA member countries in addressing the topic of gender, and the substantial contributions of rural women to agriculture and development, women continue to be discriminated against and excluded. In addition to hindering their ability to fully exercise their economic, social and political rights, this situation also limits women's opportunities to contribute as key stakeholders to the achievement of greater food and nutritional security, as well as a more competitive, sustainable and inclusive agriculture.

### ***Gender and public policies***

The incorporation of the gender perspective into public policies seeks to draw attention to and eliminate gender inequality and inequity through the commitment of Member States to the achievement of gender equality and equity and the transformation of gender relations. The incorporation of this topic has been necessary in order to make these policies more effective, efficient and equitable, and improve the way in which they address gender topics, as well as to promote women's participation, strengthen democracy, and contribute to State modernization.

### ***Framework of international mandates on development and gender***

The present policy is set within the framework of mandates adopted at the Summits of the Americas; resolutions, policies and programs of the Organization of American States (OAS) related primarily to sustainable development, gender and social inclusion; and agreements signed at the hemispheric meetings of ministers in favor of a competitive, sustainable and inclusive agriculture.

Executive Order No. 16-03 of the General Secretariat of the OAS, which refers to the General Secretariat's Institutional Policy on Gender Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, and was issued on March 7, 2016, was particularly relevant for the creation of this policy.

The present policy is founded on a number of global agreements on development, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979; the agreements of the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit; the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994); the strategic objectives and actions for achieving gender equality of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995; the 2014 resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system;" and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

### ***IICA's contribution to gender equality***

The Institute has carried out a number of efforts related to the gender perspective, with the aim of promoting and supporting actions executed by its member countries to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being. The most noteworthy efforts are described below:

- The document entitled "Gender, Women and Development: A Framework for IICA's Action in Latin America and the Caribbean" (1993), which presents a strategy for incorporating a gender-based approach into agricultural modernization and rural development efforts, and including the participation of the Institute's units in the execution of the strategy.

- Resolution No. 342 (1999) of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), according to which it was agreed to incorporate the gender perspective into IICA's institutional system by means of pertinent legal, regulatory and operational changes, and to ensure that the Institute's gender policy is expressed in the Institution's actions and instruments for technical cooperation.
- IICA's participation in the hemispheric institutional framework, acting as:
  - ✓ A signatory of resolution AG/RES. 1853 (XXXII-O/02) of the General Assembly of the OAS, which calls for the implementation of the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality.
  - ✓ A participant in the meetings of the Executive Committee and the biennial Assembly of Delegates of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), both of which generate annual reports on actions carried out in relation to this topic.
  - ✓ An observer member of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The establishment of priorities and ways to address and emphasize the topic of gender in technical cooperation actions detailed in MTPs created since 2002.
- The International Forum "Women in Agriculture: Women's contribution to agriculture and food security in the Americas" (2010) and the outcome document entitled "Policies to



Strengthen the Contribution of Women to Agricultural Development and Food Security: Executive Summary” (2010).

- The Institutional Position Paper on Gender (2013, internal working document).
- The implementation of MTPs prepared since 2002, which have included programs and projects on topics related to rural women and gender mainstreaming. The MTPs have allowed the Institute to capitalize on knowledge and lessons learned, and, in this way, contribute to improving the Institute’s technical cooperation and responding to the different needs of women and men in the member countries.

## Guiding principles

The guiding principles of the present policy are human rights, social inclusion, and gender equality and equity. The policy recognizes the importance of allowing all persons to fully exercise their rights, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and body diversity. The policy is also consistent with the Code of Ethics of the Institute.

## Concepts and definitions

The definitions of the concepts on which this policy is based are provided below:

- **Sex:** Classification of men and women based on their biological and physiological characteristics.
- **Gender:** A cultural, social and historical construction that, on the biological basis of sex, distinguishes male from female in society.

- **Gender equality:** Acknowledgement of the fact that women and men must have equal rights and conditions, allowing them to realize their full potential in order to contribute to political, economic, social and cultural development.
- **Gender equity:** Establishment of a series of measures to compensate for historical disadvantages that prevent men and women from equally enjoying the benefits of development and having equal access to decisions, opportunities and power.
- **Empowerment:** Process that leads to the attainment and development of capacities that enable people to access positions of authority and decision-making positions and to gain control over their lives. This process leads to changes in the way people think, cultures, institutional structures, and the distribution of resources within organizations and societies.
- **Gender analysis:** Study of the differences between men and women with regard to their gender roles and stereotypes, as well as their responsibilities, needs, opportunities, and their ability to access, use and control resources.
- **Gender perspective:** Set of methodologies and instruments that are implemented to ensure that the concerns and experiences of women and men are incorporated into the Institute’s management and technical cooperation actions, in order to promote gender equality and equity.
- **Gender mainstreaming:** Process whereby actions are planned and their consequences for men and women in all areas and at all levels of the Institute’s work are evaluated.

- **Advocacy:** Intervention process undertaken by parties interested in guiding the content of public policies.

## General objective

To institutionalize the gender perspective and gender equity approach in internal management and the technical cooperation provided to member countries.

### Specific objectives

1. To advocate for gender equality and equity in the exercise of rights and for equal opportunities and treatment in all areas of the Institute's work, by developing a culture and management process for this purpose and by strengthening the personal and institutional capacities necessary to achieve this goal.
2. To increase awareness of and capacities to carry out strategic actions related to gender topics in the Institute's management and technical cooperation actions.
3. To ensure that gender equity and equality is integrated into all of the Institute's policies, programs, projects, technical cooperation practices, and internal management.
4. To carry out continuous communication, training and awareness-raising activities necessary to implement this policy at the internal and external levels.

### **Guidelines for institutional management**

1. Gender equality and equity are guaranteed for all personnel through:
  - a. A lack of discrimination with respect to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, as well as body diversity.
  - b. Institute rules for contracting and development of personnel.
  - c. Internal communication.
  - d. Remuneration and working conditions.
2. An equitable balance of women and men must exist at all levels and in all units and delegations of the Institute.
3. Equality and equity constitute institutional values and characterize the behavior of the persons who collaborate with IICA.
4. The gender perspective is systematically promoted by means of actions geared toward raising awareness of the topic.

### **Implementation of the policy in institutional management**

1. The Institute's Code of Ethics and regulatory structure will be reviewed in order to guarantee the mainstreaming of gender equality and equity and the incorporation of the gender perspective into the Institute's areas of work.
2. The present policy will be taken into account in the process of evaluating job applicants and selecting the best applicant.

3. Salaries will be determined based on the categories of positions and each employee's level of responsibility and performance, with no distinctions made on the basis of gender.
4. Working conditions will be established under a gender-based approach, based on the categories of positions, the labor laws of each country, and institutional rules.
5. Gender analyses will be conducted in order to establish gender indicators and undertake necessary actions to improve gender equality and equity.
6. Activities to raise awareness on the topic of gender will be carried out at IICA Headquarters and in the Delegations in the member countries.
7. Opportunities for participation and consultation will be provided in order to share experiences and information related to this topic with organizations or communities.
8. A communication strategy geared toward fostering interest in this gender policy and promoting awareness of its provisions will be implemented via the Institute's official communication channels.

### ***Guidelines for technical cooperation***

1. Women are seen as important stakeholders in technical cooperation processes, and their culture, conditions, needs and special interests are taken into account.
2. The important role that women play in society and in the achievement of food and nutritional security,

the inequalities that women face in relation to economic remuneration, and women's knowledge and critical contributions to food production and transformation are recognized.

3. Inclusive and equitable participation in development projects and decision-making processes is encouraged, in order to foster the personal, collective and economic empowerment of women and other historically excluded groups.
4. Women's access to information, knowledge, technology and good practices for sustainable and inclusive agricultural development is facilitated.
5. The dissemination of technical cooperation actions with a gender-based approach is promoted.
6. A gender-based approach shall be mainstreamed in external communication actions and products.

### ***Implementation of the policy in technical cooperation***

1. Tools, methodologies and good practices for promoting gender equality and equity in agriculture will be created, adapted and disseminated.
2. The participation of women in decision-making activities and opportunities will be facilitated, and female leadership shall be supported and promoted.
3. Specific actions that foster the empowerment of women in agriculture and acknowledge and value their contributions to food production and transformation shall be incorporated into technical cooperation mechanisms.

4. The development and strengthening of local and national capabilities for planning and implementing actions with a gender-based approach, as well as the creation of national policies that promote gender equality in the development of agriculture and rural areas, shall be fostered.
5. Information on the institutional framework for and situation of gender in the agricultural sector of the member countries shall be kept up to date; this includes information already available at international organizations and information that can be generated based on statistical data gathered from the Institute's technical cooperation instruments.
6. Actions and results that include a gender-based approach, as well as the corresponding indicators, shall be recorded in the Unified Institutional Management System (SUGI).
7. Information about progress achieved in incorporating the topic of gender into technical cooperation shall be generated and disseminated using goals and indicators; additionally, the results will be reported to interest groups.
8. The search for financial resources for initiatives geared toward recognizing, strengthening and supporting equality and equity for women in agriculture shall be fostered.
9. Permanent technical personnel shall be available to support and guide technical cooperation actions with the aim of promoting gender equality and equity.

## Responsibilities

- **The General Directorate** shall take the necessary steps to implement and monitor the implementation of this gender policy, including administrative and technical actions to guarantee compliance.
- **The Directorate of Management and Regional Integration and the Directorate of Technical Cooperation** shall ensure the coherent and effective implementation of this policy in their corresponding areas.
- **The Human Talent Management Division** shall implement this policy at the internal level and establish incentives to drive the creation and maintenance of work teams that are diverse in terms of gender, nationality, age and technical background in all of the Institute's levels and units. Additionally, it shall monitor the impact of the abovementioned policy and incentives.
- **All personnel** shall maintain a behavior that is respectful of and coherent with the guidelines of this policy. Supervisors must implement these guidelines and promote the full exercise of gender equality and equity among the staff members they supervise and in the actions carried out by their units or Delegations.

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