

# GENDER REPORT: TRAINING OF TRAINERS ON SOCIO-TECHNICAL INNOVATION BUNDLES IN AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

## Building Equitable Climate-Resilient African Bean and Insect Sectors



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the BRAINS Project in Cameroon, a series of participatory workshops was held in September 2025 to co-design and strengthen the implementation of socio-technical innovation bundles (STIBs) to improve agricultural productivity, sustainability, and inclusiveness. The workshops brought together 100 diverse stakeholders from the bean, insect, and fruit value chains, as well as actors involved in processing, marketing, and value addition across these sectors.

The workshop aimed to train core groups of competent trainers capable of transferring the knowledge and practices they acquired to producers, cooperatives, and rural organisations. The main goal was to strengthen the capacities of these trainers on STIBs to enhance bean and fruit tree cultivation, promote integrated pest management (IPM), modern beekeeping, and sustainable black soldier fly (BSF) breeding.

The training sessions took place in Bamendjou, Mfoumbot, Mbouda, and at IRAD Foumbot, on the 15, 16, and 17 September 2025 in the West Region of Cameroon, combining theoretical presentations and hands-on field exercises. The workshops were divided into three main phases:

1. Knowledge sharing on innovative agricultural techniques, including pest fly control using pheromone traps, pollination management, and the use of biofertilizers, biopesticides, and drones for crop management.
2. Demonstrations and practical fieldwork to apply these techniques in real production settings.
3. Discussions on gender and social inclusion within agricultural innovation systems.

A significant component of the workshops focused on gender integration, led by the BRAINS Project gender focal people, Dr Irene Flore Kuetche and Dr Siri Bella. The gender sessions aimed to raise awareness on gender-transformative socio-technical innovation bundles (STIBs) and emphasised four key objectives:

- Ensuring that 60% of direct beneficiaries are women, girls, and young people, contributing to the project's goal of reaching 10 million direct and 50 million indirect beneficiaries.
- Enhancing climate resilience, leadership, and agency among women and youth in bean and insect production systems.
- Scaling climate-smart agricultural technologies in a gender-responsive manner to strengthen resilience across production systems.
- Catalysing gender-responsive business development, supporting enterprises that invest in carbon-neutral, climate-resilient agriculture benefiting women and youth.

The sessions also clarified the distinctions among gender equality, equity, justice, and inclusion through practical examples. Discussions highlighted women's and youth's participation, access to resources and information, empowerment, and leadership in transforming agricultural systems. Examples such as BSF production and beeswax value addition were used to illustrate how gender-transformative STIBs can empower women and youth in agri-enterprise development.

A vibrant discussion identified key challenges faced by women and young people, including restrictive social norms, limited economic and social power, family constraints, and low confidence or ambition. In response, several women's groups were identified for further engagement, and the project committed to future capacity-building sessions to strengthen their participation and leadership in agricultural innovation.

## INTRODUCTION

As part of the BRAINS Project in Cameroon, a series of workshops was organised, both online and in Uganda, to co-design appropriate socio-technical innovation packages to enhance productivity and sustainability in key agricultural value chains. These workshops brought together stakeholders from the bean, insect, and fruit sectors, including actors engaged in processing, marketing, and value addition. The participatory approach ensured that the identified innovations were context-specific, practical, and aligned with the needs of different value chain actors.

Building on the outcomes of the Uganda meeting, the Cameroon BRAINS Project team conducted a second round of capacity-building workshops on September 15–17, 2025. The BRAINS Project recorded 100 individuals across the three sites—Bamendjou, Foumban, and Mbouda. Participation was diverse, representing men, women, youth, and persons living with disabilities (PLWD). At the Bamendjou site, 25 participants attended, including 19 men, 6 women, and 8 youth. The Foumban session brought together 36 participants, comprising 26 men, 10 women, and 8 youth. In Mbouda, 39 participants took part, with 28 men, 11 women, 6 youth, and 1 person living with a disability. Overall, across all sites, there were 73 men, 27 women, 20 youth, and 1 person living with a disability, making a total of 100 participants.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE TRAINING

These sessions focused on training a core group of competent partners capable of effectively transferring knowledge and best practices to producers, cooperatives, and rural organisations. The main objective was to strengthen trainers' capacities on socio-technical innovation bundles (STIBs) to improve bean and fruit tree cultivation, promote integrated pest management (IPM), modern beekeeping, and sustainable black soldier fly (BSF) breeding. This report particularly highlights the gender dimensions integrated into these three workshops.

## LOCATION AND TRAINING

The September workshops were held at various locations, including Bamendjou, Mfoumbot, Mbouda, and IRAD Foumbot, combining both institutional and private production sites. Activities were structured in three main phases.

### Phase one

The first phase focused on knowledge sharing, where participants were introduced to several technical innovations, including:

- Techniques for controlling pest flies using pheromone traps, covering their operating principles, importance in IPM, available trap types, and field installation and monitoring procedures.
- The agronomic and economic importance of pollinating insects for sustainable agriculture.
- The use of biofertilizers and biopesticides to promote environmentally friendly farming.
- The application of drones for bean treatment and crop monitoring.
- The production of BSF as an alternative source of animal protein and as a soil fertility enhancer through microbial interactions.

### Phase two

The second phase involved hands-on field demonstrations and experimental exercises, allowing participants to apply these innovations in real agricultural settings.

### Phase three

The third phase discussed social innovations across gender, finance, markets, and nutrition. This component of the workshops focused on gender integration and was led by the BRAINS Project gender focal persons, Dr Irene Flore Kuetché and Dr Siri Bella. The main objective of this session was to raise participants' awareness of gender-transformative socio-technical innovation bundles (STIBs) and to highlight the importance of mainstreaming gender in agricultural innovation systems.

The facilitators emphasised four key dimensions of the BRAINS Project's gender strategy:

#### 1. Gender Objectives of the BRAINS Project:

Participants were briefed on the project's gender-related targets, including ensuring that 60% of direct beneficiaries are women, girls, and young people, with an outreach goal of 10 million direct and 50 million indirect beneficiaries. The project seeks to enhance climate resilience, leadership, and agency among women and youth in bean and insect production systems. It also aims to scale climate-smart agricultural technologies and socio-technical innovation bundles in a gender-responsive manner to strengthen resilience across value chains and promote gender-responsive business development, particularly in carbon-neutral and climate-resilient enterprises that empower women and youth.

#### 2. Understanding Core Gender Concepts:

The facilitators explained the distinctions between gender equality, equity, justice, and inclusion, illustrating each with practical examples from agricultural and community settings. This helped participants understand how these concepts apply in practice and why they are essential for achieving transformative change.

#### 3. Women's and Youth Participation and Empowerment:

The session highlighted the need to strengthen women's and youth's access to information, resources, and decision-making spaces. Participants discussed the importance of promoting empowerment through leadership development, equal opportunities, and supportive institutional frameworks that recognise and address gender-based barriers in agriculture.

#### 4. Gender-Transformative STIBs in Practice:

Using examples such as Black Soldier Fly (BSF) production and honey by-products like beeswax, facilitators demonstrated how socio-technical innovations can serve as entry points for economic empowerment and inclusive participation of women and youth in agri-enterprise development.

An engaging discussion followed, during which participants identified the main challenges faced by women and young people in agriculture and in accessing innovations. These included family constraints and social norms, low economic and social power, and limited confidence or ambition to engage in leadership or innovation.

As a result of these discussions, several women's groups were identified for future collaboration, and the BRAINS Project team committed to organising additional capacity-building workshops to strengthen further women's and youth participation in agricultural innovation and decision-making.



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