

EMPOWER@SCALE

CERTIFICATION CRITERIA FOR EMPOWERMENT LEARNING CENTRES (ELCS)

I. BACKGROUND

Integrating the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) in projects, contributes to the empowerment of people, especially but not exclusively, of women and youth. The Empower@Scale project implemented by the consortium Oxfam Novib-Hivos and supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has invested in the development and piloting of mechanisms to bring GALS up to scale. One of those mechanisms is the establishment of professional Empowerment Learning Centres (ELCs). An ELC is a living example of how GALS is used in a Community Based Organization (CBO) or group. It's a place where an individual or a group of people can access GALS services and it's primarily made up and steered by experienced GALS champions¹ in partnership with GALS facilitators.

II. PURPOSE

With the aim of establishing professional ELCs and therefore assuring a certain level of quality of services provided, it is important to have guidelines to qualify ELCs across

¹ A champion is a person who has changed her/his life through the use of the GALS methodology thus becoming a living example of change. She/he also supports the changing process of others.

board. This can only be done through setting out bare minimum criteria to define ELCs. These criteria are indicated below.

III. CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

1) Management and Legal structure

These criteria include the need for an ELC to:

- Be registered and recognized as a legal entity (for example having a constitution).
- Have a functioning management system and structure, which enables participatory decision making, fair income distribution and reinvestment.
- Have at least 3 Champions within the management team who have significant experience in GALS.
- Have elected officials to represent a board that is distinctly independent of the management team.
- Demonstrate that there are mechanisms to ensure that board elections are carried out as defined in the constitution of the ELC.
- Ensure gender balance is adhered to, and observed in the board and management structure.

2) Operational criteria

These criteria include the need for an ELC to:

- Have an agreed annual work plan that guides the operations of the ELC.
- Be able to organize, execute and facilitate training and workshops.
- Be able to work with a range of partners for facilitation of capacity development processes on GALS.
- Provide GALS services that are accessible to all people (inclusivity).
- Maintain a database of: trainees and clients (including trainings they received) and facilitators and champions (including their different skills, with recurrent peer reviews).
- Have local GALS learning and training materials.
- Have linkages with other ELCs for collaboration and cross-learning.
- Demonstrate to have linkages with GALS facilitators – either belonging to other organizations or independent consultants - for further cross-learning.

- Have a physical address and or location with hygiene and sanitation facilities.
- Have a working email address and / or mobile telephone for purposes of communication and linkages, preferably a group Mobile no./ email that is appropriately managed.
- Where necessary, have extra equipment such as computer, speakers and microphone for larger events.
- Have access to means of transport (i.e. bicycles, motorcycles etc.) to enable GALS activities.

3) Quality control

These criteria include the need for an ELC to:

- Have clear criteria to define and certify champions (peer-to-peer certification - champions certify champions. See [certification process for champions](#) developed by the Empower@Scale project) which are understood and agreed by all members.
- Have at least 20 certified GALS champions with at least three years' experience and at least 100 community members practicing GALS to improve their lives.
- Work in partnership with GALS facilitators.
- Have a basic monitoring and evaluation system of its internal processes (not limited to GALS training) and be able to show the system to clients and visitors and explain the changes. Must be able to demonstrate that they document evidence and stories of gender and livelihoods changes at different levels and keep track of peer learning.

4) Target group

An ELC must be rooted in a community, working with Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The ELC must primarily reach out to rural communities in their own area and share the GALS methodology and gender messages, before training external people.

5) Sustainability

These criteria include the need for an ELC to:

- Have a business plan / model for sustainability purposes (with activities from agricultural production, processing and marketing to trainings and other income generating activities).
- Be able to generate simple financial records.

IV. GUIDING NOTES

1. The certification process will be overseen by an independent certification committee, that is made up of experienced champions and GALS facilitators from other ELCs that will be created for that purpose.
2. An ELC can score variable points, dependent on relative importance to the proper functioning of an ELC. The total sum of the scores can be a maximum of 105. [See evaluation grid.](#)
3. An ELC is deemed certified if it has a score of 95 or higher and a certificate will be issued to the ELC.
4. After certification, the ELC ensures having a page on the Empower@Scale online platform that communicates their activities and offerings. Details of all certified ELCs - both interim and fully certified - will be uploaded to the online platform.
5. An ELC that scores above 75 will be certified on 'interim basis' but might be given several conditions that have to be fulfilled before 'full Certification' can be granted. Interim certification shall be valid for a period not exceeding six months from the date of being certified on interim basis.
6. An ELC that scores below 75 must reapply for a fresh evaluation.
7. Full certification status remains valid for a period of 3 years, after which an evaluation must be undertaken.
8. Certification can be revoked by the certification committee at any time when the ELC is proven to have committed gross professional misconduct that is not consistent with the GALS principles and the objects contained in the constitution and by-laws. The committee must define what constitutes professional misconduct and provide guidance on how reported cases will be handled.