



AWARD Strategy 2023-2027

Gender-responsive Solutions Driving
Equitable Agrifood Systems





AWARD Strategy **2023-2027**

Gender-responsive
Solutions Driving Equitable
Agrifood Systems





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ACRONYMS

AR4D	Agricultural research for development
AST	Advanced Science Training
AWARD	African Women in Agricultural Research and Development
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
GRARD	Gender Responsive Agricultural Research and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TWAS	The World Academy of Sciences

FOREWORD



SUSAN KAARIA

Director, AWARD

It gives me immense pleasure to present our new five-year Strategy 2023-2027 which underscores our continued commitment to gender-responsive agrifood systems that equally benefits men and women smallholders. We are thrilled to enter this new phase, as we mark 15 years since our founding.

This Strategy is a product of an intensive process that included internal and external consultations augmented by an independent evaluation of our previous strategy. Through this process we distilled some of the issues that continue to shape the agricultural research for development (AR4D) context in Africa, confirmed AWARD's relevance and the fundamental role that we play in the context of AR4D.

Recent evidence indicates that the persisting gender gaps in our agrifood systems continue to hold back the potential of agricultural-driven development. That is why we are motivated to, together with our partners, intensify the work around advancing gender-responsive AR4D.

The AWARD Strategy 2023-2027 demonstrates how we are reinforcing our promise to contribute to agricultural-driven transformation for equitable livelihoods, emphasizing gender responsiveness as a critical lever.

Built around three strategic pillars, our Strategy 2023-2027 aims to: Strengthen individuals' contribution in AR4D by investing in the leaky pipeline of women

in leadership, and equipping African researchers to address gender in their research; Accelerating institutions' impact by supporting them to deliver better in their mandate in gender-responsive ways; and fostering an enabling environment for gender responsiveness to thrive where the policies are equitable, and African voices are at the fore front of global and regional AR4D conversations.

This strategy document highlights what we are learning from our 15 years of existence and how we will sustain our gains. We are proud of the massive footprint we have established in Africa and are keen to expand our scope in the next strategy cycle. We have learned that our Fellowship model played a significant role in deepening our presence and impact in Africa. In the AWARD Strategy 2023-2027, we are renewing our commitment to widening the pipeline of capable, influential women in leadership of agricultural research for development by intentionally targeting younger women for a continuous, steady pipeline.

Learning from our pilot Gender-Responsive Agricultural Research and Development (GRARD) initiative, we are energized to bolster our investments in enhancing institutional capacity to conduct gender-responsive research, and support institutions to embrace and adopt gender responsive

policies and practices. We are committed to helping enhance institutional processes and practices to work for its people.

Gender responsiveness holds an immense transformative potential to move agrifood systems toward equity. Gender responsiveness is multifaceted and allows different actors in AR4D to interrogate not only who is participating in agrifood systems, but also how, for what purpose and to what extent.


In the 2023-2027 cycle, we will enhance our approach to fostering a gender-responsive AR4D policy environment. We plan to elevate the dialogue around gender and agrifood systems to new heights, going beyond individuals and institutions, to influencing systemic structures in the agrifood systems and galvanizing consciousness for change toward gender responsiveness.

As we embark on this journey, we value our partners, with whom we have a shared vision of agricultural-driven transformation. We are keen to nurture more meaningful partnerships to accelerate our joint impact.

Ultimately, we aim to create lasting impacts to drive Africa's agrifood systems toward equity. We recognize that the world is already half-way to the 2030 global development agenda and that there is an urgent need to accelerate progress.







1. OUR CONTEXT

1.1 Addressing gender gaps in African agrifood systems as an imperative for agricultural transformation

At a time when evidence reveals that the world is off track in achieving gender equality in its global development agenda, gender-responsive agricultural research for development (AR4D) becomes a prerequisite for equitable agrifood systems.

The urgency of fully addressing women's underrepresentation in AR4D leadership in Africa, the challenge that African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) set out to resolve 15 years ago, is now magnified by the importance agrifood systems have assumed in Africa's economic development. The 2023 FAO report on the status of women in agrifood systems (FAO 2023) indicates that while women constitute over 50% of the agricultural labor force in many sub-Saharan African countries and rely on agrifood systems for their livelihoods more than do men, substantial gender inequalities still exist in agrifood systems.

Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in agrifood systems can improve food security and nutrition while generating more justice, resilience, and sustainability within these systems (Njuki et al. 2021). FAO (2023) estimates that closing the gender gap in farm productivity and the wage gap in agrifood system employment would increase the global GDP by 1% (roughly US\$ 1 trillion) and reduce worldwide food insecurity by about 2%, resulting in 45 million fewer food-insecure people on the planet.

Addressing the gender disparities that persist in African agriculture and agrifood systems presents a tremendous opportunity to unlock the potential of agriculture to transform African economies. But this would call for investments to tackle the barriers women face to ensure their full and equal participation in agrifood systems, and for acceleration of strategies to increase women's access to the opportunities and services responsive to their needs, priorities, and realities.

In its strategy for 2023–2027, AWARD refines its tools and approaches for tackling the gender gaps in African AR4D, focusing specifically on the issues at the three levels that define African agrifood systems, that is underrepresentation of women in AR4D leadership, lack of gender responsiveness in the policies and practices of AR4D institutions, and unequitable agrifood policies.



**US\$
1 trillion**

increase the global GDP



45 million

fewer food-insecure people
on the planet

Underrepresentation of women in leadership in AR4D



Glaring gender disparities still exist in leadership of global organizations working in agrifood systems, where women's underrepresentation is severe. Global Health 50/50 et al. (2022), a report that assesses food systems organizations' integration of gender equality considerations in their work, found about half of the organizations to have not yet achieved gender parity in their leadership by 2021 and half to have more men than women in senior management, including 30% that were composed of more

than two-thirds men.

Time series data tracking the share of women agricultural researchers in sub-Saharan Africa found their composition to have risen from an average of 23% to 28% between 2008 and 2016 but that in many of the countries their underrepresentation was still substantial, particularly in postgraduate programs and high-level research, management, and decision-making positions.

A range of factors is responsible for the low numbers of women leaders in AR4D, including unfriendly work environments, exacerbated by policies, and cultures that do not consider women's unique needs. Others are workplace, societal, and cultural challenges, and traditional beliefs about the role of women and girls in society. Women may also face challenges in balancing work and family or gender discrimination at work, and often their salaries are lower than those of their male counterparts.

Besides excluding a significant population from contributing to the continent's AR4D, low representation of women in AR4D means that the research agendas miss out on benefiting from all available expertise. Higher rates of female participation

in science and technology have been associated with improved quality and competitiveness of research and innovation (Post, Lockshin & Boone 2021).

Ensuring that the AR4D system benefits from the knowledge and expertise of both women and men is an urgent imperative. That is why it is crucial to invest in enhancing the potential of female AR4D professionals to become capable and influential leaders, while also ensuring the environment within which they operate is conducive for them to participate and maximize their potential. This includes addressing institutional policies and structures that impede or exacerbate the gender gap in AR4D leadership.



A lack of gender responsiveness in policies and practice of AR4D institutions

AR4D institutions face a multitude of challenges in integrating gender into research and development, contributing to persistent gender blindness and the lack of systematic consideration of gender in policies and practice. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts by the institutions to build their capacity to integrate gender into their work and to create an enabling environment that supports gender-responsive agricultural development.

Empirical evidence (Gurung et al. 2011, Manyire & Apekey 2013, Mbo'o-Tchouawou et al. 2019, AWARD 2020) considers the challenges for the institutions to include limited access to sex-disaggregated data, which makes it difficult to design gender-responsive and well-targeted interventions; limited organizational capacity and resources for integrating gender; institutions' resistance to integrate gender in their work, which would require changing established practices and ways of thinking; and inadequate support from institutions

for capacity development and mentoring for staff to integrate gender in their work, which can result in a lack of motivation or commitment for gender integration in research and other areas.

Gender integration in AR4D institutions requires an understanding of the internal and external factors that influence how institutions address gender. Internal gender integration focuses on internally orientated strategies and interventions to support gender parity in staffing, human resource policies, vision and mission, and organizational culture. External gender integration focuses on how gender is addressed in an institution's projects and programs in their design, implementation, and dissemination. There is a critical need to increase investments in growing the capacity of institutions to integrate gender considerations in their policies, plans, budgets, program design and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Unequitable agrifood policies and unfavorable environment

Agrifood systems' policies have a strong comparative advantage in enhancing gender equality in rural settings and accelerating rural women's empowerment. Well-designed policies can close the gender gap in agriculture; increase women's access to opportunities, resources, and services; generate gains in farm productivity; increase food security; and foster economic growth. The findings from FAO's (2023) assessment of national policy framework's extent of addressing gender issues showed some gains where some regions had highlighted the gender gaps in access to land, inputs, services, finance, and digital technology, and included efforts to produce gender-responsive outcomes, but few of the agricultural policies recognized women's roles or challenges in agriculture.

Consultations with experts and key stakeholders in the development of this strategy show that progress has been slow in making agricultural and agrifood systems policies, strategies, investment plans, budgets, and plans more gender responsive. This has resulted from:

- The limited ownership of the gender agenda by agriculture policy-making bodies and the perception that gender integration is the role of other government bodies such as the ministry of gender and women. But these ministries are not usually associated with agricultural policy development or decision-making;
- The lack of technical expertise within ministries of agriculture on how to practically integrate gender into policies, plans and budgets;
- The limited synergistic efforts to influence gender-responsive change, despite progress and the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms that could serve as a basis for policy influence. This is associated with the inadequate gender and policy capacities within AR4D institutions;
- The significant gap in evidence on what works to stimulate gender-transformative change within institutions and the wider AR4D policy environment.

A woman with a warm smile stands in a rustic wooden enclosure. She is wearing a vibrant, multi-colored patterned short-sleeved top with a white lace collar, a long black skirt, and a matching patterned headwrap. Her left hand rests on her hip, while her right hand touches a vertical wooden post. To her left, a brown and white cow stands behind a wooden fence. The background shows the interior of a large wooden structure with a corrugated metal roof, and lush green trees are visible in the distance under bright sunlight.

AWARD's Strategy 2023–2027 is demonstration of our commitment to fostering policies and legal frameworks that are right and conducive for women. Investing in supporting the actors in AR4D and agriculture-related ministries to practically integrate gender into policies, strategies, programs, and budgets an obligation for AWARD.



2. OUR STORY

2.1 A decade and a half of championing the gender agenda

AWARD is located at the complex yet critically important nexus of AR4D, capacity development and gender equality. Founded in 2008, AWARD was envisioned as a career development program that sought to widen the pipeline of women agricultural researchers in leadership.

At the time of our founding, our mandate was to support top female agricultural scientists across sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate their careers by strengthening their research and leadership skills through our flagship AWARD Fellowship. This commitment was a response to the gross underrepresentation of women researchers in the leadership of the AR4D sector (Manyire & Apekey 2023), a phenomenon known as the leaky pipeline. Since then, AWARD has established itself as a frontrunner in developing leadership capabilities of women in AR4D, contributing to their career progression.

Our fellowship model, anchored on a three-tier mentoring model (Mukhebi et al. 2017), fosters intergenerational learning and is critical in establishing a pipeline of capable African leaders in the African AR4D sector. It has remained our core pathway for enhancing the capacities of African women researchers and driving transformative change in AR4D institutions.

With our partners' support, we have expanded our footprint across Africa to reach anglophone and francophone countries with the flagship AWARD Fellowship,

which has fundamentally contributed to building and sustaining a strong, effective talent pool of African women agricultural researchers. More than 92% of the AWARD fellows are women and many of them (57%) have grown into leadership positions within and outside their institutions across the African AR4D landscape.

A critical component of the AWARD Fellowships is the Advanced Science Training (AST) which focuses on equipping the Fellows to be scientists of uncompromising quality, alongside enhancing their capacity to lead. The AST involves partnerships with top global state-of-the-art research facilities to provide short-term research placements for the Fellows to strengthen and expand their technical expertise in their selected area of research. To date, we have partnered with 73 institutions from 25 countries globally to offer AST placements to 249 Fellows. We have found that the ASTs have been instrumental in fostering north-south collaborations, with more than 40% of the Fellows reporting that their experience has enabled them to establish new partnerships and collaborations.



2.2 Scaling the AWARD fellowship model

Our fellowships continue to have a well-recognized track record of success and have benefitted 1,872 individual scientists from more than 450 institutions in 26 countries since 2008. Whilst most AWARD fellows are women, we have also included men for specific fellowships targeting

specific skills such as integrating gender in climate change research. We have also scaled our fellowship model to address the underrepresentation of African women professionals involved in shaping agrifood policies.



AWARD Fellowships have benefited a total of

1,872 individual scientists

450+ institutions

26 countries, since 2008

AWARD fellowships at a glance

Fellowship	Period	Focus	Number of Cohorts	Number of beneficiaries	Number of countries
Flagship AWARD Fellowship	2008 to 2015	Establishing a pipeline of women to be effective, confidence and influential leaders within African AR4D	7	1,161	16
Pan-African AWARD Fellowship	2018 to 2020	Building a pool of women capable to lead and influence AR4D in francophone Africa	2	149	17
Institutional fellowship for Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research	2019	Building leadership capacity of women researchers at the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research	1	58	1
One Planet Fellowship	2019 to ongoing	A pool of scientists leading climate change research with a gender lens	3	309	14
One Planet Women Fellowship	2019 to 2022	Increase the number of women equipped to lead climate research in francophone Africa	2	30	5
Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship	2022 to ongoing	Cultivating a pool of confident, capable African women to lead the design and implementation of gender-responsive policies in Africa	2	195	12

2.3 Going beyond individuals to catalyzing institutional change

AWARD experienced remarkable success in empowering women scientists to grow in their visibility, confidence, influence, and professional capacity. But it quickly recognized that the scientists' progression was slow owing to the persistent systemic barriers and gaps in institutional policies and practices.

We came to understand that supporting individual scientists was not enough and that systemic transformation could only come about if we challenged conventional approaches to AR4D and connected the dots between individual capacities and institutional transformation much more tightly. That is why we spread out to African national agricultural research institutions and universities and the wider AR4D





environment, with an aim of influencing their policies and practices toward gender responsiveness. We established and piloted the Gender Responsive Agricultural Research and Development (GRARD) initiative.

We conceptualized GRARD as a comprehensive approach to support AR4D institutions to integrate gender in both their internal structures and their external environment, rather than as an isolated issue. This would ensure that they considered gender in their policies and programs, including in recruitment, leadership, and allocation of decision-making positions, and incorporate gender-specific perspectives in research planning, design, and dissemination. GRARD was piloted in eight institutions in six countries in eastern, southern and western Africa, institutions with which AWARD had had a strong partnership. The intervention was two pronged:

- The researchers were equipped with the skills to integrate gender in the overall research process from design through implementation to dissemination. Some 377 individuals from these institutions were trained in various skills, including leadership, incorporating gender in agricultural research, mentoring, and science writing.
- The institutions were supported to establish mechanisms to promote gender parity and systematically integrate gender in their institutional systems and processes. Some of the important achievements included piloting of an institutional fellowship based on the AWARD model, designing of grants to enhance research capacity of emerging career scientists, supporting designing of institutional policies to prioritize gender responsiveness, and supporting establishing of institutional mentoring programs.

2.4 Enhancing our training portfolio

To deepen and sustain our impact, we invested in building a world-class training unit comprising experienced African professionals, subject experts and process facilitators with pan-African and international experience, called the African Trainers Embracing the AWARD Mission (A-TEAM). Most of the A-TEAM members remain in their institutions and contribute to influence their institution's awareness, policies, and practices toward gender responsiveness. The trainers are designing and delivering bespoke learning experiences, developing the talent and leadership of African scientists across the continent. The following are some of our customized training programs:

- The leadership series focuses on equipping women scientists to become influential leaders and change agents in the AR4D sector, building their resilience to thrive in a rapidly changing world and exposing them to emerging leadership models. AWARD has designed and delivered its renowned

Women's Leadership and Management and Negotiation skills Courses to 333 women from 60 institutions across 52 countries, including One CGIAR, United Nations agencies and others.

- The mentoring series seeks to establish a mentoring culture across the continent, equipping researchers and institutions with the skills to institute structured mentoring programs to foster intergenerational learning and collaborations. We have designed and delivered customized mentoring training programs to 131 staff of institutions across 11 countries.
- The science skills series concentrates on growing the ability of agricultural researchers to produce a variety of scientific publications and develop relevant research proposals that can attract funding. More than 108 participants from 11 countries have received the science skills training focusing on scientific and proposal writing.

- The gender in agriculture series equips participants with the knowledge and skills to integrate a gender perspective in research design, implementation, and dissemination. This series includes a focus on gender awareness for institutional leaders including university vice chancellors. We have trained 348 participants from 11 countries on gender and agriculture.
- The training-of-trainers series, which we have delivered to 64 participants from 11 countries, is a response to our ambition to continually learn and grow. The series is designed to cultivate pools of experts that can deliver exceptional learning experiences for the AR4D workforce in Africa.



2.5 Country chapters

In intensifying the work to drive institutional and ecosystem transformation for gender-responsive policies and practices, AWARD adopted a model bringing together its alumni into country chapters, which were also to serve as a pathway for intra-country engagement. Today there are chapters in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi,

Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia with 650 members in total. The country chapter model is critical in the sustainability of AWARD's interventions and in building collaborative partnerships at the national, regional, and continental levels.



The country chapters' initiatives are driven primarily by their unique needs and the necessity to remain focused on the gender agenda. The chapters are designing AR4D projects that address gender issues and establishing partnerships to raise funding for projects. Examples of their activities include:

- The creation by the Nigerian chapter of an advocacy and knowledge sharing platform and the organizing of an annual conference of the country's top AR4D actors to accelerate agriculture-driven development.
- The implementation by the Kenya chapter of a UNESCO-TWAS project funded by Elsevier Foundation that is supporting women in northern Kenya to adopt climate-smart technologies.
- The partnering of the Kenya and Nigeria country chapters with the International Veterinary Vaccine Network since 2019 in outreach programs to shape the perspectives of high school girls towards science and agriculture. These outreach programs are one of the ways in which the country chapters contribute to plugging the leaky pipeline.





3. OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR 2023–2027

In our 2023–2027 strategy period we are intensifying our contribution to AR4D and expanding our scope to focus on agrifood systems more broadly. This phase builds on our 15-year experience and learnings to consolidate our gains, emphasizing gender responsiveness solutions as a critical lever for change.

This strategy is based on an approach that guided our previous strategy phase and that is anchored on the three pillars that underpin the execution of our mission. While each pillar has its own set of outcomes, the three are highly interdependent and together they form a singular comprehensive strategic approach.

3.1 Our vision and mission

We envisage gender-responsive solutions that will catalyze equitable agrifood systems for African women and men smallholders.

Vision

Gender-responsive agricultural research for development driving equitable agrifood systems.

Mission

Catalyzing positive change in agricultural research for development by building a pipeline of intergenerational women in leadership, equipping AR4D professionals and institutions to integrate gender in policies and practices and influencing the enabling environment to enhance gender responsiveness.



3.2 Our theory of change

Our theory of change is informed by our goal to reduce gender inequalities and deliver more equitable benefits for women and men smallholders in African agrifood systems. Collectively, our outcomes will contribute to global development outcomes aligned with specific targets within SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 5 on gender equality, and SDG 13 on climate action.

We have prioritized seven interconnected intermediate outcomes that will define our vision of success for AR4D:

- A pool of capable, confident, and influential women in leadership positions in the African AR4D sector, sustained by an intergenerational pipeline of women growing into and staying in leadership.
- AR4D professionals equipped to integrate gender in their work.
- AR4D institutions adopt gender-responsive policies and practices.
- AWARD alumni influencing institutional policies and practices, advancing our intra-country engagement.
- A self-sustaining capacity development hub that is enhancing capacities for leadership, mentoring, innovation, and gender responsiveness.
- Availability and uptake of reliable, up-to-date evidence on the status of gender responsiveness in the African AR4D sector.
- Policy practitioners designing and implementing gender-responsive agrifood policies.



3.3 Areas of focus



Pillar 1: Investing in Individuals

The leaky pipeline of women in AR4D leadership, with its gross underrepresentation of women in decision-making and agenda setting, continues to impose a tremendous cost on Africa's development. AWARD will continue its work of building a pool of capable, confident and influential women leaders and strengthening the capacity of AR4D professionals to deliver innovations that respond to the needs and priorities of women and men in Africa's agrifood systems. A change in AWARD's approach from the previous strategy will be the purposive expansion of our targeting to include early career and emerging leaders for a sustainable and strong pipeline.

Outcome 1: More women access leadership positions and AR4D professionals influence gender responsiveness

Intermediate outcome 1a: A pipeline of capable, confident, and influential women leading AR4D

AWARD will invest in building an intergenerational pool of capable, confident, and influential women leading critical innovations in AR4D. We will accelerate the involvement of women in AR4D leadership and integrate women's leadership themes in global and regional conversations focusing on AR4D. This

will require enhancing our fellowship model and adapting it to the dynamic environment and emerging trends to deliver career accelerator programs that will set more women on the leadership path.

Key actions:

- Design and deliver career accelerator programs targeting women at different stages of their careers including those at the entry-level, mid-career, and advanced-level positions.
- Establish platforms to amplify the voices of women leaders in AR4D and support women professionals to participate in networking events to increase their exposure and visibility.

Intermediate outcome 1b: A pool of AR4D professionals integrating gender in their practice

Appreciating the need for widespread awareness among AR4D practitioners on the crucial role of gender responsiveness in agrifood systems, AWARD will equip women and men professionals in AR4D with the skills and knowledge to integrate gender in their work so that they can generate innovations that address the needs and priorities of women and men smallholders.

Key Actions:

- Design fellowships for AR4D professionals working on different aspects of agrifood systems to equip them with skills on integrating gender in their work.
- Establish communities of practice for participants of our fellowships, for fostering peer learning and widespread understanding on the emerging trends in this area.





Pillar 2: Strengthening Institutions

AWARD will enhance the capacity of regional, subregional and national AR4D institutions to integrate gender responsiveness in their policies and practices. AWARD's alumni and country chapters will form integral components in the execution of the agenda under this pillar.

Outcome 2: Improved gender responsiveness in African AR4D institutions and their partners

Intermediate outcome 2a: AR4D institutions embracing gender-responsive policies and practices

AWARD seeks to foster improved institutional capacity for gender responsiveness in policies and practices of AR4D institutions' internal and external processes. Recognizing that an organization's commitment to gender equality, along with positive external pressure for change, is considered a key success factor in institutional transformation, AWARD will identify and partner with institutions that

have demonstrated commitment to gender equality to influence their policies and practices to address gender.

Key actions:

- Strengthen the capacity of AR4D professionals to integrate gender in the design and implementation of their interventions, including in analyses to identify gender-specific constraints and opportunities, to develop interventions that address the distinct needs and priorities of men and women smallholders, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions on gender equality outcomes.
- Support AR4D institutions to develop internally orientated strategies and interventions to support gender integration in their vision and the mission, staffing, human resource policies, and organizational culture, as well as for the collection of data on key performance metrics related to gender.

Intermediate outcome 2b: AWARD alumni shaping gender responsiveness in AR4D institutional policies and practices

An evaluation of the implementation of AWARD's previous strategy revealed that a critical mass of alumni within an institution can lead institutional change. This lesson will form the basis of our approach for this intermediate outcome. AWARD will strengthen the capacity of our alumni on how to organize and influence gender responsiveness in AR4D institutions.

Key actions:

- Strengthen the capacity of AWARD alumni to become change agents and to influence gender responsiveness in their institutions' policies and practices.
- Support AWARD alumni to strengthen networks for advocacy, knowledge sharing, and intra-country collaboration, to amplify the impact of AWARD's work and to champion gender integration for institutional transformation.

Intermediate outcome 2c: A self- sustaining capacity development hub enhancing capabilities in leadership, mentoring, innovation and gender responsiveness in agrifood systems

Over the 15 years of AWARD's existence, our training unit has grown to acquire leading standards in the quality of both our trainers and delivery of our programs. AWARD's dynamic environment and highly competitive space necessitate continuous growth and refinement of our training programs, trainers' knowledge and skills, and services.

Key actions:

- Continue to grow and improve AWARD's course content, trainer's knowledge and skills, and services.
- Establish a self-sustaining capacity development hub for leadership, mentoring, science skills, and gender responsiveness.





Pillar 3: Influencing the Environment

AWARD understands that its mission will not be accomplished without the support of the highest levels of continental, national and institutional governance systems. Activities under this pillar, therefore, will involve revamping our approach to expand collaboration with actors at those levels to cultivate a gender-responsive AR4D ecosystem and generating evidence to influence the wider AR4D policy agenda.

Outcome 3: Improved gender responsiveness in the African AR4D ecosystem

Intermediate outcome 3a: Increased availability and use of compelling evidence on the impacts of gender responsiveness in the AR4D ecosystem

AWARD will generate evidence on what works to advance gender equality within AR4D institutions and leverage our partners' capacities to institutionalize gender-responsive practices for better policies, strategies, programs, and budgetary

decisions. This is an opportunity to become the go-to institution and authority on gender responsiveness in the AR4D ecosystem.

Key actions:

- Periodically produce and disseminate evidence to monitor the status of gender equality within the AR4D sector.
- Generate actionable evidence on what works to advance gender responsiveness within AR4D institutional policies and practices to better inform policies, strategies, programs, and budgetary decisions.

Intermediate outcome 3b: Increased influence on AR4D policy environment toward gender responsiveness

AWARD will raise awareness on gender responsiveness and network with others to influence the wider AR4D policy agenda, fostering an enabling environment within the AR4D ecosystem.

Key actions:

- Strengthen the capacity of policy practitioners to analyze gender gaps in policies and equip them with the expertise and tools to design and implement gender-responsive agricultural policies.
- Organize convenings at global, regional and subregional AR4D forums to create awareness and a platform to influence and engage with partners on gender-responsive AR4D.







4. DELIVERING ON OUR PROMISE

We appreciate that to achieve our mission, we must invest in growing our ability to deliver. We firmly believe that sustaining our gains is intricately connected with having a robust delivery model. We have identified a set of five crucial intersecting elements that will set us on a path toward success.

4.1 Competency

As part of its operational planning, AWARD will identify the key skills and capacities that it will need at the leadership and staff levels to deliver its 2023–2027 strategy. We will strengthen our competencies and expertise to build an organization that is fit for purpose and is motivated to deliver. One specific area to strengthen is AWARD's expertise on gender.

4.2 Evidence-based influence

We will leverage our robust monitoring, evaluation, learning, knowledge management and communication functions to consolidate our knowledge and to influence the AR4D policy environment toward gender responsiveness.

4.3 Partnerships

AWARD understands and appreciates the critical role of nurturing robust, meaningful partnerships with diverse stakeholders. We will invest in establishing strategic partnerships and collaborations to influence the AR4D policy environment toward gender responsiveness and to foster lasting change in African AR4D.

AWARD will develop a partnership strategy and policy, including guidelines to support the management and engagement of partners. The partnership strategy will support AWARD to establish and nurture meaningful partnerships to complement its strengths and to identify the types of partners that it will need to deliver on the strategy. Intentional efforts will be made towards collaboration with regional and subregional research institutions, national agricultural research and extension systems, regional economic communities, and One CGIAR, amongst others. Such partnerships will enhance AWARD's overall impact delivery, scaling, influence, and resource mobilization.

4.4 Resourcing our work

AWARD will develop a resource mobilization strategy aiming to diversify its funding base to include donor funding, targeting of a wider pool of private and public philanthropies, income generation through for-pay products, and an income stream from innovative activities with some of the partnering institutions. AWARD will also seek to identify the skills and organizational capabilities needed to deliver on the resource mobilization strategy.

4.5 Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy implementation will gauge the progress towards the realization of the outcomes and help to gather learning for the improvement of the approaches. Furthermore, it will facilitate accountability checking and outcome delivery against the indicators. The impact of AWARD's work will be gauged through an evaluation process. This will require data gathering at predetermined

points to assess the progress towards the anticipated outcomes. The implementation plan with the success indicators to be used as the yardstick for evaluating the outcomes is shown in Appendix 1. As an institution with learning as a major ingredient of its makeup, AWARD will gather lessons from the implementation of this strategy for use in improving future aspects of its work.



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APPENDIX 1:

Strategy 2023–2027 Implementation Plan

Outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Key actions	Success indicators	Time frame
Pillar 1: Investing in individuals				
Outcome 1: More women access leadership positions and AR4D professionals influence gender responsiveness	1a: A pipeline of capable, confident, and influential women leading AR4D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver career accelerator programs targeting women at different stages of their careers including those at the entry-level, mid-career, and advanced-level positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of women AR4D professionals with improved leadership skills following participation in AWARD interventions. 	Throughout the strategy period
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish platforms to amplify the voices of women leaders in AR4D and support women professionals to participate in networking events and increase their exposure and visibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of women AR4D professionals supported to participate in networking events and international conferences. 	Throughout the strategy period
	1b: A pool of AR4D professionals integrating gender in their practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design fellowships AR4D professionals working on different aspects of agrifood systems to equip them with skills on integrating gender in their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of AR4D professionals with improved skills in the integrating gender in their work following participation in AWARD interventions. 	Throughout the strategy period

Outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Key actions	Success indicators	Time frame
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish communities of practice for participants of our fellowships, fostering peer learning and widespread understanding on the emerging trends in this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which participants of fellowships use the community of practice for peer learning and knowledge exchange 	Throughout the strategy period
Pillar 2: Strengthening institutions				
Outcome 2: Improved gender responsiveness in African AR4D institutions and their partners	2a: AR4D institutions embracing gender-responsive policies and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the capacity of AR4D professionals to integrate gender in the design and implementation of their interventions, including in analyses to identify gender-specific constraints and opportunities, to develop interventions that address the distinct needs and priorities of men and women smallholders, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions on gender equality outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of AR4D institutions with the capacity to integrate gender in design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of their interventions, thereby addressing the distinct needs and priorities of men and women smallholders. 	Throughout the strategy period

Outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Key actions	Success indicators	Time frame
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support AR4D institutions to develop internally orientated strategies and interventions to support gender integration in their vision and the mission, staffing, human resource policies, and organizational culture, as well as for the collection of data on key performance metrics related to gender. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of AR4D institutions with internally orientated policies to support gender integration in their vision and mission, staffing, human resource policies, and organizational culture, as well as for the collection of data on key performance metrics related to gender. 	Throughout the strategy period
	2b: AWARD alumni shaping gender responsiveness in AR4D institutional policies and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the capacity of AWARD alumni to become change agents and to influence gender responsiveness in their institutions' policies and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which AWARD alumni are influencing gender responsiveness in their institutions' policies and practices. 	Throughout the strategy period
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support AWARD alumni to strengthen networks for advocacy, knowledge sharing, and intra-country collaboration, to amplify the impact of AWARD's work and to champion gender integration for institutional transformation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of active AWARD alumni country chapters that are amplifying the impact of AWARD's work. 	Throughout the strategy period

Outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Key actions	Success indicators	Time frame
	2c: A self-sustaining capacity development hub enhancing capabilities in leadership, mentoring, innovation and gender responsiveness in agrifood systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to grow and improve AWARD's course content, trainer's knowledge and skills, and services. Establish a self-sustaining capacity development hub for leadership, mentoring, science skills, and gender responsiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer satisfaction score for capacity development hub training programs. Extent to which the capacity development hub is able to attract demand for the for-pay training courses. 	<p>Throughout the strategy period</p> <p>Throughout the strategy period</p>
Pillar 3: Influencing the environment				
Outcome 3: Improved gender responsiveness in the African AR4D ecosystem	3a: Increased availability and use of compelling evidence on the impacts of gender responsiveness in the AR4D ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodically produce and disseminate evidence to monitor the status of gender equality within the AR4D sector. Generate actionable evidence on what works to advance gender responsiveness within AR4D institutional policies and practices to better inform policies, strategies, programs, and budgetary decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download counts and citation counts for AWARD knowledge products on gender responsiveness in AR4D. Number of studies and policy briefs generated to champion change in the gender responsiveness agenda. 	<p>Throughout the strategy period</p> <p>Throughout the strategy period</p>

Outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Key actions	Success indicators	Time frame
	3b: Increased influence on AR4D policy environment toward gender responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the capacity of policy practitioners to analyze gender gaps in policies and equip them with the expertise and tools to design and implement gender-responsive agricultural policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of AWARD fellows trained in technical skills for gender-responsive policy and practice. 	Throughout the strategy period
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize convenings at global, regional and subregional AR4D forums to create awareness and a platform to influence and engage with partners on gender-responsive AR4D. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of convenings at global, regional, and subregional levels. 	Throughout the strategy period







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