



# Refreshed AWARD Strategy 2017-2022

August 2021





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AWARD Strategy  
2017-2022

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## **AWARD**

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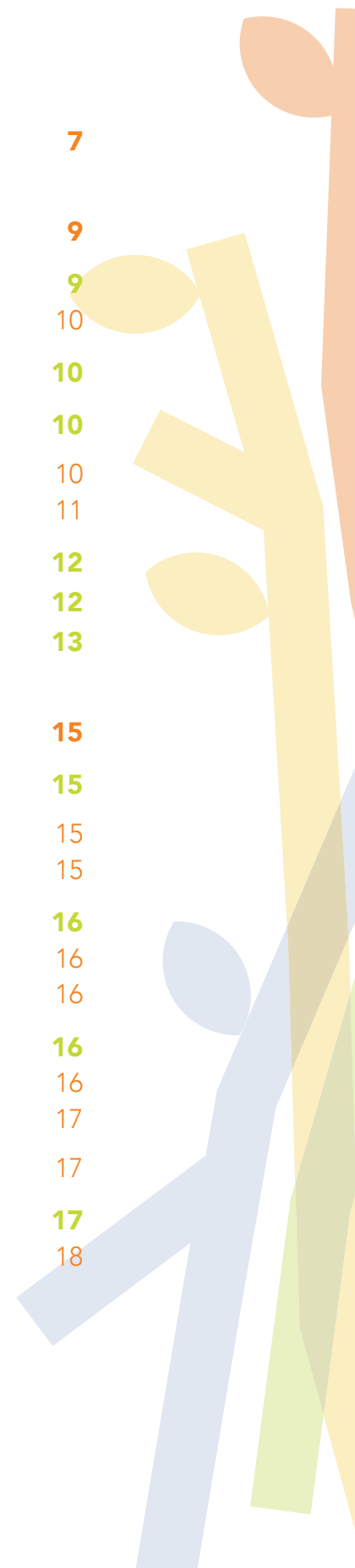
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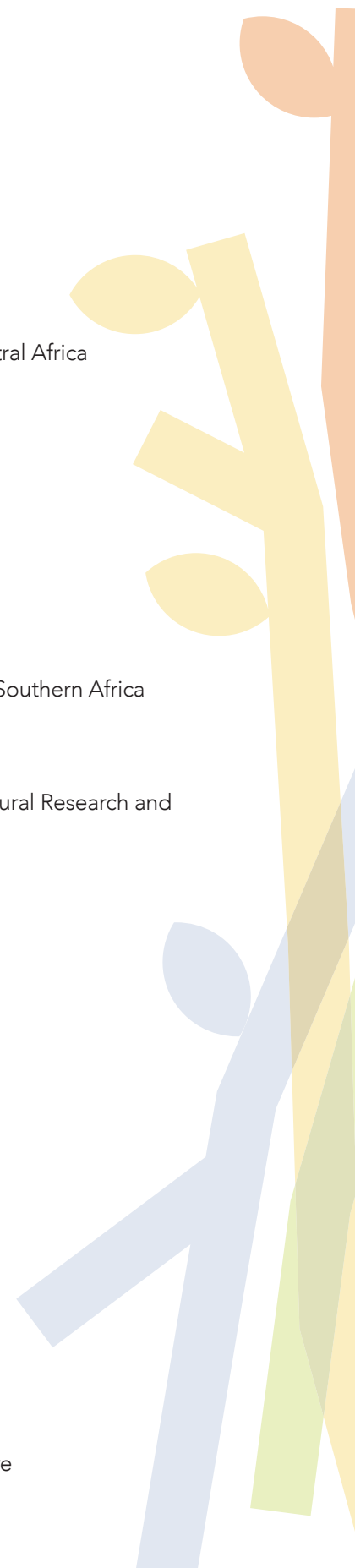
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# Acronyms

AECF	Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
AIS	Agricultural Innovation System
AgTech	Agricultural technology
ARD	Agricultural research and development
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
ASTI	Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators
A-TEAM	African Trainers Embracing AWARD's Mission
AWARD	African Women in Agricultural Research and Development
AWSEM	African Women in Science Empowerment Model
AU	African Union
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CCARDESA	Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CORAF/ WECARD	Conseil Ouest et Centre africain pour la recherche et le développement agricoles/West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
EU	European Union
FAAP	Framework for African Agricultural Productivity
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FtF	Feed the Future (USAID initiative)
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Program
GRARD	Gender-Responsive Agricultural Research and Development
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
IARC	International Agricultural Research Centre
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
ReSAKSS	Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System
RUFORUM	(African) Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture



SCARDA	Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRO	Sub-Regional Organization
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



# Chapter 1: About AWARD

## Our story

**A**frican Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) was founded in 2008 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 equip top women agricultural scientists across sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate agricultural gains by strengthening their research and leadership skills through our tailored flagship AWARD Fellowships.

The flagship AWARD Fellowship was designed as a catalyst for innovations with high potential to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of African smallholder farmers, most of whom are women. The flagship AWARD Fellowship continues to have a well-recognized track record of success and has since benefited 534 Fellows and more than 1500 researchers from 30 countries across Africa and beyond.

The AWARD Fellowship's successes led to scaling the novel model to widen the frontiers of our capacity development interventions beyond African female scientists and to include male scientists and emerging European scientists. We are building a robust pipeline of scientists equipped to lead climate change research in Africa through the One Planet Fellowship, establishing an intergenerational network of scientists across Africa and Europe and fostering research collaborations. Announced at the inaugural One Planet Summit in December 2017, the One Planet Fellowship is a coalition of the One Planet Summit Commitments focused on mobilizing researchers and young people to work for the climate. The inaugural cohort of the One Planet Fellowship, launched in 2018, consisted of 44 Laureate Candidates and 44 Mentors.

Five years into our founding, our mandate expanded beyond investing in individual scientists to working with agricultural research and development institutions to foster increased responsiveness to the needs and contributions of different women and men in the African agricultural landscape.

In 2017, as part of our strategic expansion, we launched an ambitious strategy designed to build gender-responsive agricultural research and development in Africa. At the same time, we continued investing in plugging the leaky pipeline by building the capacities of women scientists. The AWARD strategy 2017-2022 set us toward inclusive, agriculture-driven prosperity for the African continent by strengthening the production and dissemination of more gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation. AWARD understands gender-responsive agricultural research as research that addresses the needs and priorities of a diversity of men and women across Africa's agricultural value chain. Evidence indicates that gender-responsive research is more efficient; it results in more inclusive, targeted, and relevant innovations with higher adoption rates.

We believe that gender responsiveness has a transformative potential to enhance agricultural research for Africa's sustained and inclusive economic growth. Gender responsiveness offers a powerful tool through which agricultural researchers can intentionally design agricultural research agendas that drive sustainable and inclusive rural transformation for Africa. Indeed, focusing on innovation that addresses the constraints of African farmers at the margins, especially women, offers the potential to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of African ARD by increasing the scale, scope, and sustainability of impacts.

## Gender-responsive, scalable, and sustainable agribusiness solutions

The AWARD Strategy 2017-2022 saw us venture into gender and agribusiness, piloting our Gender in Agribusiness Investments for Africa (GAIA) initiative to spotlight and support agribusinesses committed to bridging the gender gap in African Agriculture. The GAIA pilot focused on technologies that addressed significant constraints in African agriculture, such as closing yield gaps, reducing post-harvest losses, and improving market inefficiencies. It focused on technologies that demonstrated clear benefits to marginalized groups, including smallholders and women involved beyond the production end of agricultural value chains.

AWARD introduced a critical conversation on the importance of gender considerations within Africa's agribusiness sector and agricultural innovation sector more broadly through the GAIA initiative. GAIA brought 79 agribusinesses to participate in intensive boot camps and the agricultural technology (AgTech) solutions marketplace. GAIA boot camps connected innovators with private-sector organizations and institutions interested in taking up new AgTech solutions with the potential for widespread adoption and adaptation in different contexts.

Beyond the highly successful pilot that invested in 79 agribusinesses across Africa, AWARD is exploring the potential of designing a robust set of interventions to grow GAIA's impact.

### Our values

- Learning and Innovation
- Diversity and Respect
- Communication and Collaboration
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Results and Accountability

## Our Context and Opportunity

### An Opportunity for Africa's Inclusive Economic Growth

The central role of agriculture in Africa's economy is well recorded, with evidence indicating that agriculture provides the livelihood for two-thirds of sub-Saharan Africa's population.

The 'OECD-FAO agricultural outlook 2016-2025' report records that agriculture contributes 15 percent of Africa's GDP and employs more than half of its total labor force, with women comprising at least half of this labor force. The World Bank reports that agricultural GDP growth in sub-Saharan Africa has accelerated from 2.3 percent per year in the 1980s to 3.8 percent from 2000 to 2005. The African Development Bank (AfDB) identifies agriculture as the continent's second-largest industrial sector (measured by value). A McKinsey global study estimates that the sector will grow by 6 percent per year until 2030.

Indeed, the agriculture sector presents exciting opportunities to sustain Africa's economic growth and ensure that the growth benefits all Africans.

Despite these huge potentials, Africa is identified as one of the parts of the world most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (Niang et al., 2014). Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) climate change projections show that the continent will face water stress, extreme heat, rainfall variability, and sea-level rise (IPCC, 2007; Niang et al., 2014). The effects are aggravated by the interaction of multiple stresses, including high dependence on rain-fed agriculture, widespread poverty, and weak adaptive capacity (African Union, 2014). The agricultural sector is more vulnerable as rainfed agriculture accounts for approximately 96 % of crop production (World Bank 2013). Moreover, the production of crops and livestock in Sub-Saharan Africa is typically located in semiarid regions (Barrios et al., 2008).

African governments have long recognized the critical role of agriculture in driving prosperity and the African Union during its 2003 Summit and as an integral part of its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), initiated by the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). This policy framework is focused on engendering agricultural transformation, wealth

creation, food and nutrition security, and economic growth and prosperity for all.

In 2014, the AU reiterated its CAADP commitment to agricultural transformation through the *Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods*. The Malabo Declaration makes seven specific commitments for 2015 to 2025, beginning with a reaffirmation of “the pursuit of agriculture-led growth as the main strategy to achieve targets on food and nutrition security and shared prosperity.”

Generally, Africa’s capacity in research is one of the lowest in the world. For instance, despite 15% of the world’s population lives in the continent, Africa produces only 2% of the world’s research output (Blom et al., 2016

). In 2013, Africa’s gross expenditure on research and development was about 0.45 percent of GDP, 1.62 percent in Asia, and 1.03 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean (African Development Bank, 2018). Africa was home to just 2.4 percent of the world’s researchers, compared with 42.8 percent in Asia (*ibid*), suggesting that the continent invests limited financial and human resources on research, leading to limited research outputs.

## Gender in Agricultural Research

Even with high-level commitments from African governments and the AU, it is crucial to recognize that African agriculture must deliver inclusive economic growth within a challenging context that includes massive youth unemployment, climate change, and widespread malnutrition.

In the African context, agricultural transformation and women’s empowerment are inextricably linked. Addressing the gender disparities that persist in African agriculture represents a tremendous opportunity to unlock the potential of African agriculture.

The agricultural sector in Africa is the largest employer of women; 62 percent of economically active women are working in the sector, while in countries such as Rwanda, Malawi, and Burkina Faso, over 90 percent of economically active women are involved in agricultural activities.

Yet, the rural wage gap between men and women in Africa is estimated to vary between 15 and 60 percent. For example, in Ivorian cocoa and

Ethiopian coffee production, women provide 68 percent and 75 percent of the labor, respectively, but earn only 21 percent and 34 percent of the income generated (*ibid*).

The wage gap is only one of many disparities, including unequal access to land, improved inputs, extension, and other technical services that comprise the yawning gender gap in African agriculture.

The World Bank cautions, “Failure to recognize the different roles of men and women in agriculture is costly, resulting in misguided projects and programs, forgone agricultural output and incomes, and food and nutrition insecurity.”

The recognition should go beyond political correctness, incorporating gender issues systematically in agricultural research, development, and extension systems to significantly meet the food needs of Africa’s growing population and ensure that productivity gains in food systems translate to improved welfare of the poor. The empowerment of women farmers requires institutional transformation, with research institutions becoming more gender-responsive and paying close attention and genuinely responding to the needs of women farmers. For agricultural research, increased gender responsiveness requires a transformation of both the research process itself and more gender-equal staffing. Thus, the empowerment of women farmers requires changes in the policies, practices, culture, and staffing of agricultural research institutions. Indeed, gender responsiveness in agriculture is not about “fixing” the women farmers but addressing the institutional structures that impede their productivity.

Unfortunately, social analyses more broadly, and gender analysis, in particular, have not historically been seen as integral to the core business of agriculture research. As a result, social and relational issues are considered incidental to agricultural research agendas,

resulting in a limited understanding of how gender relations affect research, thus negatively impacting the uptake of technologies by women and men in agricultural value chains. AWARD is located at the complex yet critically important nexus of agricultural research, capacity development, and gender equality.

## Our strategic focus

We work toward positioning the agricultural sector as a critical driver of sustainable and inclusive economic growth and influencing an Agricultural Innovation System (AIS) that responds directly and immediately to the urgent needs of the diversity of players across Africa’s agricultural value chains. We recognize that “the adoption of innovation required to increase productivity cannot be decreed. Innovations must meet the needs of producers and, for health and environment, must concern the entire national communities.”

For systemic transformation and research outcomes relevant to end-users, African agricultural research must challenge conventional approaches to agricultural research and connect the dots from lab to farm and beyond much more tightly. Our

work seeks to influence agricultural research and development to contribute toward transforming food systems, which is dependent on the inclusion and interaction of different actors along the agricultural and food value chains.

## Our vision and mission

AWARD envisions a robust, resilient gender-responsive agricultural innovation system working toward agriculture-driven prosperity for Africa.

Contributing toward this vision, AWARD is investing in African scientists and institutions to deliver and influence innovative, sustainable, gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation.

Guiding the execution of our mission are three pillars:



**Pillar one:** We invest in building a pool of capable, confident, and influential African scientists to lead critical advances and innovations in the agricultural research and development sector (ARD).

**Pillar two:** We support African ARD institutions to prioritize and embrace gender responsiveness in both policy and practice. We partner with institutions to grow their capacity for gender-responsive agricultural research by leveraging the talents of gender-diverse research teams and strengthening gender prioritization in research, design, implementation, and dissemination.

**Pillar three:** We are building an enabling environment for gender responsiveness to become an embedded cultural norm and practice in the African ARD by growing the awareness of gender issues into policies, programs, and accountability mechanisms. We focus on increasing the visibility of women researchers and research leaders, generating and curating compelling evidence on the value of gender responsiveness in ARD.

While each pillar has its own set of objectives, they are also highly interdependent. They together form a singular comprehensive strategic approach that will continue to guide AWARD's effort to enhance the gender responsiveness of African agricultural research.

## Our Learnings

More than a decade of implementing our interventions has validated the need to scale up our initiatives. Our monitoring, evaluation, and learning coupled with the demand for our initiatives continue to demonstrate that:

- Africa's agricultural research workforce and decision-makers have a tremendous appetite for enhanced leadership, mentoring, research, and technical gender skills<sup>1</sup>.

- The need for enhanced capacity demands for robust investment in designing and delivering a training strategy that will scale the AWARD learning experiences
- Addressing the persisting gender gap in ARD calls for intensified investments in addressing systemic barriers and enhancing men's understanding of their role in this equation

Collaborations and innovative partnerships are critical to advance research and innovation. It is vital to foster and nurture connections between individual scientists and catalyze relationships between/ among research institutions.<sup>2</sup>

- Failure to tackle institutional deficiencies and promote accountable and robust leadership exacerbate the gender gaps recorded across Africa<sup>3</sup>.
- Mentoring is a proven and powerful driver for career development and for retaining women and other emerging researchers<sup>4</sup>
- If Africa is to realize inclusive, agriculture-driven prosperity, there is a critical need to bridge the gap between agricultural research, agribusiness, and the agribusiness investment community. Connecting these key players will maximize adoption and commercialize agricultural innovations and build sustainable agricultural value chains for the continent.

<sup>1</sup> <https://awardfellowships.org/our-learnings/a-decade-of-advancing-inclusive-agricultural-research-the-award-story/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://awardfellowships.org/our-learnings/advanced-science-training-a-decade-of-strengthening-the-research-skills-of-african-women-through-global-partnerships/>

<sup>3</sup> Mbo'o-Tchouawou, Michèle; Musembi, Leonard Mulei; Beyene, Hailemichael Taye; and Kamau-Rutenberg, Wanjiru. 2019. Gender and leadership in Africa: Exploring the nexus, trends, and opportunities. In 2019 Annual trends and outlook report: Gender equality in rural Africa: From commitments to outcomes, eds. Quisumbing, Agnes R.; Meinzen-Dick, Ruth Suseela; and Njuki, Jemimah. Chapter 3, Pp. 32-43. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). [https://doi.org/10.2499/9780896293649\\_03](https://doi.org/10.2499/9780896293649_03)

<sup>4</sup> <https://awardfellowships.org/our-learnings/strengthening-mentoring-partnerships-for-african-women-scientists-in-the-agricultural-research-and-development-system-in-sub-saharan-africa/>



# Why Climate Smart Agriculture?

Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is an approach that helps to identify the actions needed to transform and reorient agricultural systems to effectively support development and ensure food security in a changing climate. CSA addresses three main objectives: sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes, adapting and building resilience to climate change, and reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible.


**Vision:** Climate resilient and low carbon growth sustainable agriculture that ensures food security and contributes to national development goals by Kenya Vision 2030.

**Mission:** To facilitate agriculture that sustainably increases productivity, enhances resilience and minimizes greenhouse gas emissions.

**The three pillars of CSA:**

Productivity:	Adaptation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance to sustainably increase agricultural productivity and incomes from crop, livestock and fish without using a higher input on the environment.</li> <li>• This, in turn, will raise food and nutritional security.</li> <li>• Any context specific increasing productivity is sustainable intensification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should help to reduce and/or remove greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.</li> <li>• This implies that we reduce losses from each sector or build food forests and other agroforestry systems. That we avoid deforestation from agriculture.</li> <li>• We manage soils and trees in ways that maximizes their potential to act as carbon sinks and absorb CO2 from the atmosphere.</li> </ul>

**Older farmers utilizing natural practices**



Drought tolerant sweetpotato varieties

**Conservation - Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emission**




Minimum tillage reduces CO2 emissions




Mulching conserves moisture


**Productivity - Managing Farms Sustainably to Increase Incomes**



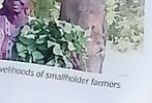
Water retained in the furrows is used by crops



Furrow preparation on a demonstration plot



Zai pits combine water harvesting and conservation



Improving livelihoods of smallholder farmers

## KeAW

### Mission

To contribute to improved and sustainable production, productivity and commercialization through collaborative research and building, policy and advocacy.

### Vision

To be an organisation that empowers and supports smallholder farmers.

### Motto

Strength of a woman

### Objectives

1. To promote sustainable food nutrition through research and capacity building, productivity, post harvest handling, value marketing among smallholder farmers.
2. To empower upcoming scientists through agricultural research and development, mentorship, capacity building and in a responsive manner.
3. To enhance networking and collaborative relationships for professional development and visibility of KeAWARD.
4. To mobilise resources for supporting KeAWARD activities.
5. To influence policy in agricultural research and development.



Sweet potatoes



# Chapter 2: Our Focus Areas and Programmatic Approach

Our experience over the last decade, coupled with our learnings and demand for our interventions, endorse the need to scale up our work and partnerships to catalyze the production and dissemination of more gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation in Africa. We have structured our approach into four broad programmatic areas.

## 1. Fellowships

Our Fellowships, inspired by the flagship AWARD Fellowship model, are designed to accelerate the careers of Africa's researchers and agricultural policymakers and their capabilities to lead and influence the agricultural research and development agenda in Africa

### The Flagship AWARD Fellowship

Our flagship initiative, the AWARD Fellowship, is a career development program investing in accelerating the careers of the continent's leading women agricultural scientists. It cultivates a growing pool of women to be:

- a) Influential within agricultural research and development institutions supporting the agricultural value chain
- b) Effective across a range of research disciplines serving the sector
- c) Responsive to gender issues in the service of women without excluding men, and
- d) Technically competent to generate innovations needed by rural smallholders

The core intent is to empower women scientists and propel them to leadership across agricultural re-

search and development.<sup>5</sup> The unique career development program fosters mentoring partnerships, builds science skills, and develops leadership capacity. Successful implementation of the AWARD Fellowship is expected to result in sharpened scientific writing and publishing skills, mentoring, team management, and effective leadership.

### One Planet Fellowship

A coalition of the One Planet Summit that focuses on mobilizing researchers and young people to work for the climate, the One Planet Fellowship is a career development program building a robust pipeline of scientists equipped to lead climate change research in Africa. The One Planet Fellowship establishes an intergenerational network of scientists across Africa and Europe to foster research collaborations.

The One Planet Fellowship is working toward four primary outcomes:

- A pipeline of scientists working on climate change, comprised of One Planet Laureates as champions of sustainable climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Increased Africa-Europe research collaborations on climate change
- A mentoring culture to support the continuous development of capable, confident climate change researchers
- A pool of scientists equipped to analyze the potential of their research to bridge the gender gap in African agriculture and ability to cope with climate change

<sup>5</sup> AWARD, 2012. *Effective Solutions for Agricultural Development through Empowered African Women Scientists*, (AWARD).

## 2. Institutional Engagement

### Gender-Responsive Agricultural Research and Development (GRARD)

Gender-Responsive Agricultural Research and Development (GRARD) is the leading vehicle that we will use to drive our institutional engagement. GRARD will involve strengthening national agricultural research and development research institutions to deliver their mandate in ways that consider the needs and priorities of the wide range of their end-users.

AWARD defines gender-responsive research as research that addresses the distinct needs and priorities of a diversity of men and women across the agricultural value chain to close the gender gaps that contribute to Africa's low agricultural productivity.

#### *Why does gender-responsive research matter?*

Gender-responsive research focuses on the contextual needs of both men and women in diverse groups to identify, analyze and challenge gender inequalities. Gender-responsive research is about integrating, complementing, or accompanying sex-disaggregated data with gender analyses evidence. It supports identifying and providing recommendations for achieving equity as well as gender equality outcomes.

We believe that gender-responsive research presents an opportunity for agricultural researchers and organizations to investigate the underlying and unseen causes of the "gender gaps" in agriculture. Indeed, gender-responsive research prompts researchers to be key actors driving transformative change in Africa's agriculture through approaches that challenge and reconfigure discriminatory social structures. In so doing, GRARD can change the very rules and practices that marginalize certain demographic groups in agricultural value chains. Moreover, we believe that gender-responsive research is well-positioned to challenge myths and dominant narratives in agricultural research that are misguided and poorly rooted. Examples include narratives portraying women as socially isolated from men and women and men as static homogenous social categories often in conflict with each other.

### Tapping on the network of AWARD alumni

AWARD has, over the years, cultivated a critical mass of researchers, research leaders, and other development actors committed to its vision of agricultural-driven transformation for Africa. This pool is a vital entry point for AWARD's intra-country engagements with institutions and influencing policies at institutional, national, and regional levels. We will continue building this critical mass into strong AWARD alumni. We will also work with the AWARD alumni, which includes structured country chapters, to deepen our intra country engagements, catalyze networks for advocacy, knowledge sharing at the national level, and intra-country collaborations. The chapters build on members' experiences with AWARD's interventions to forge joint advocacy promoting empowerment among professional scientists and gender responsiveness, especially in the international research centers and other international and national organizations.

AWARD country chapters include AWARD alumni, fellows, mentors, fellows' mentees, and other individuals interested in driving gender and agricultural research and development agenda. AWARD country chapters are legal entities with varying structures as per their identified needs and priorities.

AWARD alumni are scientists who have directly participated in the AWARD Fellowships and training programs.

## 3. Thought Leadership

We will develop and influence global platforms that shape the narrative around gender-responsive agricultural research and development. Through these platforms, we will amplify the voices of the African experts, foster experience sharing and learning, forge partnerships and collaborations and catalyze intergenerational learning.

### GoFoWiSeR

While AWARD focuses on building the capacity and skills of agricultural research scientists in Africa, we recognize that agricultural research is only one subset of scientific research, and the gender gap in agricultural research is reflected in other STEM fields more broadly.



With ongoing concern about the sparse numbers of women in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), there is a growing momentum to pay attention to the numbers and experiences of women in science.

The Global Forum on Women in Scientific Research (GoFoWiSeR) is a platform that brings together key players, including researchers, research funders, and research leaders, to take concrete action toward bridging the gender gap in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). GoFoWiSeR is designed as a global conversation that addresses the systemic causes of the gender gap in STEM and spotlights the strategies and approaches that can improve the numbers and experiences of women in STEM.

### AgSpirations

Through AgSpirations, AWARD is curating a series of conversations and producing various knowledge products to foster engagement and cross-learning among stakeholders and to illuminate some inspiring stories of African Agriculture.

AgSpirations will also guide our active pursuit of speaking engagements to represent our voice and present our learnings in major forums that drive the agricultural research and development agenda in Africa

AgSpirations' outputs include podcast series, webinar series, conferences, online and face-to-face dialogues, impact publications, and stories of change.

### AWARD Community of African Gender Experts and Researchers

We are investing in curating a database of African agricultural researchers and gender experts. Through this platform, we seek to spotlight African researchers leading agricultural researchers on the continent, foster partnerships, and collaborate to widen agricultural researchers' networks and influence inclusive agricultural research in Africa.

The AWARD Community of Gender Experts is a one-stop space for anyone seeking research partners, research leaders, expert advice, more visibility for their research, improved profile, among other benefits. We aim to provide research funders with the best researchers to invest their funding and shape the agricultural research agenda on the African continent.

## 4. AWARD Training

AWARD Training has been a prominent actor in delivering our interventions, taking a leading role in the design and delivery of bespoke learning experiences. AWARD Training is firmly embedded in the Fellowships and institutional engagement. Increased demand from the larger ARD community for AWARD learning programs has required us to scale out our learning programs by enhancing our training capacity and profile. The ability and willingness of players in African ARD to pay for AWARD Training Courses is a positive indicator for AWARD Training to become self-sustaining and work towards semi-autonomy.

Over the years, we have invested in building a world-class training unit that comprises a robust pool of internationally experienced professionals, known as the A-TEAM, subject experts, and process facilitators in leadership, science, and gender. The A-TEAM is committed to realizing the AWARD vision of gender-responsive agriculture-driven prosperity in Africa by designing and delivering unique learning experiences, developing the talent of African scientists, and empowering the leadership of scientific institutions across the continent.

The dynamic environment within which AWARD operates, characterized by the rapidly evolving donor landscape, expansion of AWARD's programmatic work, and the global focus on food systems, has compelled us to review our training structure, product, and service offering and operating processes. The review resulted in an ambitious strategy for AWARD Training to build robust gender-responsive capacity in African Research and Development institutions as a business solution and for AWARD's sustainability.

The design and delivery of the AWARD learning programs are guided by four major themes, including mentoring, science, leadership, and gender.

Key pillars of success for AWARD Training include:

- Human Capital: Investment in personnel and staff incentive schemes to foster productivity and retain talent
- Partnerships: Fostering partnerships for efficiency and effectiveness.

- Finance: Well-defined policies and procedures; and financial plans
- Capacity Building: Enhancing the capacity of staff and the A-TEAM.

### Expected outputs of AWARD Training

- A sustainable and autonomous unit that controls its profit and loss accounts and attracts business from third-party entities in addition to AWARD.
- Diverse partnerships for training projects.
- High impact transformation case studies.
- Increased visibility as a leading actor in capacity building in the agricultural research and development sector.

## Areas of intervention

Our interventions under the four programmatic areas seek to develop capacity and influence growth in five areas (both at individual and institutional levels).

### 1. Shaping effective research leadership

We will continue investing in developing the capacities of African researchers and research institutions to lead research effectively. We will further facilitate the researchers to acquire the latest scientific technologies and exposure to the emerging trends in research for their active contribution toward accelerating agricultural gains.

### 2. Fostering inter-generational networks and mentoring cultures

Anchored on a decade of success, we have adapted the uniquely designed AWARD mentoring model to meet the specific needs of women and men in agricultural research and produced a tested set of guidelines for mentors, fellows, mentoring coordinators, and trainers. We will continue working to ensure the learnings and experiences cascade to various levels. Evidence has established that “mentoring remains an essential component of effective knowledge transfer, well-planned career development, and professional networking.”<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Influencing the design and delivery of gender-responsive research and development

We will equip scientists (both early-career high potential and mid-career researchers and research leaders) with the skills and knowledge to design and lead the development of research-based innovations that respond to the needs and priorities of various actors in the African agriculture value chains. We will also support research institutions to establish gender-responsive policies and structures that facilitate the design and delivery of gender-responsive agriculture.

### 4. Catalyzing networks and incentivizing research collaborations

We will spotlight African researchers and experts in gender-responsive agricultural research and development and actively position them for research partnerships and collaborations. We will provide platforms for African researchers to develop and access networks while strengthening existing networks

### 5. Enhancing scientific communication and publishing skills

We will equip researchers with the skills and knowledge to intensify their scientific writing and publishing while raising their visibility as major contributors to research-based knowledge and innovation in Africa.

### 6. Influencing policy and shaping global narratives around gender-responsive agriculture

We will continue to cement our place as a credible partner of choice, accelerating Africa’s gender-responsive agricultural research and development. We will amplify the African voice in influencing and shaping the narrative around gender-responsive agriculture to foster inclusive agriculture-driven prosperity.



# Chapter 3: How we will operate

## Levering Partnerships to deliver on our promise

The 2030 global sustainable development agenda, as outlined in sustainable development goal 17 (SDG17),<sup>2</sup> acknowledges the pivotal role of partnerships in achieving sustainable development and focuses on revitalizing and supporting global partnerships.

AWARD will continue exploring national, regional, and international partnerships to galvanize our actions as we work toward inclusive, agriculture-driven sustainable development for Africa. We will actively pursue collaborations with the leading global agricultural research and development partners, including the oneCGIAR, regional actors that influence the agendas, and national research organizations and higher learning institutions.

The Fellowships provide an enormous opportunity to work with global partners to build young African researchers' leadership and scientific skills to design and lead targeted research for African smallholders. Through Advanced Science Training, we have partnered with more than 45 state-of-the-art research institutions globally to offer research placements to more than 200 scientists. We will continue pursuing these partnerships to build a pool of capable and influential young African scientists as we also catalyze inter-continental and intra-continental partnerships among institutions.

Through our work on GRARD, we have partnered with eight institutions in five African countries over the last three years to prioritize gender responsiveness in agricultural research. We will continue to build such targeted partnerships to

advance institutional engagement for a gender-responsive agricultural research and development ecosystem.

Through our work under AWARD Training, we have partnered with more than 46 institutions in more than 23 countries to deliver training programs that have reached more than 8,000 participants.

Our work on GoFoWiSeR has seen us mobilize six new partnerships with research funders from Europe, the USA, AND Africa.

The pilot of our GAIA initiative saw us expand our partnerships with international bodies, private sector players, and private philanthropists, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), Intelicap, Centum, African Development Bank (AfDB), and Africa Agribusiness Incubator Network (AAIN).

We will continue to explore innovative funding partnerships with the private sector, service providers, technical experts, institutions with interests in capacity building and development partners.

## Mobilizing Resources to Sustain our Operations

AWARD will continue to increase the level of flexible and long-term funding for its programmatic interventions by diversifying its funding sources, including:

- Broadening of the partner and donor base
- Leveraging with like-minded institutions working in the same space through engaging in

joint proposals/projects as consortia.

- Promoting target recipient institutions to build and adopt gender lens budgeting systems to partially and or fully pay for AWARD courses and services.
- Actively pursuing a robust AWARD Training business model reducing financial dependence on AWARD
- Developing partner institutions' capacity to effectively raise funds locally and internationally to go into gender programs.
- Identifying a long-term roadmap for GAIA and establish the pathways for its implementation

By the end of 2022, we envision our key partners and constituents having recognized the need to build an increased budget towards the work we do and contribute directly to them through in-kind contributions and financial resources. We envision an ecosystem that appreciates the need for prioritizing gender-responsive agricultural research and embracing gender-responsiveness in their plan, implementation, and management of their core business/research work as a means of ensuring long-term systemic change.

## Measuring our performance

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) are essential for ensuring effectiveness, transparency, accountability, informed decision making, organizational learning, and result-oriented culture. It also helps to understand what does and does not work and why. AWARD understands the critical role of MEL to achieve its vision, mission, and goals has in place a robust and adaptive MEL system since its inception in 2008. The MEL system has undergone several changes over time, incorporating developments in the field and practical lessons. The strategic objective of AWARD MEL is to develop a robust, reference model for measuring capacity building, enhance evidence-based decision-making, organizational learning, program improvement, and accountability from the use of M&E findings and recommendations and ensure the achievement of AWARD goals, mission, and vision. It also aims to empower all stakeholders to ensure accountability to themselves and others, learn from success and failure for their own benefit, celebrate their own

achievements, and share their knowledge more widely with the world.

## Guiding principles

The overall purpose of MEL is to encourage norms and organizational culture that promote self-reflection and self-examination, seeks evidence, learns, and encourages experimentation and change. Precisely, the following principles will guide the practice of MEL at AWARD:

- 1. Participation and inclusion of its beneficiaries** to use and benefit from M&E, ensure accountability to themselves and others; to learn from successes and failures for their benefit; to celebrate their achievements, and share their knowledge more widely.
- 2. Beneficial to multiple stakeholders** with a utilization-focused approach that does M&E to provide AWARD's management, participants, and sponsors and those involved in policymaking, funding, and similar interventions elsewhere, with credible, tested, and valuable knowledge and insight.
- 3. Mutual accountability and transparency** to themselves, the society, their peers, and those who support and sponsor them to make the interventions possible. As an entirely equitable practice, it thus seeks to recognize the sponsors' accountability to the other stakeholders, the responsibility of the managers towards participants, and the accountability of the stakeholders to one another and future generations.
- 4. State of the art, Innovative and ethical MEL methods-** applying evaluation's 'golden rules' by:
  - (i). Employing designs, methodologies, and methods appropriate to need and resources.
  - (ii). Ensuring quality design and rigorous execution across all dimensions of the work.
  - (iii). Honoring people and their voice to bring benefit and not harm.
  - (iv). Seeking out and adopting known leading-edge MEL approaches and methods and

pushing the frontiers of established M&E practice by developing and sharing its tools and processes appropriate to need and context.

- 5. Quality Standards:** AWARD monitoring and evaluation activities will follow relevant international standards for quality.

## Our MEL approach and Key Result Areas

The MEL field has seen tremendous growth in recent years. More multifaceted techniques and new technologies focus on broader MEL aspects to extract strategic lessons and evidence. As a result, we continuously adapt our MEL methods and approaches in response to a fast-changing environment. AWARD follows the theory of change approach based on mixed methods that rely on qualitative and quantitative data. The specific methods largely depend on the nature of the intervention and the expected key results areas. As a result, the methods are designed in line with the three AWARD pillars and associated changes we would like to see in the short, medium, and long term (see Annex 3).

1. Individual-level: changes in knowledge, skill, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and actions of individuals targeted in the program. In other words, they are changes in capability that ultimately lead to improved performance. AWARD will employ non-experimental evaluation methods to evaluate these changes, including pre and post-training evaluation, contribution analysis, baseline, and follow-up surveys, collaborative outcomes reporting, case studies, qualitative comparative analysis, and qualitative impact assessment.
2. Institutional-level: includes changes in collaborations, partnerships and institutional linkages, organizational priorities, motivations, incentives systems, functioning, and performances of institutions targeted in the program. They also include institutional procedures, systems, policies, and culture. The MEL methods for this level include institutional

case studies, participatory institutional impact assessments, inter-institutional comparison, network analysis, etc.

3. Enabling environment-level: These are system-level changes related to policy, frameworks, strategies, institutional setup, allocation of resources, adoption of technologies and practices by the society. It also includes the societal values, customs, laws, policies, and norms that govern civic engagement that affect people and organizations' functions. AWARD will employ MEL methods including, among others, secondary data compilation and synthesis, case studies, policy tracking, coalition analysis, media tracking, system mapping, and network analysis.

## Impact pathways, Expected Outcomes, and Critical Success Factors

Our impact pathway is influenced by various constraints and channels, eventually resulting in outcomes and influence at different levels. The AWARD impact pathway is articulated in the Theory of Change (Annex 3)

### Expected Outcomes

- More women in leadership in agricultural research and development
- More young researchers leading climate research in Africa
- Reverse knowledge transfer between generations and between continents, south to north
- More policymakers and leaders equipped with evidence-based knowledge on gender-responsive agriculture
- Gender responsiveness is fully embraced as the norm for ARD and NARS
- Regional and national leaders craft supportive policy invest in and incentivize gender-responsive institutions and ARD
- Scientists well represented in research, policy, and other leadership roles in Africa
- Male and female researchers conducting high quality, high impact gender-responsive ARD

- NARS fully support women scientists excelling in ARD and leadership
- More female scientists empowered to remain in and effectively contribute to ARD
- More multi-skilled, empowered, women scientists influence and lead science, entrepreneurship, and policy initiative in the ARD sector

### *Critical Success Factors*

- More global funding allocated for ARD
- Enough and appropriate resources – financial, infrastructural, and human – must be available and accessed promptly.
- The external environment and immediate (institutional) context for implementing the program must be sufficiently enabling.
- Enough of the right participants must be drawn into, commit to the program, and act with the necessary responsibility and accountability.
- Institutional partners and networks must be committed and influential enough to help catalyze broader change in the ARD sector.
- The implementation team must have the numbers, capabilities, motivation, and attitudes to be successful.
- The Strategy must be understood and shared by those responsible for implementation and supported by appropriate protocols and processes in practice.
- AWARD and implementing partners will have enough credibility and capacity to mobilize and inspire other influential actors to participate in and contribute to achieving strategic objectives.
- AWARD will be perceived as having the brand, legitimacy, and authority to lead initiatives in capacity development on gender, agriculture, and climate change research.
- AWARD and implementing partners will be able to sustain or enhance quality standards in all processes and products.
- ARD institutions will be interested in collaborating with AWARD and implementing partners on organizational change processes

to strengthen research and development and dedicate the necessary resources.

- The leadership and staff in collaborating institutions will have the motivation and incentives to learn and apply new insights and instruments/tools in research and development policies, strategies, and initiatives.
- Mobilize a critical mass of change agents capable and influential enough to bring about institutional and systems' change.
- Influential stakeholders will see agriculture and climate change research as a priority and success factor for the global fight against climate change and hunger.
- New gender-responsive ARD-related technologies, practices, and innovations will reach users, and the users will have the resources and required support for adoption.

## Communications, Knowledge Management, and Engagement

A robust communication, knowledge management, and engagement strategy are not only essential but fundamental to the achievement of AWARD's goals in a structured way that can be easily monitored and tweaked as required. Our communication and knowledge management approaches are structured to support AWARD's vision while amplifying our role as a knowledge broker and connector in the ARD landscape.

The Strategy's core message is to portray AWARD's ability to deploy effective capacity and leadership to build and influence gender-responsive agricultural research and development in Africa.

### Communication Goal

Our communication interventions are two-tracked, targeting internal and external audiences.

1. Our **inward-looking** goal is to facilitate internal knowledge creation and sharing, enhance communication capacity and ensure brand consistency among AWARD staff and the

A-TEAM<sup>6</sup>.

2. Our **outward-looking** goal is to strengthen AWARD's organizational messaging and profile as a visible, credible partner of choice, accelerating Africa's gender-responsive agricultural research and development.

## Communication Objectives

We seek to **inform, engage, influence, and change the behavior** and approach of stakeholders across Africa's agricultural research and development landscape toward gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation. Our communication will:

1. Increase stakeholders' awareness of the critical role and contribution of enabled African scientists in developing gender-responsive, home-grown solutions for Africa
2. Increase stakeholders' understanding of the potential of gender-responsive agricultural research and development
3. Enhance the visibility of AWARD Fellows and Laureate Candidates and their contribution to research and development
4. Influence actors in agricultural research and development [including research funders, development partners, corporate philanthropists] to invest in building gender-responsive agricultural systems
5. Integrate knowledge sharing within the organization culture and increase staff awareness of the communication guidelines and objectives

## Core communication principles

Four principles will guide the communication activities for the effective and consistent implementation of the communication strategy. These will include:

- **Accessibility:** AWARD will develop systems and tools to ensure that its communication products and platforms are accessible to its target

audiences

- **Timeliness:** AWARD will ensure that its communication activities and products are produced at the right time, focus on the right audience, at the right time, and with the right message packaged appropriately.
- **Inclusiveness:** AWARD will adopt effective and efficient ways of involving different stakeholders, including internal departments and relevant partners, in the creation and co-creation of knowledge
- **Accuracy:** AWARD will ensure that its knowledge products contain accurate, relevant, and credible evidence-based information

## Key Target Audiences

- AWARD Staff
- AWARD Steering Committee
- Scientific Advisory Panel of the One Planet Fellowship
- CIFOR-ICRAF Board of Trustees
- Emerging young African agricultural researchers
- Universities and other public research institutes in Africa
- Senior agricultural researchers and research leaders across Africa
- International NGOs
- International research and development organizations such as the One CGIAR
- Donors and other funding partners, including private philanthropists

## AWARD as a Knowledge Broker and Connector

We are keen to ensure easier retrieval and use of knowledge as and when required by different audiences [both internally and externally]. We are also keen to build the profiles and improve the visibility of the members of the AWARD Community for possible research collaborations.

<sup>6</sup> African Trainers Embracing the AWARD Mission (A-TEAM) is the term we use to refer to the team of AWARD Trainers identified and engaged to deliver the AWARD Training courses.



We achieve these goals through active collaboration between our communications and MEL units and using several knowledge platforms, including:

- a. A revamped website surfacing information in more insightful and user-friendly ways
- b. A Management Information System supporting our robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning to tell the AWARD story
- c. A database spotlighting the AWARD Community of researchers and gender experts
- d. A SharePoint to facilitate internal collaboration and knowledge sharing
- e. A robust digital presence across social media platforms
- f. AgSpirations Engagement Series.



# Annexes

## Annex 1: Risks and Risks Management

### People Risks

- Work-life balance issues leading to fatigue and burn-out
  - Attracting the right talent in optimum numbers
  - Developing talent and teams
- High staff turnover affecting implementation and staff morale
  - Retaining the right talent
  - Fostering and enabling environment
  - Promoting a performance-driven organization

### Finance

- Resources mobilization for long term sustainability:
  - diversifying the donor base to reduce overreliance on one or two main benefactors.
  - Adoption of a hybrid model that also leverages the AWARD Training business model to achieve systemic change

### Governance and legal structure:

- AWARD being a non-legal entity, the changing context within which we are situated and operate, including the shift to OneCGIAR and the CIFOR-ICRAF merger, poses a possible significant risk to our existence and operations
  - Explore other institutional anchoring mechanisms for medium and long- term operations

### External/unexpected: political, disease outbreaks,

AWARD operates in a dynamic and sometimes volatile ecosystem. There is a constant need to be aware of national, regional, and international forces beyond our control that can adversely affect our operations.

- Unrest in our geographical areas of operation that could arise due to political or economic changes
- Public Health crises, e.g., Ebola and Covid-19 pandemics, etc
- Natural disasters exacerbated by Climate Change, e.g., extreme droughts and flooding, lead to the agricultural systems' breakdown.
  - AWARD will take safeguards to minimize exposure to such risks as much as possible by carefully evaluating the various parameters before engaging.
  - AWARD will procure the insurance covers to safeguard such eventualities and critically evaluate exclusions and how they may affect our staff, client safety, and operations.

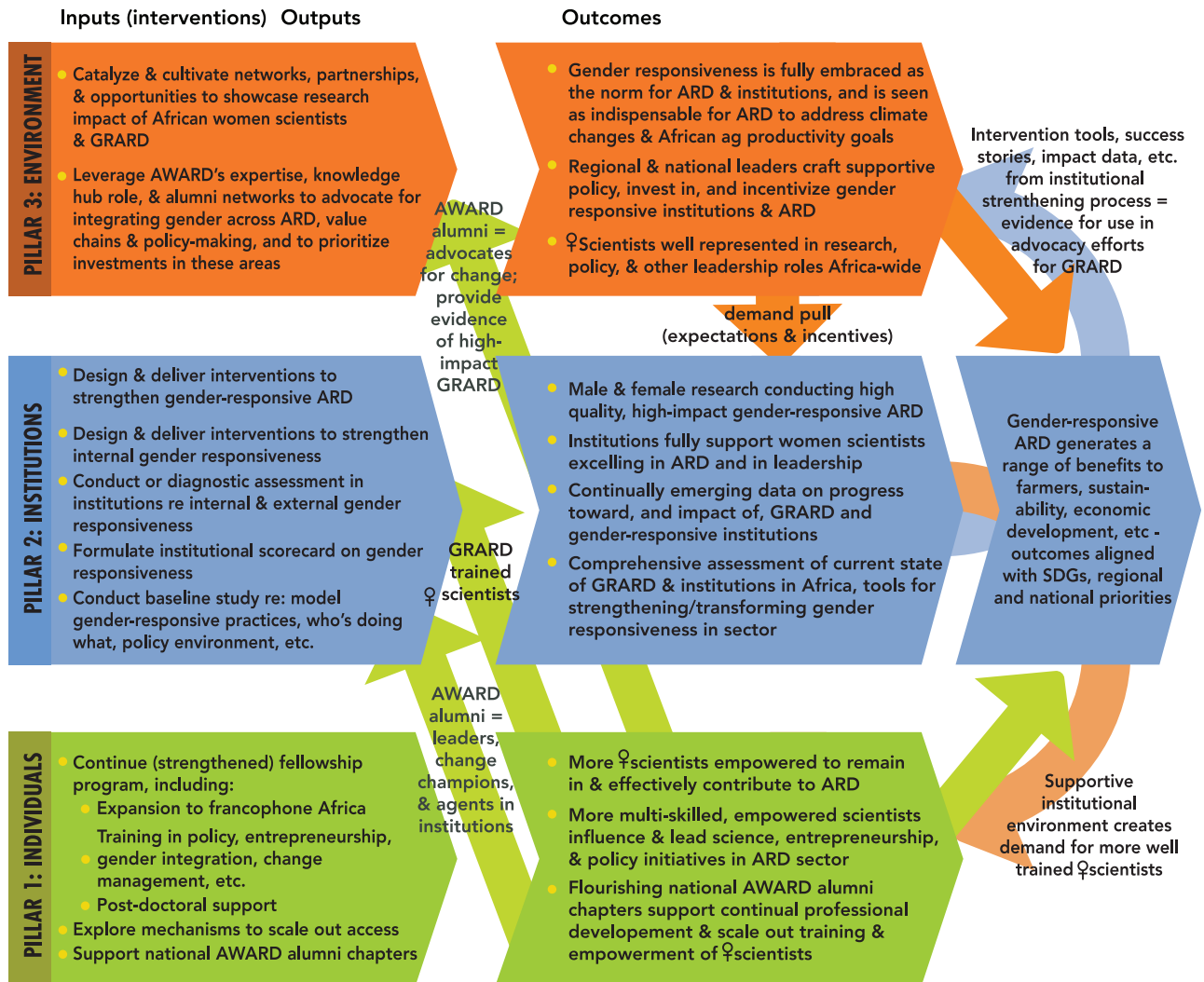
## Annex 2: Governance structure

AWARD has a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of key stakeholders, e.g., regional stakeholders, our host institution, and donor representatives that help provide programmatic oversight. The fiduciary oversight responsibility lies with the ICRAF Board of Trustees, and the linkages

between these two arms of governance may need to be strengthened/linkages enhanced. Other technical advisory groups such as the Scientific Advisory Panel of the One Planet Fellowship are constituted as required.



## Annex 3: Summary of AWARD Phase 3 Pillars, Interconnections, and Impact Pathways



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African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) is working toward inclusive, agriculture-driven prosperity for the African continent by strengthening the production and dissemination of more gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation. We invest in African scientists, research institutions, and agribusinesses so that they can deliver agricultural innovations that better respond to the needs and priorities of a diversity of women and men across Africa's agricultural value chains.

For more information, visit [www.awardfellowships.org](http://www.awardfellowships.org).

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