



Terms of Reference to Conduct an External Evaluation of the AWARD Strategic plan

1. Background

African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) was founded in 2008 as a career-development Fellowship program that sought to widen the pipeline of confident, capable, influential African women scientists in leadership in the Agricultural Research and Development (ARD) sector. The flagship AWARD Fellowship benefited 1,226 individual scientists (464 fellows, 396 mentors and 366 fellows' mentees) across Africa. The successes of the AWARD Fellowship led to scaling of the novel model to expand our target groups, capacity development interventions and thematic areas. As a result, AWARD designed the pan-African AWARD Fellowship to increase its presence in francophone Africa. Moreover, through the One Planet Fellowship (OPF), we are building a robust pipeline of scientists equipped to lead climate change research in Africa. A total of 260 beneficiaries (130 Laureate candidates and 130 mentors) are currently involved in the One Planet Fellowship. Responding to a need for enhanced capacity across Africa's ARD. Since 2008, AWARD has designed and offered customized training courses that have benefited 7,569 individuals, from 274 institutions drawn from 66 countries, globally. AWARD is also working with ARD institutions to strengthen their capacity in leadership and integrating gender in their organizational processes and the whole ARD spectrum.

The AWARD strategy 2017-2022 envisions a robust, resilient gender responsive agricultural innovation system working toward agriculture-driven prosperity for Africa. AWARD invests in African scientists and 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 food systems. The strategy is anchored on three pillars including 1) build a pool of capable, confident, and influential African scientists to lead critical advances and innovations in the agricultural research and development sector 2) Support African ARD institutions to prioritize and embrace gender responsiveness in both policy and practice 3) build an enabling environment for gender responsiveness to become an embedded cultural norm and practice in the African ARD. As this year culminates the last year of the current strategy, we are in the process of developing a new strategy (2023-2027) that charts the way forward for AWARD.

AWARD wants to conduct an evaluation on the effectiveness of its current strategy and highlights of work since inception, its achievements, identify gaps, challenges, opportunities and lessons that will be used as a foundation for the next strategic plan development.



2. Purpose/objectives of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, visibility, and sustainability of AWARD. The evaluation will cover the implementation of the AWARD Strategic Plan, identify gaps, challenges and lessons that will inform the development of the new AWARD strategy.

The evaluation will have the following specific objectives:

- Assess the appropriateness of AWARD's strategy, short, medium, and long term priorities and objectives for the achievement of AWARD's mission. This will include assessing implementation and progress towards the achievement of expected results specified in the results framework of the strategic plan.
- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, coherence, and sustainability of the programmatic areas of the Strategic Plan in terms of delivering quality services and interventions to the beneficiaries.
- Assess AWARD's programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) relevance, performance and identify areas of improvement in terms of implementation modalities, portfolio management, M&E, knowledge management, partnerships, and resource mobilization as stated in the strategic plan.
- Assess the transition and coherence of the program from the previous Strategic Plans to the current Strategic Plan.
- Identify issues, challenges and lessons and provide strategic conclusions and recommendations including important programmatic elements, structural and management considerations for the next strategic plan, taking into consideration the changing landscape.
- Make recommendations on strategic priorities for AWARD's next strategic plan

3. Evaluation Scope and Key Questions

The primary focus of the evaluation will be the current Strategic Plan (2017-2022) and the previous Strategic Plans since the inception of AWARD, in order to distill lessons and identify strategic focus areas as an input into the new Strategic Plan (2023–2027).

The evaluation will apply the following evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions: (see annex I) for the details of guiding evaluation questions):

- **Relevance** (is AWARD responding to a real need and which gap is AWARD addressing) – How responsive are AWARD's vision, mission, strategic objectives, and programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) to beneficiaries, organizational/institutional, country, global and partner policies, and priorities? What has been the strategic value add of AWARD?
- **Coherence** (is AWARD fit for purpose?) – To what extent are AWARD programmatic areas and operations (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA)



aligned with, and adding value to, other interventions operating in the sectors of agriculture and food systems across countries?

- **Effectiveness** (is AWARD achieving its objectives) – To what extent has AWARD’s programmatic areas and operations (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) achieved the intended objectives / targets, mission and vision? What key success stories and best practices available in AWARD programmatic areas? What are the key lessons and possible improvements to be considered in the new strategy? What existing/emerging opportunities should AWARD consider to achieve its goals? What is the return to investments of AWARD’s programs?
- **Efficiency** (is AWARD doing things right? how well are resources being used?) – To what extent do AWARD programs and operations contribute to cost-effective results? How effectively has the AWARD managed risks related to its activities?
- **Impact** (what difference does AWARD make?) – To what extent has AWARD and its programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) delivered medium- and longer-term results whether positive or negative, intended, or unintended? What has been the value for money?
- **Sustainability** (will the benefits last?) – What is the likelihood that the benefits from AWARD and its programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time? To what extent is the current strategy and AWARD’s interventions sustainable? In what form should AWARD continue, in order to ensure sustainability? What role have AWARD alumni and training contributed to AWARD sustainability?
- **Visibility**- How well is AWARD positioned to continue delivering on its mandate? To what extent has AWARD elevated and raised visibility and what can be done to shift the needle more on gender equality? To what extent is AWARD’s contribution to ARD recognized in the landscape? What is AWARD’s unique contributions in ARD. What is AWARD known for in ARD?
- **Knowledge management** – How effective has AWARD been able to tell its story through executing an M&E and communications strategy to make the case for value for money.
- **AWARD Model** -- To what extent has the AWARD’s model, design, and delivery methods been suitable and effective at achieving its mandate (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) objectives? What lessons can we draw from other similar Fellowships (AGRA-Led Centre for African Leaders in Agriculture ([CALA](#)), African Food Fellowship [AFF](#), Women for the Environment in Africa ([WEA](#))).
- **Partnerships**: To what extent are AWARD partners a strategic fit? How effective and efficient has been the selection of AWARD partners? Has AWARD maximally leveraged on her partnerships? How can AWARD maximize the existing partnerships (on the continent and globally)?

4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation will apply a mixed-methods approach, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, and adhere to the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards,



as well as the Ethical Guidelines for evaluations in the CGIAR system¹. It will be guided by the evaluation criteria defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and additional aspects as detailed in the evaluation questions. The consultants are expected to use a gender responsive evaluation approach, methods and tools and being intentional to consider gender in the whole evaluation process. Moreover, it is expected that participatory evaluation methods will be employed to involve both internal and external key stakeholders.

The evaluation will be based on a mix of the following methods (but not limited to):

1. **Document review:** Desk Review of AWARD Strategy documents, proposals, annual donor reports, and M&E reports etc.
2. **Review of available M&E Data:** review existing M&E data sources to collate available data and identify gaps for primary data collection.
3. **Collection of Primary Data²:** Focus group discussions and key informant interviews will be conducted with beneficiaries, stakeholders, ATEAM trainers, partners, staff, management, our host-ICRAF management, and steering committee members using a participatory and gender-responsive approach.
4. **Consultation and validation workshop** with AWARD staff to elicit staff inputs for the evaluation, and validate the findings.
5. **Case studies** to conduct in-depth investigations of success stories and best practices of AWARD interventions and document lessons learnt, achievements, challenges and way forward.

The evaluation team is free to propose additional methods and is expected to triangulate data collected using different methods to validate the findings/results of the evaluation.

5. Deliverables

The evaluation team is expected to deliver an inception report, a comprehensive evaluation report and a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the key findings of the evaluation.

- a) Inception Report explaining the methodology, tools, timing, and resource allocation. Inception report with the evaluation framework, work plan, methodology and draft templates for all necessary evaluation tools. This will build on the initial meeting with AWARD staff.
- b) A detailed draft Evaluation Report with the following section sections:

¹ https://cas.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/pdf/CGIAR%20CAS%20Evaluation%20Framework_24.3.2022_v2.pdf

² This will include conducting field visits to 4 countries: Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, and Ghana. In addition, online consultations will be conducted in other countries where AWARD has implemented activities and where there are ATeam Trainers.



- Executive summary
- Background
- Methodology
- Results and findings
- Best practices and success stories
- Challenges, lessons and opportunities
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Annexes

Examples

- ✓ References
 - ✓ ACRONYMS
 - ✓ Persons /institutions visits
 - ✓ Terms of Reference
 - ✓ Evaluation Matrix
 - ✓ Evaluation timeline
 - ✓ Detailed evaluation methodology
 - ✓ Fieldwork agenda
 - ✓ Data collection tools
- c) Validation seminar / presentation on the Evaluation findings and recommendations.
- d) Final Evaluation report
- a. Detailed final evaluation report incorporating all feedback / comments received on the draft report and during the validation seminar.
 - b. Executive Summary of key findings, recommendations and lessons learned (maximum five pages).
- e) Raw and secondary datasets used for the evaluation

6. Requirements for the evaluation team

AWARD is seeking an evaluation firm (or team of experts) possessing diverse skill set and composed of different disciplines that can support the entire evaluation process. Generally, the proposed evaluation team should have the following expertise and competencies:

- Substantive knowledge and experience in undertaking evaluations, meta-reviews, and critical research of international organizations, with a minimum of 10 years' experience.
- Knowledge and experience of strategic plan design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Ability to handle and analyze big quantitative and qualitative datasets and conduct multi country reviews.



- Excellent communication skills, both spoken and written English, experience in the production of clear and concise reports for international/intergovernmental institutions. It is expected that the firm will have team members who can design tools, collect data, analyze, and write report in French.
- Good understanding of, and experience in evaluating gender and inclusion programs, and at the individual and institutional capacity development level, preferably in the African Agricultural Research and Development sector.
- Experience in conducting participatory and gender-responsive mixed-methods evaluations.

7. Organization of evaluation and timelines

Below is a tentative timeline including evaluation milestones. A detailed timeline will be developed during the inception phase:

Main Phases	Timeline (tentative)	Deliverables
1 Preparation	May 9	Terms of Reference shared with Steering Committee for information
	June 2	Launch call for expression of interest
	June 27	Recruitment of Evaluation Team
2 Inception	July 1	Inception meeting / Inception mission
	July 15	Inception report
3 Fieldwork	July 15 to September 30	Data collection including field visits to at least 4 countries (Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, and Ghana) and online consultations in other countries, where there are concentration of AWARD activities, stakeholders and A-TEAM Trainers.
4 Reporting / Reviews	October 15	Draft evaluation report
	November 1	Validation workshop
	November 15	Final evaluation report
5 Finalization	November 30	Summary evaluation report Management Response



ANNEX I: Guiding Evaluation questions

Allied to the evaluation criteria, the evaluation will address the following key questions, which will be further developed by the evaluation team during the Inception Phase in close collaboration with the AWARD Staff. The Inception Phase will include an assessment of existing leadership programs and available data, which will be included in the inception report and inform the development of an evaluation matrix.

Question 1: How responsive are AWARD's vision, mission, strategic objectives, and programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities? Under this question, the evaluation will assess the extent to which:

- the AWARD and its programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) objectives and strategies are in line with the African development agendas, international development agenda (including the agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals) and with the priorities of participating countries in terms of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)
- the design is relevant and appropriate to the stated purpose, target groups (AWARD Fellows, ARD Institutions), activities, countries and partnerships.
- GEWE objectives and gender mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design.

Question 2: To what extent is AWARD and its programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) are compatible with, and adding value to, other interventions operating in the sectors of agriculture, nutrition, and women's empowerment in the region? Under this question, the evaluation will assess the extent to which:

- the AWARD and its programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) has a comparative advantage over other institutions.
- the AWARD has established strategic partnerships to enhance delivery.
- coherence, alignment, and complementarity were achieved between the AWARD and national/regional policies and programs relevant to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).

Question 3: To what extent has AWARD and its programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) achieved its intended objectives / targets, including any differential results across programmatic areas, at the regional / country level? The evaluation will analyze the nature, quantity and quality of results achieved (both positive and negative) against those intended. The evaluation will also analyze whether AWARD achieved its intended results at the output level, and to what extent the results and lessons learned are being reflected in policy and planning.

- What outcomes has AWARD programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA) achieved, expected and unexpected, positive, and negative?
- Are the programs reaching the intended beneficiaries, rights holders, and duty bearers?



- What would the likely outcomes be, had the AWARD interventions not occurred?
- How relevant is the program logic model, theory of change and performance measurement framework?
- How effective was the process in relation to stakeholder participation, inclusivity, accessibility, transparency, and capacity development?
- What is the added value of AWARD and its programmatic areas (AWARD Fellowships, GRARD, ATU, GAIA)?
- How effective was of the bilingual delivery model and how to increase AWARD's capacity in francophone work?
- To what extent are the products, including knowledge products and information resources, disseminated by AWARD used by the various stakeholders

Question 4: Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated and used appropriately across the various units of AWARD?

- The evaluation will include a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the observed outputs, relative to the inputs; the efficiency of the governance structure; and whether, and how, the results could have been achieved, and monitored, more efficiently.
 - Are the resources and inputs (funds, expertise, and time) being used to achieve outcomes in an efficient and timely manner?
 - Is the relationship between cost and results reasonable?
 - Are there sufficient resources to achieve the intended outcomes of the work?
 - How do the costs compare with similar programs?
 - Are the variances between planned and actual expenditures justified?

Question 5: What factors contributed to the AWARD performance and results? Under this question, the evaluation will consider the:

- operational and policy environments, capacities and resources in the participating countries;
- governance and management of the AWARD, including the SC Secretariat; and
- partnerships and funding, including whether the necessary commitment, agreement and actions were taken by partners and donors to support AWARD to achieve its objectives.

Question 6: Is there evidence that the initiative is likely to grow – scaling up and out – beyond the program life? The evaluation will review:

- the sustainability of the results achieved
- the extent to which the AWARD is contributing to national ownership of efforts to achieve and sustain Women's Leadership in ARD.
- the extent to which the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices.
- What is the likelihood that benefits of AWARD programming will continue to flow long after its completion?



- How have Country Chapters / ATU helped with AWARD sustainability – visibility and what can be done to shift the needle more?
- Is the capacity being developed adequate to ensure that institutions/organizations will take over and sustain the benefits envisaged?
- To what extent has the program built in resilience to future risks?
- To what extent do partners and beneficiaries participate in and 'own' the outcomes?

Question 7: To what extent has the AWARD program delivered longer term results from processes, whether positive or negative, intended or unintended, across all dimensions of women's empowerment? While the impact criterion is challenging to measure for any intervention, insofar as is possible, the evaluation will explore the impacts of AWARD at the individual and institutional levels. It will assess the extent to which the program has been catalytic in addressing some of the root causes of inequalities experienced by women.

ANNEX II: Acronyms

AFF	African Food Fellowship
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
ARD	Agricultural research and development
A-TEAM	African Trainers Embracing AWARD's Mission
ATU	AWARD Training Unit
AWARD	African Women in Agricultural Research and Development
CALA	AGRA-Led Centre for African Leaders in Agriculture
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
GAIA	Gender in Agribusiness Investments in Africa
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GRARD	Gender Responsive Agricultural Research and Development
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPF	One Planet Fellowship
SC	AWARD Steering Committee
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
WEA	Women for the Environment in Africa Rural Women