



Australian Centre
for International
Agricultural Research



Women in Agriculture Leadership Program Fellowship

An Initiative under the
Africa-Australia Partnership for Climate
Responsive Agriculture



1





PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Women in Agriculture Leadership Program Fellowship is an initiative led by African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) under Africa-Australia Partnership for Climate Responsive Agriculture.

Inspired by the AWARD Fellowship model, the career development fellowship seeks to strengthen the capability, confidence and influence of African women agricultural scientists to lead and participate in climate- resilient agricultural research. The Fellowship combines leadership development, mentoring partnerships and technical excellence to enhance the Fellows' capabilities and position them as influential actors in agrifood systems.

TARGET COUNTRIES AND PARTICIPANTS

The Fellowship targets women researchers from six African countries including Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal.

3

Two Cohorts, of 50 Fellows each, will be competitively selected through a rigorous process that will evaluate the academic qualifications of the applicants, their experience in agrifood systems and climate resilience, their leadership potential and career aspirations.

Potential Fellows will include mid-career agricultural and climate researchers from national and international agricultural research institutes, ministries of agriculture, academic institutions, among others, ensuring strong institutional representation across the agrifood and climate research landscape.

Target Countries:



All Applicants Must:

-  Be female agricultural researchers from one of the target countries.
-  Reside in Africa and be actively engaged in research, policy or practice relevant to climate change and Africa's smallholder agriculture.
-  Have attained a minimum education level of a master's degree in agriculture and climate change related fields of any relevant discipline from a recognized university (agriculture, agricultural economics, agricultural extension, natural resources, food science and nutrition, climate science, etc.)
-  Have at least seven years of work experience in agriculture, agrifood systems, gender, climate, including design or implementation at institutional, national, or regional levels.
-  Applicants are required to respond to the open call for applications for each Cohort as announced on the AWARD website for a specified period.
-  Applications are submitted through the online application portal on the AWARD website in English or French.



FELLOWSHIP APPROACH

The two-year non-residential Fellowship adopts a blended learning approach of virtual and face-to-face engagement, and its activities are anchored on three main components:

1. A Three-Tiered Mentoring Program

The structured mentoring program is designed to build an intergenerational network of women scientists in agriculture sciences working together to support a new generation of women scientists.

5

The program entails the following activities:



Matching with a Senior Mentor:

At the start of the Fellowship, each Fellow is paired with a Mentor¹, a senior scientist whose expertise aligns with Fellow's professional goals. In the second year, the Fellow assumes a mentoring role by supporting an emerging scientist as the Fellow's Mentee. This intergenerational structure creates a three-tier mentorship network that fosters continuity in leadership while advancing innovations to strengthen productivity and climate resilience among African smallholders.



8-Week Virtual Mentoring Orientation Workshop (MOW):

Fellow-mentor pairs participate in an 8-week virtual Mentoring Orientation Workshop (MOW) that introduces the Fellowship cycle and approach. With guidance from their mentors, Fellows reflect on and refine their career development objectives and develop a purpose road map outlining their career goals and the actions needed to achieve them.

¹ During the application, the Fellow is required to propose up to three potential mentors based on a set of criteria provided in the application form. A comprehensive process of selecting the appropriate mentor from the three proposals is done upon the Fellow's selection



Monthly Mentoring Meetings:

Mentoring pairs meet monthly, as agreed at the start of the program, to review progress toward set goals, address challenges, and identify opportunities for career advancement, while agreeing on action plans for next steps. Over one year, mentors share their experience, scientific knowledge, and networks to support candidates' career growth.



4-Week Virtual MOW for Fellows' Mentees:

Once paired, each Fellow and their Mentee participate in a four-week virtual MOW program that includes planned activities and regular monthly meetings to support their professional development.



Mentors Activities:

In addition to the MOW and mentoring meetings, Mentors will have access to AWARD's course offerings, including gender courses. Up to 20 mentors per cohort will receive a modest allowance to attend conferences aligned Fellowship themes, and up to 25 per cohort will serve as institutional focal points to support dissemination of outputs and strengthen institutional partnerships during and beyond the fellowship.

2. Customized Training Programs

Fellows are required to attend various learning programs offered throughout the Fellowship including:



Women's Leadership and Negotiations Skills Course:

This five-day, in-person course strengthens leadership and managerial skills for female professionals in agricultural research and development. Participants build capacity to manage teams, navigate organizational dynamics, and influence policy, while enhancing their communication skills and expanding their professional support networks.



Gender in Climate Adaptation Course:

This four-week virtual course is open to Fellows, mentors, mentees, and other professionals from their institutions. The course seeks to enhance participants' understanding of the gendered dimensions of climate change impacts on agriculture. Learners are supported to critically analyze the role of gender equality in building resilient and sustainable agricultural systems. Participants will develop skills in gender analysis, participatory planning, and community-based adaptation.



Gender in Gender in agrifood systems course:

The five-day face-to-face workshop that will strengthen the capacity of the Fellows to integrate gender in various aspects of agrifood systems including use of different frameworks and tools to analyze programs for gender gaps, the design, development, dissemination and adoption gender-responsive research and tracking gender transformative change. Participants will gain knowledge and skills 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.



Science communication and proposal writing course:

This four-week virtual course strengthens Fellows' capacity to write practical scientific research proposals and communicate research results to various audiences. Participants develop skills in scientific presentation, social competence, and personal branding to build confidence and pitch their research ideas to peers and potential funding agencies.

2. Collaboration, Networking and Advocacy

The Fellowship places a strong emphasis on cross learning, visibility and practical application for sustained learnings.

Activities in this component include:



Collaborative cross-country research groups:

Fellows will be required and supported to establish collaborative cross-country research groups that promote joint publications and resource mobilization.



Role-modelling events

Fellows' mentees will be required and supported to design and deliver face-to-face role-modeling activities in their institutions or communities to apply the learnings from their mentoring programs and expand their networks.



Storytelling:

This entails Fellows' participation in an eight-week virtual training course that will equip them with skills to craft and share compelling personal stories about their work. It culminates in an in-person storytelling event and is designed to increase their visibility and amplify their voices as agents of change. Fellows will improve their ability to connect with diverse audiences and position themselves as thought leaders.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Women in Agriculture Leadership Program Fellowship is an initiative of African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) funded under the Africa—Australia Partnership for Climate Responsive Agriculture.

It seeks to contribute to the Partnership’s end-of-program outcome two (EOPO2): “Australia leverages its funding to national and multilateral agricultural research institutes to increase the number of women leading and participating in climate resilient agriculture”.

The Africa—Australia Partnership is delivered by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.





African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) envisions transformative change toward gender-responsive solutions that will catalyze lasting impact for equitable agri-food systems for women and men smallholders. We are investing in women's leadership to foster equality in AR4D, equipping AR4D professionals to integrate gender in their work, strengthening institutions to adopt gender-responsive policies and practices, and impacting the enabling environment to enhance gender responsiveness.

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