

Career Development Pathways for Gender Scientists Leadership and Mentoring Program

Roadmap and Action Plan

African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) and CGIAR GENDER Platform

December 2020

Background

The GENDER Platform through its capacity-development strategy has established the need to prioritize and foster the practice of gender integration throughout the agricultural research for development (AR4D) portfolio of projects and interventions. Agricultural scientists, managers and particularly gender researchers are at the core of these processes to ensure effective and appropriate responses to the needs and priorities of diverse groups of food system actors—including their most marginalized members, such as rural women. This means making realities and experiences of differentiated groups, an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all AR4D work, so that all are represented equitably and benefit equally. To achieve this, gender researchers, working across AR4D institutes and embedded within multi-disciplinary teams, should be equipped to lead and influence processes of designing and implementing socially inclusive approaches towards transformative change in the agricultural sector.

To this end, the GENDER Platform has set out key areas of capacity building and strengthening for gender researchers in the CGIAR system and in partner institutes to enable them to enhance their influence and foster institutional culture change towards gender responsive AR4D. The focus on mentoring and leadership development of gender researchers, to support their professional career, personal growth, and capacities, will enable them to increase their perceived legitimacy and relevance – and that of their gender research – to bring gender and social inclusion concerns at the heart of food systems research for development.

Recognizing the critical role of mentoring relationships and effective leadership in agricultural development, the GENDER Platform is collaborating with African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) to design and implement a special **Leadership and Mentoring Program** for mid-career gender researchers in CGIAR and partner institutes.

The AWARD-GENDER Platform collaboration emphasizes the need to develop and strengthen relevant capacity at individual level to influence institutional processes towards gender-equitable and socially inclusive agricultural transformation. Beyond the technical skills, the CGIAR system and its partners must produce a community of gender researchers and non-gender scientists with a transformative mindset of leadership. For them to become effective leaders and change agents, they need to develop essential soft

skills including, empathy, moral courage, emotional intelligence, and assertive commitment to lead and drive critical advances and innovations in agricultural development. Gender scientists from CGIAR and NARS (most of whom are young women) must also learn to navigate the power dynamics of being social scientists—and *gender* scientists, which is often considered a ‘soft’ science—in institutes that place great(er) value on biophysical sciences and scientists (most of whom are men). To enhance their credibility as scientists, they must also enhance their capacities to publish their work, write proposals, and communicate effectively about their work and impact. These are the types of capacities on which the program will focus.

Rationale for the collaboration - AWARD & GENDER Platform

AWARD in collaboration with the GENDER Platform will support and nurture the leadership and mentoring capacity of a growing pipeline of talented and committed researchers working at the nexus of agriculture, rural development, gender equality, and socio-economic empowerment to achieve positive outcomes in the society. Four key elements confirm the value that AWARD brings to the successful implementation of the GENDER Platform in general and its capacity-development strategy in particular:

Solid experience in building and strengthening individual and institutional capacity - AWARD has over a decade of experience delivering high quality and comprehensive capacity building programs to the agricultural research sector essentially in Africa but also in the Middle East, Asia, and Pacific regions. Building on its long-standing experience in supporting agricultural scientists, research institutions and agribusinesses, AWARD has been promoting practical research and innovation to move from laboratories to farms and to markets for sustainable social and economic impact. AWARD has contributed extensively to women’s empowerment with over 400 women agricultural scientists who have benefitted from the fellowships and other training activities. AWARD’s capacity development’s mandate has expanded to include increased investments to support both individual (men and women leaders) and institutional capacity building interventions.

Focus on social inclusion and gender responsiveness for AR4D - AWARD has embraced a very deliberate approach towards a more gender responsive agricultural transformation agenda in Africa and the developing world. From policy fora to marketplaces and in local communities, AWARD-trained scientists have in many ways, led and influenced agricultural research, food systems and policy development, the production and dissemination of knowledge, innovative and appropriate technology and practices for the betterment of smallholder farmers.

A unique and comprehensive program – AWARD offers a variety of training interventions with components that interact in multiple ways, with many reinforcing loops that greatly augment total effect. The three complementary components of AWARD training include *fostering mentoring partnerships*, *sharpening science skills*, and *developing leadership capacity*. This complementarity increases the chance of success, the depth of the empowerment participants’ experience, and the potential for sustainability of the agency gained. Moreover, the holistic nature, individually tailored approach, intensity, and diversity of AWARD’s training offerings have led to a high degree of impact across all evaluation criteria, as well as research outcomes and social impact.

Long standing partnership with the CGIAR centres and the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) – AWARD is a ‘Privileged Service

Provider' to the CGIAR with regard to capacity building of female scientists from partner institutions in the research programs and, at the CGIAR system level and as per the Consortium Gender Strategy. AWARD has sound experience with strengthening the capacity of CGIAR and other agricultural organizations to achieve meaningful changes in institutional culture and to strengthen the leadership capacities of agricultural scientists. Through its initiative on Gender Responsive Agricultural Research and Development (GRARD), AWARD has been supporting institutional capacity building and strengthening programs in selected NARIs in Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, and Tanzania while also continuously engaging other African agricultural institutes and regional bodies in the debate on gender responsive agricultural development.

Overview of the Leadership and Mentoring Program

AWARD is committed to *developing effective and confident **gender research leaders** who will promote the advancement of science, policy, practice for gender-equitable and sustainable agricultural development.* Through the Leadership and Mentoring Program, AWARD aims to equip the gender researchers with practical tools that they can apply right away to increase their visibility, gain influence, and accelerate the impact their work can have in the world. #TomorrowToday

The program consists of four (4) main components including: *i) Leadership training, ii) Coaching, iii) Mentoring training and, iv) Mentoring.*

The four components of the program are described below.

Leadership training

The Leadership training is designed to enable the gender scientists to strengthen relevant capacity at the individual level. Specifically, the training will provide an opportunity: *i) for self-discovery through impartation of knowledge on self-mastery and emotional intelligence, ii) to learn how to build resilience for thriving in the current rapidly changing world, iii) to develop the moral courage to communicate and act effectively in the midst of adversity, iv) to gain techniques for driving change even in challenging environments, v) to learn how to influence strategically and navigate politics to achieve high level outcomes, and vi) to become aware of effective communication techniques for effective and powerful leadership.* The training will focus on key topics including:

Self-mastery - The ability to be self-disciplined and controlled is one of the foundational leadership skills that every leader must possess to be effective. This cannot be achieved without first going into a self-discovery journey.

Emotional intelligence - Building on self-mastery, emotional intelligence comes down to understanding, expressing, and managing, good relationships and solving problems under pressure. With globalization, emotional intelligence is more significant than ever when teams are cross-cultural and global, increasing the complexity of interactions of emotions and how they are expressed.

Effective communication – This is a core leadership function and a key characteristic of a great leader. Effective communication and effective leadership are closely intertwined. The countless relationships at the organizational level, in communities and groups, and sometimes on a global scale require that leaders must be skilled communicators.

Moral courage – An important skill for leaders is the ability to act courageously and with integrity. Managing and driving change requires courage as it “*enables people to stand up for principles rather than stand on the sidelines.*” (Rosabeth Moss Kantor,

Harvard Business Review). Participants will be equipped with knowledge and skills to help them develop the personal courage to stand up for what is right.

Resilience building - Resilience is highly required to thrive in a rapidly changing world especially with emerging dynamics and situations (e.g., the current Covid-19 pandemic) that can cause substantial disruption at different levels. The program will emphasize on this a crucial characteristic that leaders must cultivate in themselves to advance and thrive.

Driving change – Leaders do not just build resilience for the sake of it, but it is a key component for success in driving and implementing change. The program will enable the participants to drive important changes through the resilience they have built.

Strategic influencing and navigating politics - Gender research is considered a ‘soft’ science. This creates an environment where the gender scientists especially the early to mid-careers find themselves in a space of less influence by default coupled with enough politics to rack through before making any advancements. The program will impart knowledge and practice to developing the ability to strategically influence decisions, policies, and direction within teams.

Coaching

The Leadership training will be complemented by coaching sessions that will support gender researchers in their journey to achieving a specific goal for their career development. The coaching sessions will favour the development agenda of the “coachees” that aligns with the program objectives. Specifically, coaching will aim to:

- Increase awareness of underlying thinking patterns that drive current behaviour and performance;
- Identify and access new choices and possibilities as a result of changed perceptions;
- Draw up action plans targeting blind spots to minimize ineffective and self-sabotaging behaviour;
- Increase drive to pursue set goals; and
- Increase confidence to leverage opportunities and tackle challenges as a result of heightened awareness of one’s resourcefulness.

Mentoring training

The Mentoring training aims to equip the gender scientists with the necessary guidelines for a formal mentoring process and the mentoring tools to enable them to focus their career effectively and ensure that every step that is taken and propels them to the next level. The training provides a unique opportunity for both the mentors and mentees to get to know each other better, share their ideas, clarify the roles and expectations in the mentoring process. The trainers will work closely together with the pairs to explore how different aspects influence personal and working relationships, help them set a solid foundation for a successful mentoring relationship.

The program will focus on topics such as *Understanding and leveraging personality*, *Leveraging networks*, *Working with diversity*, and culminates with the development of a Purpose Road Map (PRM) which is the central tool in the mentoring process.

Purpose Road Map (PRM) - The PRM provides a platform to deep and innovative thinking about career development, the critical requirements and the necessary skills needed to progress from one stage to the next. The PRM encourages a non-linear approach to the career development pathway.

“The only way to prepare for your future is to create it.”
Peter Drucker

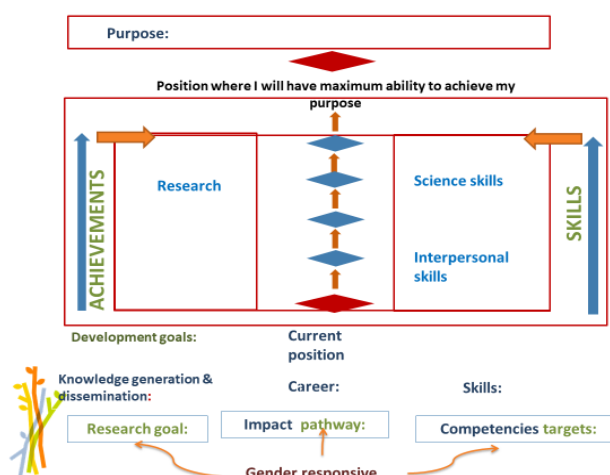
The tool has four (4) components with long term strategic thinking and perspectives:

Purpose: Overall intended contribution to development

Career path: through different levels and roles until the desired, most opportune position to deliver the intended development purpose

Research/knowledge generation necessary for career advancement

Skills/capacities necessary for effective career advancement



Mentoring

The Mentoring sessions will bring together two generations of researchers connected and investing in each other: a **mentor** and a **gender researcher**.

- A **mentor** is a senior colleague, someone with great professional experience in the field of gender research and who can support the overall professional development of the mid-career gender scientists.
- A **gender researcher** is at the core of the Leadership and Mentoring Program. He/she is a mid-career gender scientist, with 3-5 years of research experience on gender and social sciences, working in a CGIAR centre or partner institute.

Within their mentoring relationship, the mentors and gender researchers will meet regularly (at least twice a month, two (2) hours) to discuss and document progress, challenges and achievements against the goals set in their Purpose Road Maps.

Program implementation

AWARD will implement the Leadership and Mentoring Program for Gender researchers. AWARD will support one (1) initial cohort of up to **30 mid-career gender researchers** from the CGIAR centers across the world and from selected partner institutes.

The total duration of the Leadership and Mentoring Program and related activities (e.g., M&E, and final reporting) is estimated at **21 months**, from April 2021 to December 2022. One month (April 2021) will be dedicated to the finalization of the partnership agreement between AWARD and the GENDER Platform. The actual implementation which will be approximately **20 months** starting May 2021, will entail specific activities at different points to maximize the quality of the learning experience itself and the services associated with the training and learning process. The Leadership and Mentoring Program will proceed as follows:

Months 1-4 (May-August 2021): AWARD will initiate and coordinate a content development and design process for the Leadership and Mentoring Program in accordance with the objectives of the GENDER Platform's capacity-development strategy.

- **Training - Content development and design**

AWARD training courses cover a broad base of knowledge and skills designed to enable participants at different levels to make significant impacts on their personal development and career paths. For a successful implementation of the Leadership and Mentoring

Program, AWARD will coordinate a content development and design process that will include review, training material customization and course delivery modes. Specifically, the courses will clearly highlight the various professional development issues related to the realities of gender researchers in CGIAR and NARIs (i.e., being a gender researcher in organizations dominated by biophysical research; and gender issues in such organizations) and how these can be addressed to accelerate the journey towards effective and transformative leadership. AWARD will offer adaptive learning mechanisms, such as training needs assessments (TNAs), throughout the program.

Month 1 (May 2021): Towards end May 2021, AWARD will organize an information webinar with possibilities for Questions and Answers (Q&A) to provide potential candidates and their supervisors with the information required to decide whether to apply and commit to participating in the program.

Months 2-3 (June-July 2021): AWARD and the GENDER Platform will work together to issue the Call for applications and facilitate the selection process.

- **Call for applications and selection process**

The recruitment and selection process will be led by the GENDER Platform, with support from AWARD—particularly as regards identifying and selecting NARI candidates. Thirty (30) gender researchers will be selected and will embark for the onboarding process.

Month 4 (August 2021): AWARD will seek official endorsement from the relevant institutions and the CGIAR centres. The selected gender researchers participate in an online Orientation Webinar. AWARD will deliver a **Program Orientation Webinar** to the selected gender researchers to present and discuss the details and specifics of the overall Leadership and Mentoring Program.

Months 5-6 (Sept.-Oct. 2021): The 30 selected gender researchers embark on a Leadership training which will be fully delivered online.

- **Leadership training (fully online)**

Due to travel restrictions arising from the COVID 19 pandemic, we anticipate the **Leadership and Negotiation Skills Course** to be delivered virtually during a period of seven (7) weeks (3-4 hours per session, 1 session per week). Mid-career women scientists will constitute the main audience among the gender researchers, given that the field of gender research is highly skewed towards women researchers, although men who satisfy the selection criteria are also invited to participate. We will customize the course content accordingly. The course delivery will be followed by a six (6) month coaching program with the support of AWARD A-TEAM of trainers.

Months 7-12 (Nov. 2021-April 2022): The cohort attends monthly coaching sessions with the AWARD team of trainers. In **month 12**, the gender researchers will participate in a **Webinar** to discuss progress, challenges, and opportunities with the coaching team.

Months 7-10 (Nov.2021-Feb. 2022): Nomination and Matching of the mentoring pairs. The gender researchers will be invited to nominate three (3) potential mentors based on the AWARD selection criteria¹ for Mentors. AWARD will review the nominations

¹ The selection criteria for the Mentors are: (i) the current supervisor/direct line manager **cannot** be considered as a potential mentor (including PhD supervisors if applicable); (ii) he or she must have a solid scientific and/or professional experience in the field of agriculture; (iii) he or she should ideally work or live within a short distance from the Fellow (**geographical proximity**) to allow for an optimal mentoring relationship; (iv) he or she must be willing to provide the nurturing support that will allow learning and growth both within the research field and the home institution; (v) he or she should be available to participate with the gender researcher in the Mentoring Orientation Workshop (MOW) and the overall mentoring program.

and recommend the matching pairs based on mutual expertise, shared research interests, and expression of interest in participating in the mentoring program.

Mentors will be selected across the agricultural research landscape, including academia, NARIs, United Nations agencies, and other Non-governmental and civil society organizations. This will also serve the purpose of creating a solid network of gender experts who can maintain strong collaborations and foster constructive dialogue on the professionalization of gender researchers to lead effective transformative change in the agricultural sector.

Months 10-11 (Feb.-March 2022): AWARD will conduct a Training Needs Assessment with the selected **mentoring pairs** to determine gaps, needs and priorities for excellent mentoring relationships.

Month 12 (April 2022): The thirty (30) gender researchers embark on the Mentoring training which will be delivered face to face.

- **Mentoring training (in-person)**

The Mentoring Orientation Workshop (MOW) will tentatively be delivered face to face in April 2022 if the sanitary situation permits. The MOW will be attended by gender researchers and their Mentors at AWARD Headquarters in Nairobi² and will culminate with the development of their Purpose Road Maps (PRMs).

Months 12-19 (April-Nov.2022): The mentoring pairs engage in 8 months of mentoring during which they meet regularly (bi-monthly mentoring sessions) to implement the PRMs and identify opportunities for research and career progression.

Month 18-19 (Oct.-Nov. 2022): The mentoring pairs will participate in a **Webinar** to reflect on their mentoring experience, professional development purpose and readiness to mentor junior scientists entering the field of gender research. The gender researchers will then plan and conduct one (1) outreach session to inspire an emerging generation of research scientists who are passionate about gender and other socio-economic dynamics.

Month 20 (Dec. 2022): In this final month of the Leadership and Mentoring Program, AWARD will bring together the two generations of scientists: Mentors - Gender Researchers.

- **End of Leadership and Mentoring Program**

The Program will close with a **Virtual Alumni Conference** that will bring together all the participants, the leadership coaching team, and other key stakeholders. These key actors in the Program will review the overall Program's experience, reflect on the career road maps and the conducive and impeding factors for the achievement of the set goals and ultimately, strategies to sustain a platform for continued mentoring, experience sharing and collaboration.

Month 5-20: Participants in the Leadership and Mentoring Program for gender researchers embark in various networking activities.

- **Networking activities**

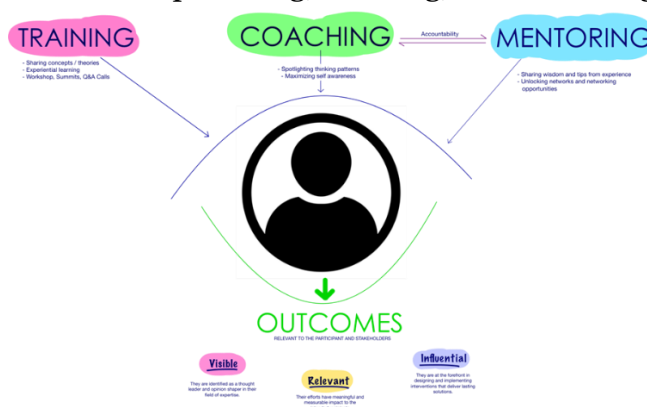
It is hoped that the “graduates” of the Leadership and Mentoring Program will grow as effective leaders and role models within the scientific community and will strive to create a vibrant **community of practice** to share their knowledge, learnings and skills with their peers and other stakeholders in the gender and agricultural development fields. The

² AWARD prioritizes the mentoring process as a “high touch” activity demanding physical presence as much as possible. It is our hope that by 2022, the Mentoring program will proceed with minimal health risks and travel restrictions. Otherwise, AWARD will adjust the implementation accordingly.

participation in the **CGIAR Annual Conferences** is particularly critical as such networking events constitute a tremendous opportunity to capture and distil knowledge that has been gleaned from the Leadership and Mentoring Program. We will also prioritize learning exchanges with the senior scientists and alumnae of previous AWARD's leadership and mentoring programs as an excellent opportunity to forge collaboration on gender responsive research within the CGIAR centres and beyond.

Expected Outcomes and Impact of the Program

While the two-year program will focus on leadership training, coaching, and mentoring, it is also expected that, through the engagement with content, processes, and activities, the gender researchers will gradually show good signs of progress towards becoming more visible, relevant, influential, and ultimately, effective leaders and change agents within their institutions.



Following their participation in the Leadership and Mentoring Program, AWARD envisions **gender researchers** capable to:

- **Push limits to increase their visibility, influence, and relevance**

As the gender researchers acquire a better understanding of themselves, they also improve their ability to better apprehend their environment and other factors which may influence their working relations with scientists from other fields and their professionalisation as gender scientists. We hope to see:

- Self-confidence and motivation to perform
- Visibility through enhanced communication skills
- Improved capacity to navigate the system of and to influence their organizations/clear road map for driving change (influence) in the gender responsiveness of their organization's research agenda
- Motivation for career progression

- **Empower with their inspirational experience and success stories**

Gender researchers gradually increase their ability to turn their work into an inspirational experience for others. They also enhance their capacity to discuss research interests and career prospects in the field of gender research. Some of the specific likely results will include:

- New insights about gender research
- Free thinking and improved communication
- Motivation to lead and perform

- **Anchor their impact and ignite change in the world**

Outcomes at the individual level should in turn impact institutions positively, as the “transformed” gender scientists, with expanded ability to influence processes and policies, contribute more significantly to set organizational goals and even beyond. This impact is also able to raise awareness in the institutions of the outstanding contribution that gender scientists bring to the table, and to influence the institution's overall collaborative research

processes and agenda. In turn, these organizational changes can influence the larger AR4D ecosystem. We expect to see:

- Enhanced visibility and respect for gender researchers
- Improved interdisciplinary team collaboration within and between institutions
- Increased commitment towards gender equality, institutional and societal change at the organizational level, and over time, in the larger AR4D ecosystem

Plan for monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL)

AWARD highly values an MEL process that will ensure accountability for the program beneficiaries and partners, learnings from successes and failures, celebrations of achievements and knowledge sharing with the wider research community. This will be achieved through a variety of targeted, innovative knowledge products, events, and other means of communication. AWARD will implement an adaptive monitoring and evaluation system that offers new knowledge and learnings from the program itself, including from its implementation process.

We intend to use an integrated mixed-methods approach for monitoring and assessing progress throughout the implementation of the Leadership and Mentoring Program. Various M&E tools will be used at different levels:

- For the **continuous monitoring** of activities, we will prioritize tools like *progress journals*, *Mentoring/Leadership feedback forms*, *Mentoring/Leadership assessment forms*, among others. These tools are essential for collecting primary information on the activities and outputs, but also to identify gaps in implementation and take timely corrective measures where necessary.
- For a **systematic and objective assessment** of the program's results at different levels (output, outcome, and impact), we will use different evaluation tools including, *baseline and endline surveys* using structured questionnaires, *training evaluations*, *impact stories* and *most significant change* (MSC) techniques.

With a robust M&EL approach in place, we also intend to investigate the extent to which the desired outcomes of the program – *Develop effective and confident gender research leaders who will promote the advancement of science, policy, practice for gender-equitable and sustainable agricultural development* - will be achieved for the first cohort of CGIAR and NARI gender researchers.