

INITIATIVE ON Gender Equality



WEAGov NOTE 2023

WEAGov NIGERIA PILOT STUDY: FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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ABOUT WEAGov

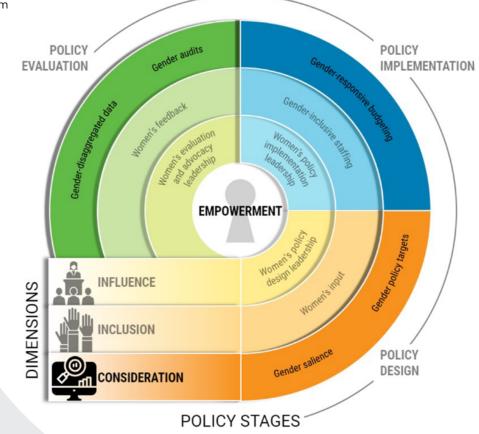
Women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life can boost a country's long-run economic growth, foster social inclusion, and help countries reach the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Beyond these important outcomes, women's inclusion in public life is a basic human right: women deserve a role in making decisions, controlling resources, and shaping policies. Yet, globally, only 22 percent of members of parliament and 16 percent of cabinet secretaries are women (WEF 2022). Women's inclusion within policymaking in the agrifood sector is particularly important and lagging. Although disproportionately employed in the agrifood system, women lack decision-making power regarding the policies that govern it.

With this situation in mind, researchers at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) developed a new tool – the Women's Empowerment in Agrifood Governance (WEAGov) assessment framework – to assess the state of women's voice and agency in national policymaking in agrifood systems. WEAGov is theory-based and has been developed and refined over time in consultations with more than 50 other index developers, policy partners, researchers, donors, and practitioners worldwide. In 2023, IFPRI partnered with agrifood policymaking experts in Nigeria to pilot the WEAGov assessment framework. The purpose of this pilot study was both to learn about women's voice and agency in agrifood policymaking in Nigeria and to further refine the tool itself. This Note summarizes the results of that pilot study.

WEAGov Conceptual Framework

WEAGov assesses the state of women's voice and agency in national agrifood policymaking. Like IFPRI's Kaleidoscope Model (Resnick et al. 2015), it adopts a policy process approach, looking at every stage of the policy cycle – from why certain issues become salient and how policy solutions to address them are designed, to the organizational strategies and budgetary outlays that shape policy implementation, to how policies are assessed against their objectives. Within each of these stages, WEAGov examines whether women are being considered, whether their voices are included, and whether they are influencing actions and decisions.

WEAGov adopts a wide lens to view the actors within the policy process and how women may exert influence, giving consideration to the public sector, the private sector, and civil society organizations. This wide lens enables us to gain a more complex understanding of how women may play a role in decision-making regarding agrifood policies, beyond national statistics like the number of women in parliament. It assesses, for example, how women may be advocating for policy solutions from within civil society organizations, how women may be leading policy implementation from within line ministries, government efforts to consult with women and women's groups during policy development, and whether gender targets set in national policies are being funded, monitored, and tracked. In total, WEAGov encompasses 11 indicators across three stages of the policy cycle: policy design, policy implementation, and policy evaluation (Figure 1). Each indicator is defined in Table 1 and is measured using a variety of credible in-country data sources drawn from local agrifood organizations and local agrifood policy experts, for a total of 44 measurements. Each measurement is scored using a Likert scale, with **1=red=very** weak, 2=orange=weak, 3=yellow=medium, and 4=green=strong. However, we want to convey with the scoring the general principle that women's full and equal participation in the policy process ("strong") is not an over-achievement - rather, it should be seen as reaching a target. Thus, we also use the terminology of 1=low, 2=on the way, 3=advancing, 4=at goal.



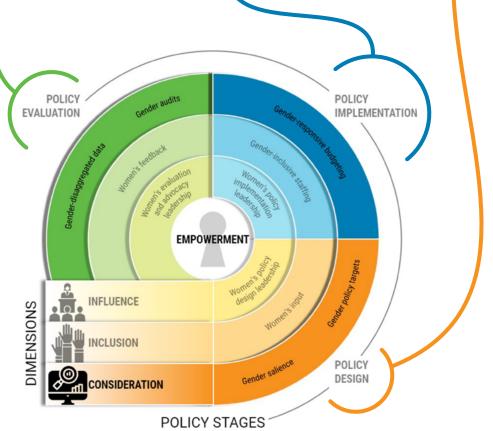
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Figure 1. WEAGov framework

Source: Kyle and Ragasa (2023). https://www.ifpri.org/interactive/weagov

Table 1. WEAGov indicators and definitions

 Gender-disaggregated data: Gender-disaggregated data: Gender-disaggregated data are collected and made available for policymakers so they can assess how policies are working for women and take corrective action if needed. Gender audits: Agrifood policy implementing agencies review their gender policies and strategies periodically and take corrective action if needed. Gender salience: Gender is an important topic within agrifood agencies allocate budgets equitably, addressing the different needs of men and women. Gender audits: Agrifood policy implementing agencies review their gender policies and strategies periodically and take corrective action if needed. Gender-inclusive staffing: Female staff are represented in agrifood policy implementing agencies, and gender-inclusive staffing policies are in place to support hiring and retaining female staff. Women's evaluation and advocacy leadership: Women take on leadership roles in evaluating and advocating for evidence-based agrifood policy reform. Women's evaluating and advocating for evidence-based agrifood policy reform.



WEAGov's Contribution

WEAGov focuses on measuring and tracking women's voice and empowerment within the national-level agrifood policy process. This perspective compliments tools and indices on women's empowerment within agriculture and agrifood systems at the household and community levels, like the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) family of tools¹ and numerous participatory tools and scorecards at community and local levels (summarized in ElDidi et al. 2021). While these tools provide important measurements of women's individual- and community-level voice and decision-making, participation in the political domain at higher levels of policymaking and women's ability may look quite different. WEAGov also compliments existing global indices on gender that measure gender equality more broadly but do not focus on agrifood systems (summarized in Ragasa et al. 2022). In providing concrete metrics for women's empowerment in the political and policy sphere specifically through national-level decision-making that affects the agrifood system, WEAGov can help measure three of the SDGs, particularly:

- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.
- 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
- 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

Political leadership, gender-responsive policies and budgeting, gender-inclusive organizational strategies, and gender-transformative institutions are needed to dismantle systemic barriers to achieving SDGs, especially 5, 10 and 16. WEAGov aims to contribute by measuring these aspects of gender equality and women's empowerment in the political and policy sphere.

WEAGov Methodology

The assessment framework is methodologically pluralistic, triangulating information from multiple sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of women's voice and agency in agrifood governance. WEAGov was developed by combining insights from key informant interviews with a scientific literature review on women's empowerment, agrifood systems, and governance (see Ragasa et al. 2022). In 2022, key informant interviews included experts involved in the development of other frameworks and indices measuring different aspects of gender and governance; donor agency representatives; academic experts; and policy partners, researchers, civil society leaders, and private sector leaders from three countries with diverse agrifood governance institutions - Nigeria, Malawi, and India (Ragasa et al. 2022). In 2023, we conducted another round of key informants' interviews and collected further expert feedback to further refine the WEAGov tool and methodology. Lastly, pilot-testing in Nigeria provided very useful lessons for further refining the tool for the second round of pilot-testing in other countries and for scaling partners in 2024 and beyond. Figure 2 provides a full timeline of the process of developing WEAGov.

¹ https://www.ifpri.org/project/weai

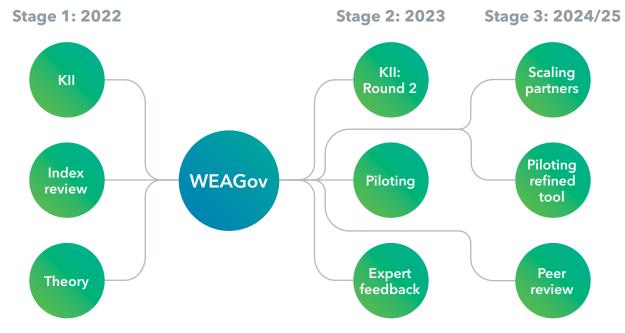


Figure 2. WEAGov development process

Note: KII=key informant's interviews

The WEAGov methodology consists of five steps: (1) a policy landscape analysis of the key national policies, actors, and organizations in a country's agrifood sector; (2) a content analysis of national agrifood policies; (3) surveys of the key organizations in the agrifood sector; (4) surveys with agrifood policy experts; and

(5) a technical workshop with local experts to discuss and validate results from (1)-(4). This local validation of results is key. In May 2023, we held a validation workshop in Abuja with local agrifood policy experts, during which we reviewed and refined results from our Nigeria pilot study (Kyle et al. 2023).

5 Steps of WEAGov		Nigeria Pilot	
Agrifood policy and stakeholder mapping		Scored content analysis of 19 agrifood policies (4 primary policies and 15 subsector policies)	
Desk review of objective, quantitative indicators		Indicators collected by Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet) research team from government administrative data, secondary data, and key informants	
Organization survey		141 unique organizations – including federal and state agrifood ministries, and their divisions; paraststals, nongovernmental and civil society organizations; private sector; and universities	
Expert survey		241 leaders, officers, and experts from within these organizations surveyed about their perceptions and observations on women's inclusion and influence in agrifood policy processes	
Technical validation workshop		Full-day intensive discussion and validation workshop with 10 national experts, held in Abuja	

Figure 3. WEAGov steps and pilot in Nigeria

Nigeria Results

The analyses presented in this paper are mainly based on the results of the WEAGov assessment framework process, conducted in Nigeria in 2023 and reported fully in Ragasa et al. (2023). Table 2 summarizes the main results, Table 3 presents the WEAGov scores for Nigeria, and Table 4 summarizes the indicators for the four major agrifood policies assessed.

Overall, the WEAGov pilot study shows some consideration and inclusion of women in Nigeria's agrifood policy process but also shows that many areas need major improvements and urgent attention. Out of 44 measurements for WEAGov, Nigeria achieved a high score (score=4) in one, the presence of the National Gender Policy in Agriculture, and a medium score (score=3) in ten. Several areas of strength stand out from the results. First, women's leadership in nongovernmental organizations involved in agrifood policymaking is relatively strong. Second, having a National Gender Policy in Agriculture is an additional source of strength for Nigeria in terms of women's consideration in the sector. This policy sets the direction and targets in terms of greater gender equity and women's empowerment in agriculture. The national nutrition and climate change policies also include fairly robust consideration of the potentially different needs of men and women in the sectors. Women are also somewhat well represented among managerial and nonmanagerial staff in agrifood policy implementation - an outcome of the gender policy that requires one-third of management and decision-making roles in government entities to be held by women.

By contrast, Nigeria achieved a very low score (score=1) in 15 areas and a low score (score=2) in 18 areas, indicating very weak and weak voice and empowerment of women in those areas, respectively. Several areas stood out as particularly weak and in need of concrete improvements to secure a meaningful voice for women in agrifood policymaking in the country. Ordinary women have very limited opportunities to provide input into policy design and to provide feedback on how policy implementation is working for them in practice. Budgetary outlays toward gender targets and efforts to track and monitor those targets are also significantly lacking. The policy evaluation sector overall is quite weak, with little effort to collect or to use gender-disaggregated data on women in the agrifood sector – which necessarily constrains assessment of whether gender targets are being met. Finally, and no less urgently, women's presence in formal leadership in parliament and in agrifood cabinet ministries is very low, even compared to peer countries in the region.

Policy Implications

Several recommendations and priority actions emerge from the pilot study. Among them are the following:

Take concrete steps to dedicate budget and staffing resources toward meeting the gender targets that have already been set in key national agrifood policies.

- Our review of key national agrifood policies revealed that even when gender targets had been set, these targets are generally not being funded, implemented, or monitored for progress. A key first step could be a holistic review along with socialization among agrifood ministry staff to ensure that all staff in agrifood ministries are aware of gender targets set in national policies and know how to track and monitor progress toward those targets. Policy review committees can be set up to periodically review progress toward these targets.
- Up-front coordination is needed between agrifood ministries and the Ministry of Budget and National Planning to ensure that gender targets are being sufficiently funded from inception. For example, the National Gender Policy in Agriculture achieves high scores for its attention to gender goals and for bringing strong inputs and influence of women into the policy process, but it falls short on implementation, budgetary support, monitoring, and evaluation. Ensuring that this policy has a specific and dedicated budget line and is well-integrated into the country's national and agricultural development plan is essential to securing its implementation.

Over time, legislative support for gender-responsive budgeting within agrifood ministries can improve ministries' funding and implementation support for gender targets, ensuring that gender targets set by policies are being funded in practice. The Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning and partners have been carrying out several training and mentoring activities to help government agencies with gender-responsive budgeting; these activities need to be scaled and lessons on what strategies work and do not work need should be shared to improve the effectiveness of these training and mentoring programs and get gender targets actually funded.

Strengthen policy feedback, monitoring, and evaluation, with a concentration on genderdisaggregated data and outcomes.

- More evaluation and research are needed on the gender implications of agrifood policies, and on key gaps not addressed by the current policy landscape. A meaningful first step would be to collect more gender-disaggregated data on women in the agrifood sector, especially on issues related to control of resources and women's agency and empowerment, as well as capacity building to collect and analyze these data. Collaboration between the National Bureau of Statistics and agrifood ministries around priority data and outcomes would be helpful to ensure data credibility.
- Feedback on how policy implementation is going on the ground from the citizens and farmers whom policies are intended to support is also essential. Government ministries should establish mechanisms and processes for policy feedback and promote their use. Once those mechanisms and processes are in place, it is important to ensure that citizens are aware of opportunities to provide feedback and know how to do so, especially women who are often more reticent to contact government officials.

Ensure that opportunities for policy input and consultation reach a wide audience, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- While we heard from local experts that public consultations are often held in Nigeria before a policy is implemented, these seem to be ad hoc, and many experts cited significant gaps in the inclusion of marginalized voices in consultations. Agrifood ministries should create more opportunities for citizens in general and women specifically to provide inputs into policy design through consultative processes and should socialize these opportunities more extensively to ensure that women can use them.
- Key ways to broaden inclusivity include (1) developing educational material about policies in native languages and appropriate to the literacy levels of the population; (2) advertising opportunities for input widely; and (3) reaching out for input across broad geographic areas and many channels.
- Given the existing strength of civil society organizations in Nigeria in terms of women's leadership and representation, these organizations can provide policymakers with critical inputs on policy design and policy feedback and should be extensively consulted. These organizations can also be key bridges between government ministries and civil society and provide advice on reaching more marginalized populations for consultations. Civil society organizations should get themselves to be more proactive in policy deliberations, review, and evaluation.

Close critical gaps in women's leadership opportunities.

 Despite the difficulty of taking concrete steps to increase women's representation in parliament and among cabinet ministers in the near term, as these both rely on actions by political leaders and political parties as well as on electoral results, both government ministries and civil society organizations can raise the profile of female leaders in the agrifood policy process. We found many female managers in both government ministries and civil society organizations; ensuring that these women are visibly recognized for their roles and have the opportunity to be seen by the public as leaders and experts in the field can build the profile of female leaders in the sector over time.

 In the long term, changing attitudes and norms related to gender will require providing more training on confidence building and leadership for girls and women at very young ages, as well as conducting gender-transformative campaigns that target girls, boys, women, and men.

WEAGov is designed to inform debate and identify concrete actions to improve the state of women's voice and agency in certain areas of the country's agrifood policy process. Although this report recommends several concrete steps for improving that process, ultimately local actors should identify the priority areas for improvement as well as any associated timelines for action. Periodic monitoring and revisiting of the key indicators should be conducted to measure the effectiveness of specific actions and reforms. WEAGov is meant to measure women's voice and empowerment in national agrifood policy processes; this should be complemented by other tools and evidence of voice at the community level and empowerment at the household level. Lastly, WEAGov pilot-testing in Nigeria tracked national agrifood policies; stakeholders can extend the use the WEAGov framework to track design, implementation, and evaluation of state-level policies and local-level governance with a gender lens.



Table 2. Nigeria pilot study results summary by indicator

- **Gender salience:** Although high-level speeches mention gender, they lack details and specific gender targets and strategies; and gender salience in discussions about agrifood policies is generally weak.
- Gender policy targets: The country is to be applauded for its National Gender Policy in Agriculture. Gender consideration in the National Climate Change Policy and the National Food and Nutrition Policy is also quite strong (score=3); however, gender attention in the major agriculture sector policy (the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy) is weak (score=2).
- Women's inputs: Although consultations are often conducted during policy formulation, local experts perceived few opportunities for ordinary citizens to provide input into agrifood policy formulation, and even more limited opportunities for women to do so.
- Women's policy design leadership: The extent of women's leadership in agrifood policy design varied between the public sector and the private sector and civil society. Only 3 percent of Nigeria's parliamentarians are women; however, the share of women leaders in nongovernmental entities involved in policy design is significantly higher, at 41 percent at the time of the survey.
- Gender-responsive budgeting: Across multiple measures used, budgetary support for gender goals is reportedly
 very weak. The National Development Plan (2021-2025), the basis for budgetary allocation across sectors, includes
 general gender goals but has no specific targets on gender equity or women's empowerment in the agrifood system
 and no specific budget allotted. A 2022 report by a Nigerian nongovernmental organization, the development
 Research and Projects Centre (dRPC), found that only 0.6 percent of the Nigerian federal budget was allocated to
 women's economic empowerment. This finding is consistent with responses in the organization and expert surveys:
 84 percent of sample experts in agrifood policymaking responded that budgetary allocation toward women's
 empowerment in Nigeria is "weak" or "very weak" and that none of the agrifood ministries conducts a genderresponsive budgeting exercise.
- **Gender-inclusive staffing:** Overall, female staff are fairly well represented in agrifood policy implementation in Nigeria, making up 43 percent of nonmanagement staff in agrifood policy implementing organizations. Local experts highlighted significant difficulties, however, in opening up career opportunities for women in the civil service.
- Women's policy implementation leadership: Overall, women's leadership is absent in the highest positions in agrifood policy implementation agencies: the five key agrifood-related ministries have no female ministers, state ministers, or permanent secretaries. The situation improves, however, when we include other leadership and management roles in these ministries and in a sample of other government and nongovernment entities: women represent 39 percent of the staff in management positions. This proportion is in line with the gender policy's requirement of having a third of management and decision-making positions held by women but falls short of achieving gender equality.
- **Gender-disaggregated data:** Although the National Bureau of Statistics in Nigeria periodically collects and publishes gender-disaggregated data, data on women in the agrifood system and on women's agency and empowerment are lacking. Not surprisingly, then, use of gender-disaggregated data is quite low: only 16 percent of sample organizations collect or use gender-disaggregated data.
- Gender audits: Almost all sample experts perceived weak tracking and monitoring of gender goals and policy targets overall. National agriculture, climate, nutrition, and gender policies all received low ratings (score=2) for tracking and monitoring gender targets.
- Women's feedback: No formal mechanism exists for citizens to provide feedback on agrifood policy implementation. This finding matches sample experts' perception that the government puts little effort into getting feedback from citizens and offers limited opportunities for citizens and women to provide feedback. The lack of feedback seems more the result of overall limitations in opportunities for feedback from all citizens than of specific limitations for women.
- Women's policy evaluation leadership: Among organizations involved in agrifood policy review and evaluation in our organization survey, 26 percent are led by women and 36 percent of management positions are held by women. This finding is similar for government and nongovernment entities. When asked about their perception of women's influence in policy implementation and monitoring, the majority of sample experts rated women's influence in monitoring national agriculture, climate change, and nutrition policies as "very weak" or "weak."

	Indicator Measurement		Nigeria
	1 Gender	Scored gender content in prominent presidential or budget speech	
	salience	Gender attention in prioritized agrifood policy issue*	ON THE WAY
		Scored gender content in national agriculture policy	ON THE WAY
	2 Gender policy	Scored gender content in national climate policy	ADVANCING
	targets	Scored gender content in national nutrition policy	
		Presence of national gender policy in agriculture	
		Formal process for collecting citizen's input in agrifood policymaking process	ADVANCING
c	3 Women's	Opportunities for women to provide inputs in policy design*	LOW
Policy Design	input	Women's inputs in national agriculture policy*	ON THE WAY
Ď		Women's inputs in national climate policy*	
olic		Women's inputs in national nutrition policy*	ADVANCING
		Share of women in parliament	LOW
		Share of women in parliamentary agricultural committee	LOW
		Share of women leaders in nongovernment sector involved in agrifood policy design ⁺	ADVANCING
	4 Women's policy design leadership	Women leading and influencing deliberations on the national agriculture policy*	ON THE WAY
		Women leading and influencing deliberations on the national climate policy*	
		Women leading and influencing deliberations on the national nutrition policy*	ON THE WAY
		Gender targets and budget are specified in the National Development Plan	ON THE WAY
		Gender-responsive budgeting in agrifood ministries ⁺	LOW
	5 Gender-	Perceived budgetary support and implementation of gender targets in the national agricultural policy*	LOW
_	responsive budgeting	Perceived budgetary support and implementation of gender targets in the national climate change policy*	LOW
ntatio		Perceived budgetary support and implementation of gender targets in the national nutrition policy*	ON THE WAY
pleme		Perceived budgetary support and implementation of gender targets in the national gender policy in agriculture*	ON THE WAY
Policy Implementation	6 Gender- inclusive staffing	Share of female staff in agrifood policy implementing agencies ⁺	ADVANCING
		Gender-sensitive staffing policies among agrifood policy implementing agencies ⁺	
		Efforts to hire women in agrifood policy implementing agencies*	ON THE WAY
	7 Women's policy implementation leadership	Share of female agrifood ministers, state ministers, and permanent secretaries	LOW
		Share of women in managerial positions in agrifood policy implementing agencies ⁺	ADVANCING
		Gender quota for leadership in agrifood policy implementing agencies ⁺	ON THE WAY

Table 3. All scores for WEAGov Nigeria pilot

	8 Gender-	Scored availability of gender-disaggregated national agrifood statistics	
	disaggregated data	Scored gender-disaggregated data included in agrifood performance public reporting	
		Agrifood policy implementing agencies conducting gender audits ⁺	
		Tracking and monitoring gender goals in the national agriculture policy*	LOW
	9 Gender audit	Tracking and monitoring gender goals in the national climate policy*	LOW
		Tracking and monitoring gender goals in the national nutrition policy*	LOW
_		Tracking and monitoring national gender policy in agriculture*	LOW
Policy Evaluation	10 Women's	Formal mechanism for providing feedback on policy implementation	LOW
	feedback	Perceived opportunities for women to provide feedback*	LOW
licy Ev	11 Women's policy evaluation leadership	Share of female leadership in government involved in policy evaluation and advocacy ⁺	ADVANCING
Ро		Share of female leadership in nongovernment sector involved in policy evaluation and advocacy ⁺	ADVANCING
		Women's perceived leading role in monitoring and review of the national agriculture policy*	ON THE WAY
		Women's perceived leading role in monitoring and review of the national climate policy*	
		Women's perceived leading role in monitoring and review of the national nutrition policy*	
		Women's perceived leading role in monitoring and review of the national gender policy in agriculture*	ON THE WAY

Note: *Estimates based on the IFPRI/APRNet organization survey (2023). *Indicates perception measurement collected through the IFPRI/ APRNet expert survey (2023). Scoring is based on 4-point Likert scale with 1 being the weakest and 4 being the strongest. Color codes mean: **1=very weak**, **2=weak**, **3=moderate**, **4= strong**. We also want to convey with the scoring the general principle that women's full and equal participation in the policy process ("strong") is not an over-achievement, but rather should be seen as reaching a target. Thus, we also use the terminology of **1=low**, **2=on the way**, **3=advancing**, **4=at goal**.

Indicator	National Agriculture Policy	National Climate Policy	National Nutrition Policy	National Gender Policy in Agriculture	
Scored gender content	ON THE WAY	ADVANCING	ADVANCING	AT GOAL	
Women's inputs*	ON THE WAY	ADVANCING	ADVANCING	AT GOAL	
Women's perceived influence in the design*	ON THE WAY	ON THE WAY	ON THE WAY	AT GOAL	
Perceived budgetary support and implementation of gender targets*	LOW	LOW	ON THE WAY	ON THE WAY	
Tracking and monitoring of gender policy goals*	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	
Women's perceived leading role in monitoring and review*	ON THE WAY	ON THE WAY	ON THE WAY	ON THE WAY	
Summary	Very weak to weak in all indicators; esp. very weak on budget support, implementation, and monitoring of gender goals	Moderate rating on gender content and women's inputs into design; but very weak to weak for others, esp. very weak on budget support, implementation, and monitoring of gender goals	Moderate rating on gender content and women's inputs into design; but very weak to weak for others, esp. very weak on monitoring of gender goals	Exemplary attention to gender policy in agriculture with strong women's inputs and influence, but very weak to weak on budget support and implementation, tracking, and monitoring	

Table 4. Scores by policy area for WEAGov Nigeria pilot

Source: *Indicates perception measurement collected through the IFPRI/APRNet expert survey (2023).

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