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WEAGov in Practice: Lessons from Early Adopters in the AWARD/ GRASP Fellowship

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ABOUT WEAGov

Despite longstanding international commitments to gender equality in governance, women remain dramatically underrepresented in the spaces where agrifood policy is made. As of 2024, women hold just 27 percent of parliamentary seats worldwide and 23 percent of cabinet positions. The gender gap in political empowerment is the widest and the slowest-closing of all four dimensions tracked by the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index. At this pace, closing the gap will take 169 years.

Addressing this challenge requires more than documenting the absence of women. It requires understanding where, how, and why women's voices are excluded from the policy processes that govern food systems and tracking what is needed for change. The Women's Empowerment in Agrifood Governance (WEAGov) tool was developed by IFPRI and partners to do precisely this.

WEAGov is an assessment framework designed to measure women's voice and empowerment across the full agrifood policy cycle: policy design, implementation, and evaluation. It is organized around a 3×3 matrix that considers, at each stage of the policy cycle, whether women are considered ("are their needs recognized?"), included ("do they have meaningful opportunities to participate?"), and leading ("are they in positions of genuine influence?"). The framework is grounded in a theory of change in which enabling resources—gender norms, access to education and economic assets, and health and wellbeing—shape women's capacity to engage in governance, and in which greater policy influence, once achieved, can expand those resources over time.

WEAGov was developed by IFPRI researchers through consultation with more than 50 experts and index developers and was first piloted in Nigeria in 2023 with APRNet and in India in 2024 with LEAD. WEAGov is designed to be modular: Researchers and practitioners can use the full five-step methodology for a national-level baseline or selectively draw on individual components—the policy content analysis checklist, expert survey questions, or 3×3 framework as an analytical lens—when a complete assessment is logistically or financially infeasible.

Introduction

This note synthesizes lessons from a purposive sample of early adopters of WEAGov: four recipients of the Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) fellowship from the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) who applied WEAGov in active policy innovation project across diverse country and policy contexts. This approach of gathering structured practitioner feedback during the tool's early diffusion phase is well-suited to identifying usability barriers, adaptation needs, and measurement gaps that can inform the next iteration of the methodology. Drawing on structured interviews conducted in 2025 and 2026, this note documents what worked, what proved challenging, and what changes the IFPRI development team should prioritize in the tool's next iteration. While four cases cannot support generalizable claims, the consistency of findings across applications in Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi lends credibility to the lessons drawn here. This note is intended for researchers, program managers, and development practitioners considering the use of WEAGov.

How Fellows Used WEAGov

The four fellows span a range of WEAGov engagement—from partial, targeted application to comprehensive full-cycle implementation—across three countries and four policy domains. Table 1 summarizes the scope of each fellow's application.

All fellows combined WEAGov with other frameworks, partly because WEAGov was introduced after most fellows had already committed to other tools to analyze policy content. This sequencing constraint shaped the scope of application and is itself relevant for future capacity development efforts. In each case, however, fellows drew on WEAGov to capture a unique dimension that other tools could not, particularly the implementation and evaluation stages of the policy cycle. All fellows valued WEAGov's capacity to exam-

ine what happens after a policy is written. Fellow 2 observed, "Some of the experts said: these policies, we just do...to tick the box. Looking at the implementation bit—who is doing what, how is this being translated in real practice—I think that's what brings out the governance aspects."

The four cases fall into two broad implementation profiles, summarized in Table 1. Fellows 1 and 2, both working in Uganda, conducted the most comprehensive applications of WEAGov. Fellow 1 assessed eight policy documents spanning agricultural and financial inclusion policies using the full policy cycle methodology. Fellow 2 applied WEAGov across 10 to 11 food safety policies, with approximately 50 respondents to the expert survey and a formal validation workshop. Both had sufficient project timelines, a small amount of dedicated funding,¹ and research questions that fit well with WEAGov's national policy focus. Fellows 3 and 4, who worked in Kenya and Malawi, respectively, applied WEAGov modularly. WEAGov was introduced after the fellows had already begun to apply other frameworks to analyze policy content, leaving limited time to incorporate additional components. Budget constraints also narrowed the scope of what was feasible. In addition to these practical factors, the research questions shaped how WEAGov was applied: for example, Fellow 4's community- and district-level fieldwork on the implementation of climate-smart agriculture required some adaptation of the tool from its national-level focus. Fellows 3 and 4 both used the 3x3 conceptual framework and selected survey instruments, demonstrating that WEAGov's modular components can generate genuine analytical value, even without application of the full methodology.

¹ Approximately US\$4,000–\$5,000.

Table 1. Summary of WEAGov application by fellow

Fellow	Country	Policy Domain	Components Used	Scope	Key Output
Fellow 1 (Rosemary Emegu Isoto)	Uganda	Agricultural & financial inclusion policy	Full cycle: policy content analysis, org. survey, expert survey, governance indicators	8 policy documents; full 5-step methodology	AWARD policy brief; cross-policy comparison revealing design–implementation gap
Fellow 2 (Monica Kansiime)	Uganda	Food safety & women's empowerment	Full cycle: policy content analysis, expert survey, validation workshop	10–11 policies; ~50 expert respondents	Published paper; active policy engagement with national food safety drafting process
Fellow 3 (Beatrice Muriithi & Mugendi Perpetual Gakeni)	Kenya	Plant protection & gender-responsive policy	3×3 framework as interpretive lens; expert survey (selected questions); KII guide	13 policies; 33 KII respondents across national and county levels	AWARD policy brief; manuscript in preparation
Fellow 4 (Grace Chilongo)	Malawi	Climate-smart agriculture implementation	3×3 conceptual framework; organizational and expert survey instruments	~30 qualitative interviews; district to community level	AWARD policy brief shared with Ministry of Agriculture

Source: Authors. For more details on the fellows' policy innovation project and use of WEAGov, see <https://awardfellowships.org/our-learning/policy-innovation-projects-led-by-policy-fellows-in-the-first-cohort/>

Note: KII = key informant interview.

What Worked: Strengths of the Framework and Tools

3×3 Framework as an Analytical Lens

The conceptual framework was the component most consistently valued by all four fellows, cited both for its analytical clarity and its practical utility in structuring data collection and research design.

“The considered-included-influencing framework was the strongest part of the tool for me, because it was very easy to translate into research themes, but also survey sections. It was reflecting a progression of empowerment—starting from ‘considered’ all the way. This meant both the data collection and analysis were very structured, but also coherent.”

— Fellow 4, Malawi

The 3×3 framework features a progression from women being considered, to included, to leading, which

resonated with fellows as a conceptual advance over gender checklists. The framework makes a distinction that simpler tools do not: a policy can acknowledge that women may have different policy needs (considered), but that acknowledgment differs qualitatively from women having genuine access to the process (included), which also differs from women holding decision-making power within the process (leading). Asking about this progression at each stage of the policy cycle—design, implementation, and evaluation—gives WEAGov its diagnostic specificity.

Fellow 3 used the 3×3 framework to organize their key informant interview guide and structure analysis across 13 plant protection policies, demonstrating the framework's adaptability. Fellow 4 similarly used it to structure survey sections and research themes in a qualitative study of climate-smart agriculture implementation at district and community levels in Malawi. Both cases demonstrate the framework's adaptability when the full indicator set cannot be deployed.

Policy Content Analysis Tools

For Fellows 1 and 2, who conducted the most comprehensive policy content analysis, WEAGov's ability to compare multiple policy documents was valuable. Fellow 1 in Uganda found the tool "enabled comparison across policy documents—for example, showing that the National Financial Inclusion Strategy was exemplary on gender content, but the National Agricultural Policy was very weak." Cross-policy comparisons reveal whether gender commitments are consistent or systematically absent across the policy landscape governing a sector.

The scoring rubric's 1–4 scale proved useful for communicating findings to nonspecialist audiences, providing a concrete vocabulary for discussing the gap between aspirational policy language and substantive gender integration. Fellow 1 found that the National Financial Inclusion Strategy scored highly, while the National Agricultural Policy scored very poorly, demonstrating the kind of diagnostic contrast that can motivate policy reform conversations.

Expert Survey and Value of Triangulation

Among the components, the expert survey most consistently generated findings that could not be produced through document review alone. It was also the component about which early adopters were initially most skeptical and ultimately most convinced.

That skepticism is understandable. Desk review has an intuitive appeal: a gender target is either in the document, or it is not. Scoring is tied to verifiable public sources, and the results seem objective in a way that expert perceptions do not. However, this apparent objectivity has a significant limitation. Policy documents describe how governance is supposed to work, not how it works in practice. A policy may articulate strong gender targets, yet everyone within the system expects those targets to go unfunded and unmonitored. An organization can establish gender quotas for committee representation while women members are understood to have no real influence over decisions. These gaps between de jure commit-

ment and de facto reality are precisely what the expert survey is designed to surface.

Expert surveys have known limitations: individuals have imperfect knowledge, and perceptions can be shaped by institutional affiliation, political context, or incomplete information. WEAGov recommends sampling multiple respondents per organization—directors, policy advisors, and gender focal points—as well as actors from the public sector, civil society, the research community, and the private sector. No single respondent's view drives the findings; the picture emerges from aggregated, independent judgments across a deliberately diverse sample.

Across multiple country contexts, policy documents claimed consultation processes had occurred without specifying who was involved, when, or how. Fellow 2's observation captures this precisely:

"When you ask who was consulted—nobody will tell you [...] but it's written that they consulted people."

— Fellow 2, Uganda

Fellow 3 found that policy language such as "vulnerable farmers" was implicitly understood by implementing agencies to refer to women and youth. This meaning was not stated in the document but was confirmed through interviews with policy experts. Fellow 3 also described how speaking with county-level extension agents and cooperative leaders revealed implementation realities that were absent from national policy documents.

Key Findings Generated by WEAGov

Across the four Policy Innovation Projects (PIPs), WEAGov produced a consistent pattern of findings: strong performance on policy design—particularly gender mentions and stated goals—paired with weak or missing evidence of gender-responsive implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This design-implementation gap is WEAGov's most important substantive

contribution in this cohort.

Fellow 1 in Uganda found that existing agricultural and financial policies lack measurable gender targets, budget allocations, and monitoring mechanisms, despite a National Financial Inclusion Strategy that has exemplary gender content. Their key finding noted, “Without implementation and tracking, policy rhetoric does not translate into women’s access to credit.”

Fellow 2 found that across 10 to 11 Ugandan food safety policies, women’s input was systematically absent from policy formulation. Where evaluation mechanisms existed at all, they failed to track how policies affected women. The most recent policy—the Parish Development Model—showed stronger gender grounding in design but was lacking in implementation and evaluation.

In Kenya, Fellow 3 found that while intent often existed for gender-responsive implementation, “the implementer [was] not gender responsive,” demonstrating a disconnect between what budget allocations signal and what happens in practice at the county level.

Fellow 4’s Malawi study found that women’s roles in climate-smart agriculture were acknowledged in policy language, but they lacked actionable measures. There were no clear gender targets, weak use of sex-disaggregated data, very limited representation in leadership positions, and feedback mechanisms that existed on paper but operated informally or not at all.

These findings resonated beyond the research team. Among this cohort, Fellow 2’s experience with her validation workshop exemplifies WEAGov’s real-world policy relevance. Presenting findings to government officials, she expected pushback but instead found broad acceptance, including from a commissioner who became a co-author of her subsequent paper. The findings resonated because they identified something policymakers already knew but had not seen rigorously documented: policies were being written to satisfy formal requirements without genuine intent to implement. Fellow 2 is now in active conversation with the Directorate of Crop Inspection and Certifica-

tion as Uganda develops a new national food safety policy. Fellow 4 shared her findings with the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, where WEAGov’s diagnostic framing helped structure conversations on gaps in the implementation of climate-smart agriculture.

Implementation Challenges

Document Access and Interpretation

Accessing and interpreting policy documents presented practical difficulties in several contexts. In Uganda, Fellow 2 found that officials were unwilling to share the current draft of a food safety policy, requiring her to analyze older versions. This straightforward barrier to access had no easy methodological workaround.

The more common challenge, however, was how to handle ambiguities within policy documents. Some policies had gender-neutral language that could refer to women. In Kenya, for example, Fellow 3 encountered terms such as “vulnerable farmers,” which implementing agencies understood to mean women and youth. To confirm this intent, the scorer was left dependent on expert interviews. This is a problem of data interpretation rather than access: the document exists and is readable, but scoring it requires judgment about implicit meaning that the current rubric does not fully guide.

Providing explicit guidance in the WEAGov toolkit on how to handle implicit gender language, such as policies that address women without naming them, and on scoring when key documents are unavailable, outdated, or exist only in draft form would help future users navigate these situations more consistently.

Scoring Ambiguity and Subjectivity

Scoring subjectivity was the most widely raised methodological concern, flagged by three of the four fellows. The 1–4 rubric is clear at the extremes: a score of 1 means gender is essentially absent from the document,

while a score of 4 means gender goals are embedded in the results framework, with specific measurable targets and accountability mechanisms. The middle of the scale is often where real-world policies cluster, however, and where the current implementation handbook needs to provide more guidance. The boundary between 2 and 3 is particularly difficult because it asks scorers to distinguish between a policy that discusses gender without committing to specific goals (score 2) and one that articulates gender-related goals but lacks measurable targets or tracking details (score 3). This distinction is harder to apply in practice than it may seem in theory. Policies routinely use language that straddles these categories: a goal is stated, but whether it constitutes a genuine commitment or aspirational framing depends on context, institutional knowledge, and judgment about what “specific” means in a specific policy environment. A scorer unfamiliar with the country context may reach a different conclusion than one who knows, for instance, that a particular ministry has a history of stating gender goals it has never operationalized. The rubric currently does not offer guidance on how to handle this kind of contextual knowledge or when it is appropriate to draw on it. As Fellow 3 put it, “When you’re doing the scoring, you’re still debating within yourself—do I give it a score of 2?”

A second, distinct type of ambiguity arises from the definitions of some key indicators. Even before a scorer reaches the question of whether a policy deserves a 2 or a 3, they must first determine what counts as evidence for the indicator being scored. Fellow 3 identified four indicator categories for which there was the most ambiguity about what types of evidence should be collected for scoring decisions.

- **Gender considerations in policy design:** The rubric asks whether women’s needs and priorities are recognized in the policy, but the general acknowledgment of women is hard to distinguish from substantive gender analysis. A policy noting that women are disproportionately affected by food insecurity differs from one that analyzes why, but both can be interpreted as “considering” women, depending on how generously the scorer interprets the threshold.
- **Implementation mechanisms:** A stated policy commitment can look very similar to operational planning on paper. A policy that says gender targets will be implemented through existing ministry structures has technically described an implementation mechanism, but whether that constitutes a real commitment or a placeholder depends on knowledge of how those structures function in practice.
- **Participation indicators:** Broad language on stakeholder engagement occurs frequently in policy documents and tells the scorer very little about the degree of women’s actual involvement. The word “consulted” includes everything from a single meeting with a women’s ministry representative to a structured multi-round process with community-level women’s groups.
- **Monitoring and accountability:** The presence of gender indicators in a policy framework does not confirm whether data on those indicators are actually collected, reported, or used. A policy can list gender-disaggregated targets in its results matrix, but the implementing ministry may not have a system to track them.

Each of these ambiguities arises at the same boundary between formal policy commitment and substantive practice, which is precisely what WEAGov is designed to examine. Some degree of interpretive judgment is therefore not a flaw in the rubric, but a feature of the measurement challenge itself. Going forward, WEAGov could be improved by providing real world examples that distinguish a 2 score from a 3 score for each indicator type. These examples would draw from a growing body of WEAGov pilots and a recommended protocol for reconciling ambiguities.

Complexity and the Synthesis Challenge

A third set of challenges relates to what researchers need to implement WEAGov successfully. Three related constraints emerged across the cohort of

early adopters.

The first is resource intensity. Fellow 2 spent approximately two months on her assessment and used a US\$4,000 catalytic fund from AWARD to support the expert survey. Fellow 4 was explicit that budget constraints and the late introduction of WEAGov relative to her project timeline were the primary reasons she used the tool selectively. For most fellowship-funded projects, full implementation is not possible without dedicated funding.

The second challenge related to synthesizing results. With 38 measurements across nine indicators and three policy stages, the tool's comprehensiveness creates an analytical challenge at the output stage.

"I have all this information, finally—but if it could be made clear how to aggregate it, how to present it, so that I can say: I used this tool and it gave me this result."

— Fellow 2, Uganda

WEAGov provides clear guidance on what to collect but less guidance on how to synthesize across the policy content analysis, expert survey, and organizational survey components into a coherent final picture. Fellow 3 addressed this pragmatically by reducing the 38 indicators to 13 for their study and using an Excel template to organize cross-policy comparison. Both solutions worked, but users had to develop their own analytical infrastructure.

The third challenge was conceptual accessibility in multilingual fieldwork contexts. Fellow 4 found two concepts particularly challenging: (1) the notion of "influencing" as being distinct from merely participating, and (2) gender-responsive budgeting as a technical concept unfamiliar to implementers below the national policy level. She resolved both through examples and concrete indicators but noted that the abstract nature of these concepts required significant interviewer skill and preparation. Plain-language definitions and concept guides for key terms would reduce this burden and improve consistency across research teams.

Gaps and Missing Dimensions

The "Influencing" Dimension

The influencing dimension focuses on whether women hold genuine decision-making power rather than a token presence. Three of four fellows identified this dimension as a measurement challenge. The current indicators focus on women in formal leadership positions: parliamentary committees, agency directorates, and review boards. These are verifiable and important measures, but formal position does not always capture the informal influence through which women often shape policy in practice. Informal influence also leaves few documentary traces, making it difficult to identify.

Fellow 2 observed that the influence indicators required going "around in circles" to assess, often inconclusively. The difficulty is structural: formal position and actual influence diverge in ways that are hard to document. A woman may hold a directorship but exercise little discretion over decisions that matter, while another may hold a midlevel technical role but shape policy outcomes through the quality of the analysis she produces and the trust she commands among decision-makers. Neither of these realities is visible in an organizational chart, a committee roster, or a policy document. The expert survey's "influencing" questions are specifically designed to address these distinctions, but in practice, survey respondents were uncertain what fellows meant when they were asked about women "influencing" policy decisions and how they could be sure if women did so, beyond reporting whether they held leadership positions.

Fellow 4 encountered a related but distinct problem at the respondent level. When asked about women's influence in the policy process, respondents at the organizational level struggled to understand how influence differed from participation. There is genuine ambiguity in how governance works in practice: in many institutional contexts, attendance, contribution, and influence are not distinct experiences. A woman who attends a policy consultation, speaks during the session, and watches her input go unrecorded may not describe that experience as "lacking influ-

ence”—she participated, she spoke, and the process felt legitimate. The WEAGov framework distinguishes between influence and participation, but the expert survey instrument currently lacks the scaffolding to help respondents make that distinction reliably. This is a problem that begins before scoring and affects data quality upstream: if respondents cannot operationalize the concept, the scores they produce will reflect participation rather than influence, regardless of how the rubric is defined.

Fellows uniformly recognized the dimension as analytically important; the gap is in operationalization, not conception. Behavioral and process-based indicators—whether women’s written inputs are documented in consultation records, policy language is changed between drafts in response to women’s feedback, and women chair the subcommittees where substantive decisions are made, rather than ratified—would provide more tractable evidence of influence than formal leadership positions alone. However, these type of interim interactions during the policy design process are difficult to access in practice.

Informal Institutions and Informal Sector

In Uganda, Fellow 1 identified a significant structural gap: WEAGov’s focus on formal national policy processes misses the informal institutions through which many rural women access economic governance. In Uganda, village savings and loan associations, savings and credit cooperative organizations, and rotating credit groups account for more than 60 percent of credit access, yet they are entirely outside WEAGov’s analytical scope. This gap is most acute in contexts where formal financial institutions have low reach, and it reflects a broader question about whether the tool’s national-policy orientation overlooks important governance spaces for women.

Intersectionality

Two fellows raised concerns about the tool’s limited treatment of intersectionality. WEAGov assesses

women’s empowerment in aggregate, but it does not systematically examine how age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other social markers shape differential experiences of inclusion or exclusion from the policy process. Fellow 1 asked directly, “Does age matter? [What about] youths who may also be women?” Fellow 4 noted tensions with the tool’s scope: when presenting WEAGov to the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, the program’s GESI mandate required attention to a broader set of vulnerable groups than WEAGov’s women-centered framework captures.

Constraints on Participation

WEAGov measures whether women participate in the policy process, but it does not systematically examine why they do or do not. Fellow 1 noted that the tool “doesn’t look at the gender-based constraints that may actually prevent or encourage women from participating in the policy process but rather focuses on whether women participate or not.” This is a meaningful conceptual gap: diagnosing the absence of women’s participation without understanding the structural barriers responsible for it limits the actionability of WEAGov’s recommendations.

This gap is partly addressed by the open-ended qualitative probes in the expert survey, but it is not systematically built into the scoring framework. Incorporating a structured module on barriers—whether as a scored indicator or a mandatory qualitative component—would significantly strengthen the tool’s explanatory and prescriptive value.

Recommendations for Tool Improvement

Based on the evidence across four PIPs and implementation contexts, we distill the following four priority recommendations for the next iteration of WEAGov. These are ordered from highest to lowest priority, based on the frequency and intensity with which they were raised by fellows.

Recommendation 1: Reduce and restructure the indicator set around a tiered architecture

All four fellows cited the 38-measurement architecture as a barrier to use. Fellow 2 said, “The indicators are so many – when I come to analyze, I was like, this is too much work.” Fellow 3 compressed 38 indicators to 13 for their study. This compression was pragmatic and produced usable results, but it was designed by the individual rather than being guided by the tool.

Establishing a formal tiered structure that distinguishes core indicators (required for all implementations) from supplementary indicators (applied selectively based on research question, scope, and resources) could be a productive way to address this challenge. This would allow a rapid desk-review-only implementation at the least and a full five-step pilot at the most, with a clear decision framework for choosing between levels. The modular design is already WEAGov’s stated principle, and this structure would be consistent with the modular approach.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen scoring guidance with examples and inter-rater protocols

Three fellows reported scoring uncertainty, particularly at the 2/3 boundary and for the influencing dimension. Fellow 3’s follow-up identified four specific indicator categories where ambiguity was most acute. The current rubric is clear at the extremes but provides insufficient guidance for the middle-range judgments required by most real-world policies.

Improvements should include concrete examples showing what distinguishes a 2 from a 3 for each indicator type, drawn from the Nigeria and India pilots; a recommended two-researcher scoring protocol with a structured reconciliation step for disagreements; and, where possible for objective indicators (particularly gender-responsive budgeting), quantitative thresholds rather than qualitative descriptors alone.

Recommendation 3: Develop post-collection synthesis guidance and templates for presenting results

A gap in the current methodological toolkit is guidance on what to do after data are collected, including how to aggregate across components, triangulate findings between policy content analysis and expert survey results when they conflict, and present findings in a format accessible to policymakers. Fellow 2’s experience of completing a rigorous data collection process and then facing uncertainty about how to synthesize across analytical approaches points to a specific, addressable support gap.

A practical guide to results synthesis and presentation, with a template drawing on the Nigeria and India pilot findings as examples, would significantly reduce this barrier. The template should include guidance on how to structure the 3×3 findings matrix, present cross-policy comparison, and translate scores into actionable recommendations. Fellow 2’s validation workshop demonstrates that WEAGov findings can be highly compelling to government audiences when presented well.

Recommendation 4: Revisit the operationalization of the “influencing” dimension

The influencing dimension is conceptually central to WEAGov’s differentiated value—it distinguishes the tool from assessments that measure women’s presence without asking whether that presence translates into power. But three fellows found it the hardest dimension to measure consistently. The current indicators focus on verifiable formal leadership positions, which are important but incomplete.

Revisions should consider adding behavioral and process-based indicators that capture informal influence, namely, whether women’s written inputs are documented in consultation records, policy language is changed in response to women’s feedback between

drafts, and women hold leadership roles at multiple levels within implementing agencies, not just at the top. At the same time, simplified language to explain the concept of influence to respondents without a policy background—particularly at subnational and community levels—would address Fellow 4’s finding that the concept required extensive interpretation in multilingual fieldwork contexts.

Conclusion

Fellows’ Overall Assessment

All four fellows indicated they would recommend WEAGov to future researchers and practitioners, and three confirmed plans to use it again in future projects. Their endorsements were notably specific about what they valued: the analytical insight it can generate by looking beyond policy documents to examine how policies are implemented in practice.

“If it is there and people don’t know it, then it’s not worth being there. I found this really interesting—that I could try to verify some of the written things from people who have actually been in those fora.”

– Fellow 2, Uganda

Fellow 1 specifically cited the full policy cycle approach (design–implementation–evaluation) as rare among gender tools and the multi-policy comparison architecture as a particularly powerful diagnostic instrument. Fellow 4 recommended WEAGov’s organizational and expert survey instruments as effective for community- and district-level data collection and began introducing the framework to her own students as an analytical tool for literature review. Fellow 3 confirmed intent to apply WEAGov to upcoming projects with a focus on value chains.

Both Fellows 2 and 4 have become informal advocates for WEAGov: Fellow 2 recommended it to new AWARD fellows, and Fellow 3 is exploring its use in a national training program in Malawi. This peer diffusion pathway is worth formalizing: through structured

peer-champion mechanisms, experienced WEAGov users could support new adopters through their first implementation, thus leveraging existing goodwill and reducing the learning burden.

Next Steps for WEAGov Development

This report’s findings feed directly into IFPRI’s next iteration of WEAGov, which aims to produce a simplified, more accessible tool without sacrificing the analytical depth that makes it distinctive. The priority development tasks emerging from this practitioner feedback are:

- Develop a formal tiered measurement architecture, with explicit guidance on component selection based on constraints to research questions and resources
- Revise the scoring rubric with examples and inter-rater protocols drawn from a multicountry pilot experience
- Produce a post-collection synthesis guide and template for presenting results, based on pilot findings from Nigeria, India, Uganda, and Kenya
- Revise the operationalization of the influencing dimension to include behavioral and process-based indicators alongside formal leadership measures
- Develop a plain-language concept guide for field implementation, with simplified definitions and examples for key concepts, including influence, gender-responsive budgeting, and meaningful participation

The experiences of the four AWARD/GRASP fellows demonstrate that the analytical case for WEAGov is strong, and demand is real. The design–implementation gap they documented—in Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi, and across agricultural policy, food safety, financial inclusion, and plant protection—is precisely what WEAGov was built to reveal. Policies on paper are insufficient; what matters is whether commitments

are funded, implemented, monitored, and evaluated in ways that genuinely reach and empower women. Now, the work ahead is to make that measurement

accessible to the researchers and practitioners who can act on it.

About WEAGov

The Women's Empowerment in Agrifood Governance (WEAGov) tool was developed by IFPRI researchers as part of the CGIAR Initiative on Gender Equality. For more information, access to instruments, and background papers, visit: <https://www.ifpri.org/project/womens-empowerment-agrifood-governance-weagov/>

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