



INITIATIVE ON  
Gender Equality

# Women's Empowerment in Agricultural Governance (WEAGov) Technical Workshop: India Pilot Study

## Stakeholder Workshop Report

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# Background

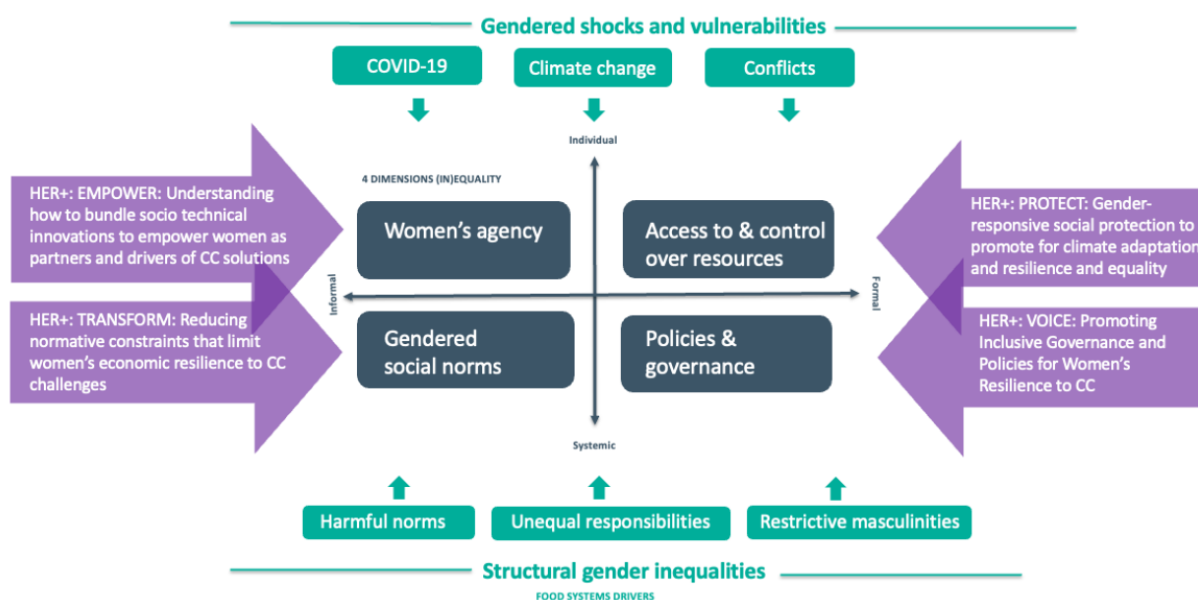
## Gender Equality research initiative

Gender Equality (HER+) is a One CGIAR Research Initiative seeking to address the following four dimensions of gender inequality in agrifood systems:

- Women's lack of agency or limited ability to define and act on goals, make decisions that matter to them, and participate in the economy and in public life;
- Women's lack of access to and control over resources;
- Social norms that discriminate based on gender; and
- Policies and governance that fail to include and benefit women.

HER+ uses impactful gender research to address the four dimensions of gender inequality by applying gender-transformative approaches to address harmful norms. It does this by bundling innovations for women's empowerment, leveraging social protection to increase women's access to and control over resources, and promoting inclusive governance and policies for increased resilience. HER+ will generate learning and evidence on levers and entry points to disrupt the foundations of inequality in agrifood systems (AFS). It seeks to achieve this by working through four work packages as illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: HER+ Initiative Work Packages**



Source: HER+ proposal document.

The stakeholder workshop was conducted as a part of Work Package 4 VOICE: Promoting inclusive governance and policies for women's resilience to climate change.

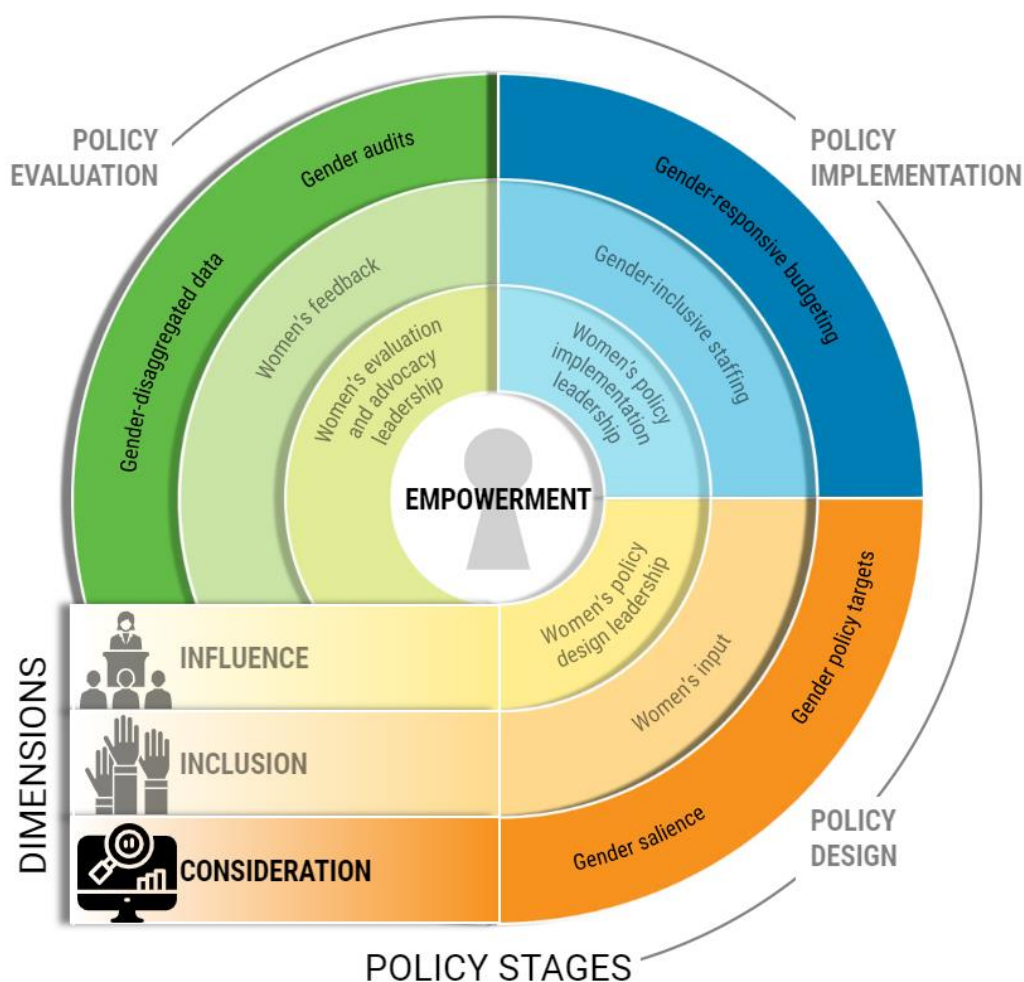
Specifically, VOICE seeks to identify, test, and scale:

- Social innovations and organizational strategies to stimulate effective voice and agency of women in climate-related agrifood systems governance;
- And public and private sector policies that effectively support women’s resilience to climate change

### WEAGov Assessment Framework

WEAGov was developed by researchers at IFPRI under the HER+ research initiative to assess the state of women’s voice and agency within national policymaking in the agrifood sector. Like IFPRI’s Kaleidoscope Model (Resnick et al., 2015), it adopts a policy process approach, looking at each 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 and tracked against these objectives. Within each of these policy stages, WEAGov provides tools and indicators for whether women are being considered, whether their voices are included, and whether they are influencing actions and decisions (see Figure 2).

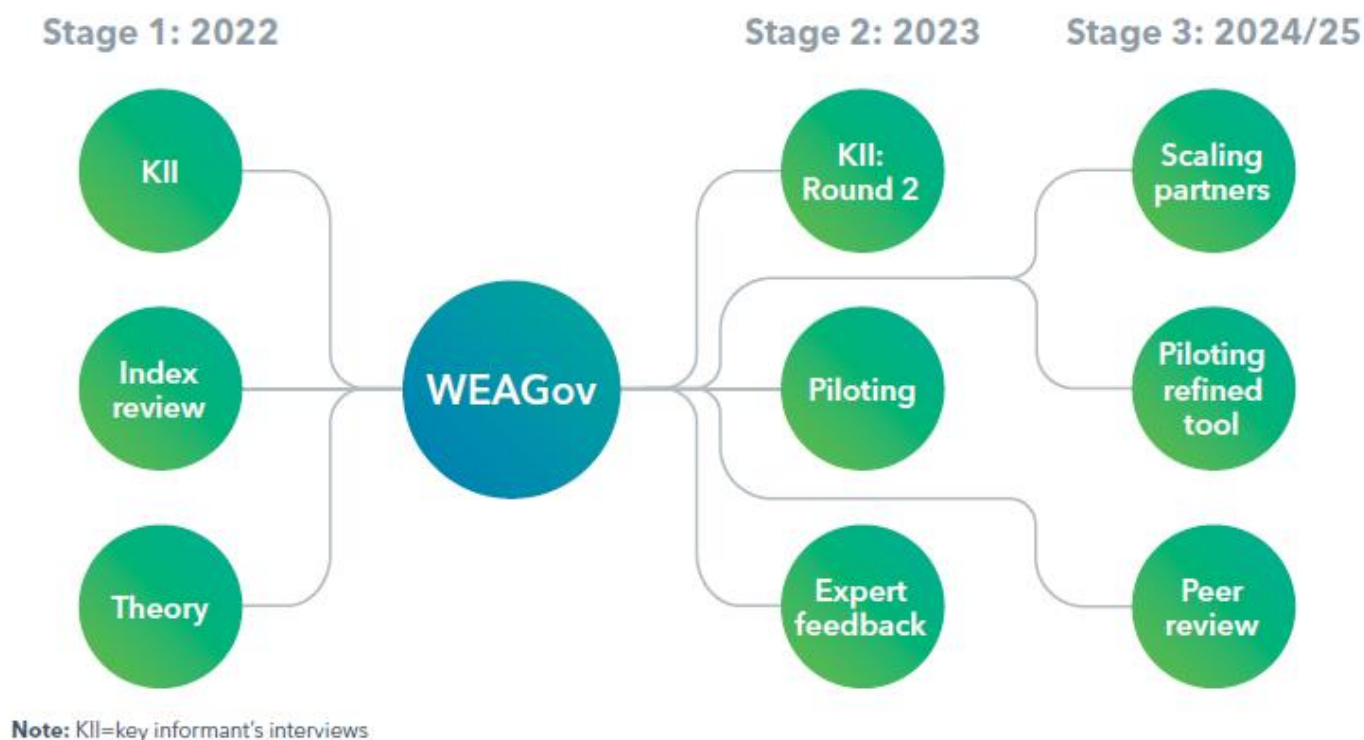
**Figure 2: WEAGov assessment framework**



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

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. WEAGov was developed by combining insights from key informant interviews with a scientific literature review on women’s empowerment, agrifood systems, and governance (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 different countries with diverse agrifood institutions (Nigeria, Malawi, and India). In 2023, a pilot study was conducted in Nigeria, including a technical workshop to discuss and validate results and to collect further feedback on the measurement tools (Kyle et al., 2023). Figure 3 provides a full timeline of the process of developing WEAGov.

**Figure 3: WEAGov’s development process**



Source: Reprinted with permission from Ragasa and Kyle (2023).

The WEAGov methodology consists of six steps:

1. A **landscape analysis** of the key national policies, actors, and organizations in the country’s agrifood sector
2. A **desk review** of the key national agrifood policies—with a focus on agricultural development, nutrition, and climate policy relevant to agriculture—and collection of quantitative indicators
3. Surveys and key informant meetings with **key organizations** in the agrifood sector - spanning the public sector, civil society, research institutes, and private sector
4. Surveys with **agrifood policy experts**
5. A **technical validation workshop** with local experts to discuss and validate results from steps 1-4
6. A **policy dialogue** with local agrifood policy actors to discuss results and prioritize policy interventions to increase women’s empowerment in the agrifood policy process

This workshop report reflects stakeholder discussions from a second pilot study and **technical validation workshop** conducted in India and led by Leverage Evidence for Access and Development (LEAD) at Krea University, an action-oriented research organization based in Chennai, India.

# Workshop overview

## Meeting objectives

The WEAGov framework was first piloted in Nigeria in 2023. In 2024, a second pilot study was conducted in India, building from these findings. The technical validation workshop is a core part of the WEAGov methodology; it enables detailed deliberations on the results from the landscape analysis, desk review, organizational survey, and expert survey discussed (steps 1-4 above). This helps to ensure the validity and interpretation of results as well as to resolve discrepancies and disagreements among experts on key indicators. On March 20, 2024, LEAD hosted this stakeholders' workshop in New Delhi, India. The workshop had the following objectives (see Annex 1 for a detailed agenda):

- To enhance the knowledge and understanding of technical experts in agrifood governance in India of the WEAGov assessment framework and its usefulness as a measurement tool
- To gather feedback and foster consensus among the attendees regarding the measurement, relevance, and implications of each indicator for the Indian context

Participants in the workshop were selected from experts with knowledge of agrifood governance within India. Stakeholders included researchers, private sector actors, and government representatives (see Annex 2 for a list of participants).

## Workshop outcomes

At the end of the workshop, the following outcomes were achieved:

1. A workshop report;
2. Targeted feedback on measurement approaches for each indicator in the WEAGov assessment framework;
3. Resolution for key measures which had ambiguous results from the desk review and expert surveys and overall validation of the pilot results;
4. Targeted recommendations on future improvements for the measurement tools.

## Workshop structure

The event was kickstarted with a set of introductions, followed by an opening speech by Shri Charanjit Singh, Additional Secretary, Rural Livelihoods, Ministry of Rural Development. In his speech, he focused on the importance of a data- and evidence-driven approach in policymaking along with feedback loop mechanisms allowing for immediate response from stakeholders both in the initial phase of policy design and during policy implementation. He noted that this type of structural change is particularly important given advancing climate change problems, which makes responsiveness in real time even more important. Additionally, he stressed that agrifood policies need to consider the socio-economic contexts and constraints that women face daily to ensure maximum impact.

This speech was followed by an introduction to the WEAGov tool, a discussion of the pilot study in India, a presentation of results from the WEAGov Nigerian pilot study, and a question and answer session. After this, the

workshop was divided into sessions focusing on different sets of WEAGov indicators, allowing for in-depth discussion by all attendees. The following guiding questions were used for facilitating the validation exercise:

- What do you think about the **accuracy of the way in which we are measuring** the indicator?
  - Please focus on the way the survey question is phrased, the data sources, and the overall way the concept is being measured
  - Please make concrete suggestions for improvement when possible
- Based on your expertise and experience, what do you think about the **validity of the results for India** for this indicator?
  - Are the selection criteria of states for the expert survey and for the focus agrifood policies for the desk review / policy document analysis relevant and valid?
  - Do the results / scores for India for each indicator seem accurate and valid based on your experience and expertise?
  - Does the result for each indicator seem higher or lower than you expected?
  - What are some emerging implications of the results / scores based for policy and programming?
- Is there **any indicator that you think is missing** that would be important for understanding women's voice and empowerment within the policy process?

## Key insights

The workshop participants eagerly contributed to the discussion, sharing valuable perspectives, raising concerns, and posing relevant questions. Several key insights emerged from the discussion, which we present below:

- Overall, the participants expressed strong interest and consensus on the value of a nationwide exercise to understand the representation of women in agrifood policymaking in India. Participants indicated that this effort will be instrumental in identifying and addressing gaps to achieve greater gender equality. By the end of the workshop, participants felt confidence with the WEAGov conceptual framework and how to implement data collection.
- A few comments addressed the **desk review and policy analysis**:
  - One significant source of discussion was on the policy landscape analysis and the potential differences between older and newer policies. Many of the key agrifood policies in India were initially developed a decade or more ago, and the participants noted that it is difficult to compare these policies to more recent policies, as views and attention to gender equality have changed over time. They also noted that older policies might score better on policy implementation because they have been in place longer and have a more well-developed capacity and implementation plan compared to newer policies. Participants recommended trying to narrow the timeline for the policies considered to ensure that they are more apples-to-apples comparisons.
  - Participants also discussed the scores for the policies, for example, they noted they would have expected higher scores for PM Kisan Saman Nidhi Yojna in particular, which was initially scored a 1. A public sector participant in the workshop noted that more than 30 million women farmers are benefitting from this scheme. We explained that WEAGov scoring is about the voice that women have within policymaking rather than the number of female beneficiaries reached by a policy. This is an important distinction between frameworks focused on women reached by particular policies and frameworks focused on voice and agency which can be further elaborated in future presentations of WEAGov.

- Another suggestion was to refine the questions that refer to the “past 12 months” by instead naming specific events. For example, the question on scoring the Prime Minister’s speech could be rephrased by referring to either the independence day speech or the G-20 speech or the budget speech for the particular year so that respondents can all refer to the same speech and comments.
- Participants also discussed that several policies span agriculture, nutrition, and climate, so it is difficult to assign one policy to one of these sub-themes for scoring purposes.
- Participants noted that policy implementation varies so much across states in India, that **one score at the national level masks a lot of underlying variation**, with some states scoring high and others scoring low for the same measure.
  - Participants noted that the WEAGov India pilot did not include North Eastern states, which tend to be quite a bit different in gender norms and culture than other areas. They noted the example of Meghalaya where matrilineal tribal communities are prevalent in particular. Including these areas would have increased the subnational variation in the results.
  - This point came up in particular in relation to indicators on women’s policy design leadership and gender-inclusive staffing, as these were indicators with significant state-level variation. Participants were very interested in the degree of variation in gender inclusivity in staffing across states.
- The participants also engaged in discussing the **scoring of several indicators from the expert survey**. These discussions helped to resolve ambiguities that arose for particular indicators for which there was low expert agreement on scoring from the survey. Table 1 provides an overview of the indicators which had unresolved scoring going into the technical workshop and how the scores were resolved by experts.

**Table 1: Scoring ambiguities resolved at technical workshop**

Indicator	Scoring presented at technical workshop	Final scoring consensus	Reasoning
<b>Gender attention in prioritized agrifood policy issue</b>	On the way / Advancing	On the way	Expert consensus was that “on the way” was the appropriate score for this metric.
<b>Women’s inputs in national climate policy</b> - <b>National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture</b>	Low / On the way	On the way	Expert consensus was that “on the way” was the appropriate score for this metric.
<b>Women’s leading and influencing deliberations on the national agriculture policy</b> - <b>National Policy for Farmers</b>	Low / Advancing	Advancing	Expert consensus was that “advancing” was the appropriate score for this metric.
<b>Gender responsive budgeting</b> - <b>Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Parivoiana (MKSP)</b>	On the way	Advancing	Experts referenced reports which we reviewed to support scoring MKSP as advancing
- <b>National Nutrition Policy (NNP)</b>	Advancing	On the way	Experts highlighted that NNP has been weak in implementation of gender-responsive budgeting



- <b>Mission POSHAN</b>	At goal	Advancing	Experts referenced reports which we reviewed to support scoring Mission POSHAN as advancing
<b>Gender inclusive staffing</b>	Low / advancing	Advancing	Experts pointed to the merit-based civil service exams as evidence of efforts to recruit fairly by gender
- <b>Efforts to hire women in agrifood ministries at the federal level</b>			
- <b>Efforts to hire women in agrifood agencies at the state level</b>	Low / on the way / advancing	Advancing	Experts pointed to the merit-based civil service exams as evidence of efforts to recruit fairly by gender. They also noted that differences in responses on the expert survey could come from variation by state
<b>Gender disaggregated data</b>	On the way / advancing	On the way	Data is available, but experts noted that publicly available data is not disaggregated in a way that allows for analysis that could improve policies

Source: Authors' elaborations.

- Participants also made recommendations on the **WEAGov methodology**.
  - Participants noted that they found the terminology for a score of 2, "on the way", to be vague and recommended adjusting this terminology, though they did not provide an alternative.
  - Participants noted that the survey instruments need to be shortened to ensure high quality engagement from experts.
  - The expert attendees suggested that a comparison of scores could be provided for themes that have been assessed using multiple measurement sources (organizational survey, expert survey, desk review). They noted that this would provide a way of comparing indicators from different sources to highlight discrepancies.
  - Participants also noted that some policies have publicly-available audit data which could be leveraged to further refine scoring
  - Participants argued that it would be interesting and valuable to disaggregate responses to the expert survey by respondent gender, noting that gender bias could affect responses.
  - Finally, participants noted that the expert survey questions were not always clear for questions regarding "women's leadership" and that respondents may have interpreted the questions differently. For example, women may serve as "project managers" but be underrepresented in senior leadership positions. The questions should clearly indicate to respondents whether roles like "project manager" are intended to be included as leadership roles.

# Conclusions and next steps

The WEAGov technical validation workshop provided substantial insights into the scoring of various indicators. Several next steps emerged from the workshop. First, these recommendations have substantially shaped and informed the forthcoming India WEAGov country report. Second, several of the recommendations about the broader WEAGov methodology are being incorporated into a forthcoming implementation manual which is intended to provide information for partners and stakeholders on how to implement WEAGov. Third, suggestions of the public sector participants in particular have been very helpful at further understanding the Indian agrifood policymaking contexts and helping to interpret results and to develop policy recommendations.

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# Annex 1: Workshop agenda

Time	Theme-wise Consultation	Speakers/Facilitators
9:30 AM- 10:00 AM	Tea/Coffee	
10:00 AM – 10:15 AM	Welcome Note and Introductions	Preethi Rao, Director, Partnership and Outreach, LEAD at Krea University
10:15 AM- 10:30 AM	Keynote Address	Shri Chiranjit Singh, Additional Secretary (Rural Livelihood), Ministry of Rural Development
10:30 AM- 11:00 AM	Session 1: Introducing WEAGov Insights from the pilot study in Nigeria	Catherine Ragasa, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI
11:00 AM- 11:20 AM	Interaction/Query	LEAD at Krea University/ IFPRI
11:20 AM- 11:40 AM	Session 2: Emerging insights from Desk Research and Policy Selection – India	Sabina Yasmin, Senior Research Fellow, LEAD at Krea University/ IFPRI
11:40 AM- 1:30 PM	Discussion of Indicators and Measurement tools	
1:30 PM- 2:00 PM	Working Lunch	
2:00 PM- 3:00PM	Roundtable discussion on Indicators and Measurement tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on the overall indicators</li> <li>• Measurement approach and Selection criteria of policies</li> <li>• Inputs on the WEAGov tool design</li> </ul> Validation of the scoring results from the pilots	Sabina Yasmin, Senior Research Fellow, LEAD at Krea University/ IFPRI
30 minutes	Closing remarks and next steps	LEAD at Krea University

## Annex 2: Workshop participants

Category	Participant	Sex	Affiliation
Civil Society Organisation	Tamali Kundu	Female	Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)
Research Institute		Female	Council of Energy Environment and Water
Research Institute		Female	Council of Energy Environment and Water
Research Institute	Aysuhi Malhotra	Female	International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)
Government	Usha Rani	Female	Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development
Government	Punam Tiwari	Female	Ministry Of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
Research Institute	Shobha Suri	Female	Observer Research Foundation
Government	Amit Roshni	Male	National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)
Private Sector	Harshit Mullick	Male	PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited (PWC)
Research Institute	Sona Mitra	Female	Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE)
Research Institute	Rashmi Mohanty	Female	Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE)
Research Institute	Sabina Yasmin	Female	Leveraging Evidence for Access and Development (LEAD)
Research Institute	Sampurna Basu	Female	Leveraging Evidence for Access and Development (LEAD)
Research Institute	Harshita Pande	Female	Leveraging Evidence for Access and Development (LEAD)
Research Institute	Aanshi Sharma	Female	Leveraging Evidence for Access and Development (LEAD)
Research Institute	Fathima Ramshi	Female	Leveraging Evidence for

			Access and Development (LEAD)
Research Institute	Catherine Ragasa	Female	International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
Research Institute	Dina Najjar	Female	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

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