



TOOL 3

# INTEGRATING WEEGE INTO IMPLEMENTING PARTNER COLLABORATION





USAID Agreement Officer's Representatives or Contracting Officer's Representatives (AOR/CORs) engage implementing partners (IPs) both formally and informally throughout activity implementation. (Refer to Box 1 for good practices to integrate gender in activity implementation.) These interactions are opportunities to reinforce and facilitate continuous integration of women's economic empowerment and gender equality (WEEGE) and to support interventions and adaptations that ensure successful achievement of WEEGE outcomes.

## Approving a WEEGE Integration Plan

The AOR/COR should ensure that IPs complete a gender analysis integrating WEEGE, as well as supplemental research, and that they incorporate the findings and recommendations into the activity. The mission Gender Advisor/point of contact (or

other gender and WEEGE expert) should create a brief document to summarize key findings and recommendations arising from the analysis ([select this link for Tool 4: Gender and WEEGE Integration Plan Template](#)).

### This report should include the following information:

- **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:**  
A summary of the country context and explanation of the USAID activity.
- **APPROACH:**  
A summary of the approach to gender analysis and research, including a description of methods used and consultations conducted.
- **OBJECTIVES:**  
The overall vision for WEEGE integration in the activity, including specific objectives—highlighting relevant [WEEGE Principles](#) or [Unit 3, Toolbox: Part III: WEEGE Illustrative Questions](#).
- **ANALYSIS WITH A WEEGE LENS:**  
The key findings of the WEEGE analysis, with recommendations for how to address these findings within the activity.
- **CONCLUSIONS:**  
A summary of how, and by whom, the recommendations can be addressed, with a focus on how findings should be integrated into the theory of change, work plan and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plan.



## Box I: Gender Integration in Activity Implementation

AOR/CORs and government agreement technical representatives are responsible for ensuring that gender is being considered in activity implementation, in accordance with the terms of the award. Good practices include:

- ◆ asking IPs to develop gender integration plans describing how gender will be integrated into all phases of the activity
- ◆ ensuring that all people-level and gender-sensitive data gathered is sex-disaggregated, as required
- ◆ ensuring that IPs report on gender-related results in quarterly or other reports
- ◆ ensuring that any observed unintended gender-related consequences of the activity are being documented, and, if a viable solution exists, being addressed

-ADS 205.3.7



## Integrating WEEGE into Activity Planning

The start-up phase is a critical moment to ensure that IPs have clear plans for integrating WEEGE in the activity. There are several areas of the activity where WEEGE integration should be explicit; often, these items also require USAID approval or concurrence. Whether or not formal approval is required by the award, each of the following elements offers an opportunity for AOR/CORs to encourage and support WEEGE in activities.

### Pre-Award Approvals

#### Key personnel and staffing

Key personnel and staffing discussions offer the opportunity to encourage or require hiring staff with knowledge and understanding of WEEGE, as well as to facilitate gender balance within teams. In addition to considering WEEGE in review of designated key personnel, AOR/CORs should consider how they can help IPs identify female candidates for all positions.

#### Subawards and partnerships

Many awards require USAID approval of subaward agreements. The process of reviewing and approving subawards is an opportunity to discuss the importance of partnering with women-led organizations, business organizations with women leaders and women-focused community organizations. Valuing the experiences and voices of women and supporting the local solutions they recommend are critical enabling factors for achieving activity goals and objectives as well as making progress on WEEGE. Promoting, or even mandating, partnerships with women-led and women-focused organizations with a specified minimum percentage of budget is one of the most effective ways AOR/CORs can promote sustainability as well as local capacity in WEEGE programming. In addition to highlighting WEEGE issues in subaward review and approval processes, AOR/CORs can help connect IPs to relevant networks and stakeholders to improve WEEGE collaboration.

### Activity Start-Up and Planning

#### Theory of change

If the activity agreement requires the IP to develop and update a theory of change, AOR/CORs should ensure that this document reflects the recommendations of the gender and WEEGE integration plan.



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## Work plan

Activity agreements typically require IPs to submit a detailed work plan within the first one to three months of implementation, though a longer submission timeframe is recommended to effectively integrate WEEGE. The work plan may be for the first year of implementation only, or it may be for the life of the activity.

In either case, it is important to ensure that activities addressing WEEGE are shown clearly throughout the life of the activity, with appropriate dedicated resources. The work plan should note any areas that require USAID input and should outline the tasks and roles of each team member.

### The following is an illustrative list of sub-activities that support WEEGE integration.

- **COLLABORATE**  
with cooperatives to promote women's membership and leadership in collective groups.
- **PROVIDE**  
assistance to support women's and girl's access to improved technology and services.
- **SUPPORT**  
the activity's social and behavior change communication messaging to broaden society's understanding of the differential impacts of and access to water and sanitation on women/men and girls/boys, as well as promote the sharing of related responsibilities.
- **DESIGN AND SUPPORT**  
business internships and mentorship programs for women.
- **WORK WITH**  
banks, saving and credit cooperative organizations and microfinance institutions to address women's financial service needs and use of guaranteed loans.
- **PILOT**  
digital financial services and savings programs for young women, including targeted savings goals.
- **SUPPORT**  
business training (through partner organizations and business development service providers) for female farmers and women-owned businesses, including information related to record-keeping, analyzing production costs, business planning, accessing market information, packaging and financing options.
- **PROVIDE**  
project resources to support women business leaders' participation in trade fairs and obtaining new contracts.
- **SUPPORT**  
activity staff to identify women-owned businesses as potential lead firms to participate in ongoing technical assistance to agribusinesses and agro-processors.
- **ENSURE**  
that price and market information are provided through mechanisms to which women have access.
- **ASSIST**  
the activity staff to integrate gender equality and women's economic empowerment considerations into their research, policy documents and studies.
- **HOLD**  
orientation training and ongoing learning sessions for all staff and partners, to build their capacity on these topics and uniformly represent the project in this area.



## Staff and partner training

In promoting WEEGE throughout the activity, each team member must understand its value, work within a supportive culture and have the capacity to implement related changes. AOR/CORs can encourage IPs to include WEEGE training for all staff and partners as part of onboarding and activity start-up.

### The following is a list of illustrative sub-activities that support capacity building, training and accountability of activity staff and partners on WEEGE integration.

#### ■ REVIEW

WEEGE Principle 9: Walk the Talk and identify opportunities to model WEEGE principles within mission staffing and training.

#### ■ HOLD

a WEEGE orientation training for all staff and partners, to build their capacity and uniformly represent the activity in this area. Invite USAID staff to present at these training events when possible.

#### ■ IMPLEMENT

continuous, mandatory WEEGE training for the activity team, replicated for all new staff. Track the evolution of staff competencies and skills over time using pre- and post-tests; organize coaching and mentoring opportunities for staff as needed.

#### ■ INTEGRATE

a WEEGE lens into technical training programs, capacity building and messaging.

#### ■ HOLD

experiential sharing and learning sessions every six months around the challenges and opportunities related to gender faced by staff, both in the field and in their own lives.

## MEL plan

Automated Directives System (ADS) 205 notes that activity MEL plans should identify the data needed to measure gains in gender equality and female empowerment, and that ongoing performance monitoring should track progress toward meeting the outcomes of the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy. MEL specialists and AOR/CORs should advise on the inclusion of gender-sensitive and WEEGE-specific indicators in activity MEL plans, as appropriate. (For more detailed guidance on developing and monitoring WEEGE-specific indicators, select this link for Unit 6: Integrating Women's Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality into Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.)

## Small grants

AOR/CORs can encourage IPs to include WEEGE considerations into the methodology, selection criteria, selection process and awarding considerations of small grants. Limiting administrative burdens is an important way to engage non-traditional partners that can add value on women's economic empowerment and gender equality. Remember to ask about where the funding was allocated, disaggregated by type of organization and their focus on WEEGE.



## Advisory committees

Many activities require the IP to consult USAID in the selection of advisory committee members. AOR/CORs can suggest and identify committee members, including women leaders and experts, to ensure gender-balanced representation and a strong WEEGE perspective.

## Reporting requirements

In addition to ensuring that WEEGE indicators ([select this link for Unit 6, Tool 1: WEEGE Illustrative Indicators](#)) are included in the MEL plan and reporting, the narrative portion of reports should describe progress toward and challenges with implementing WEEGE-focused interventions. Key WEEGE-related learnings that can be shared with the wider community should also be captured and communicated.

# Ongoing Implementation and Oversight

## Reporting and consultations

As noted above, AOR/CORs can ask IPs to include WEEGE summaries in regular reports. In addition, WEEGE can be a regular discussion point for IP check-in meetings and portfolio reviews. The work plan and MEL plan should provide information on expected outputs that support WEEGE and indicators that will be used to demonstrate WEEGE impact. ([Select this link for Unit 6: Integrating Women's Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality into Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.](#)) Reviewing progress against these plans and indicators at regular intervals is another key element of supporting WEEGE activities. Regular conversations with IPs about these efforts can help anticipate issues, identify gaps or challenges early and allow for adjustments in the activity (as discussed below). Regular check-ins provide an opportunity to follow up on local partnerships and encourage IPs to maintain focus on building the capacity of local WEEGE-focused organizations. Finally, AOR/CORs can look for opportunities to convene collaboration meetings among IPs to discuss shared learning and challenges around WEEGE. If broader collaboration meetings exist, WEEGE issues can be made part of the standing agenda.





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## Helping IPs course correct

While formal oversight mechanisms are useful to support WEEGE, it is equally important to build collaborative relationships with IPs and help them identify and address challenges and gaps in WEEGE integration throughout the life of the award. A problem-solving approach encourages IPs to be transparent about challenges, which allows AOR/CORs to be proactive in helping address them.

## Here are a few examples of adjustments and responses that can help address identified gaps and/or weaknesses in the implementation of WEEGE activities:

### ■ ADJUST

implementation plans and budgets to allow additional training of IP staff, subrecipient staff, stakeholders or beneficiaries/participants on WEEGE, or in defined areas where targeted populations need enhanced skills or knowledge to access economic opportunities.

### ■ SUPPORT

additional research to update WEEGE-related analyses of political economy, value chains, labor market or other areas to inform possible changes to theory of change, activity design or implementation plans.

### ■ REVIEW

beneficiary targeting strategies and consider adjustments to how women and men are engaged, or how participants for specific activities are selected, as appropriate.

### ■ ADJUST

where, when and how activities are conducted to ensure that: women are invited or included—either separately or together with men, as appropriate; information is shared in ways accessible to women; meetings and trainings are scheduled at times and in locations so that women can safely and conveniently attend; and activities engage women's active and quality participation rather than simply requiring attendance or passive listening.

### ■ IDENTIFY

and reach out to household, community and regional level key influencers (such as husbands, mothers-in-law, religious leaders and political leaders) to gain support for women's participation in WEEGE initiatives and to help with mitigating risks and ensuring sustainability.



## Activity Transition and Closeout

### Sustainability or closeout plan

AOR/CORs should begin discussing these plans as early as possible in the life of the activity, to encourage IPs to consider sustainability of interventions and impacts from the start. IPs should be encouraged to identify local women's organizations and women leaders who can carry on activities that support WEEGE after the activity closes out.

### Evaluations

WEEGE-related research questions should be identified at the activity level, and the evaluation process should be gender-sensitive. This means understanding how gender shapes results, explicitly assessing gender issues in evaluations. It means examining not only gender outcomes but also the extent to which those outcomes are attributable to the activity being evaluated (refer to Box 2). Evaluations should start with a WEEGE-integrated theory of change and the related outcomes and indicators. They should verify how WEEGE-related sub-activities supported and bolstered the activity's goals.

## Box 2: Gender Integration in Evaluations

Creating a gender-sensitive evaluation means that all stages of the evaluation reflect:

- ◆ an awareness that program participation, program results and potential sustainability are shaped by gender
- ◆ a recognition that explicit attention to gender issues must be integrated into the evaluation if gender equality objectives are to be addressed
- ◆ a commitment to examining the extent to which gender equality was achieved as a result of the activity that was implemented

Without engendered evaluation, USAID will be unable to examine the extent to which its programming achieves positive results and improves quality of life for women as well as men; reduces gender gaps and empowers women and girls; and contributes to the high-level outcomes articulated in the [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#).

-ADS 205.3.8.2

