Gender Research Training Needs

Photos: GREAT

Report on the assessment for the Excellence in Agronomy (EiA) Use Case teams

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1.0 Background

The Gender-responsive Researchers Equipped for Agricultural Transformation ([GREAT](#)) program, is a gender and agriculture capacity-building partnership jointly implemented by Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda and Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. During the first five years (2016 - 2020) and the bridge phase implemented in partnership with the CGIAR GENDER platform (2021 - 2022), GREAT tested and refined a capacity-building approach targeting researchers working in plant breeding and seed systems programs in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

The Excellence in Agronomy Initiative (EiA) of the OneCGIAR aims at developing and delivering locally relevant agronomic solutions at scale based on demand. The overall goals relate to the sustainable intensification and climate change adaptation (and mitigation) of smallholder farming systems. Such demand is then formulated and operationalized around Use Cases. The Initiative taps into existing innovations and expertise within the CGIAR and other innovation systems. It matches them with proven demand from demand partners in the private, public, and NGO sectors to develop Use Cases. EiA follows the innovation logic i.e., moving from an idea to developing a concept, testing or experimenting with the concept, and running pilots, which if successful lead to scaling activities.

GREAT-EiA Collaboration

GREAT and EiA entered into a collaboration to develop sequenced gender research and youth inclusion training courses for Use Case teams and their partners. This is to enable them integrate and carry out gender and youth-responsive research at different stages of their workflows when designing, validating and piloting agronomic solutions. The courses will be designed using a stakeholder consultation approach by first assessing the Use Case teams and partners (along with other relevant EiA staff) on their current gender and youth research capacities and needs, and then designing the training courses that are tailored to fit their capacities, needs, and scope of work. In addition, the gender- and youth-focused research carried out during the early stages of the first business cycle will feed into the course design.

The training courses will be implemented with Use Case teams and partners during critical steps of their workflows. For example, during the development stages of a particular MVP (steps 1 to 4) to ensure the agronomic solution being developed is responsive to the practical needs of women, men, and youth, or during validation (step 5) to engage diverse user groups for feedback on the technical and architectural but also social and economic aspects of the tool using appropriate approaches, or during piloting (step 6) to help activate feedback loops with farmers, farmer groups and other users of the tool during and after piloting.

In addition, Use Case teams and partners will attend training courses co-designed by EiA and GREAT (with EiA leading) on how to design GTAs within their Use Case context for piloting alongside agronomic solutions. EiA will document the learning by these teams and partners to understand the training courses' contribution to EiA's ability to develop, validate, pilot, and scale gender and youth-responsive solutions and transformative approaches in diverse contexts. In view of the above, GREAT and EiA conducted a training needs assessment to inform the course design. This report presents the methodology and findings from the assessment.

2.0 Methodology of the Training Needs Assessment

The training needs assessment was conducted through an online quantitative survey. The structure of the survey revolved around demographic attributes, experiences with the integration of gender at the workplace, organizational culture and enabling environment for gender research, self-rating of individual capacities, and training needs. The survey instrument used *(Appendix 1)* was an adaptation from the GENDER Platform's "*Capacities and needs assessment of gender research in CGIAR*" (Zaremba *et* al, 2022[1]). It was formatted in Google forms and a link was generated and administered to the Use Case teams and partners through email. Data were collected between 5th October - 3rd November 2022. While the survey collected respondents' emails for purposes of follow-up, it also promised confidentiality of responses which have been aggregated for the purpose of informing training course design.

3.0 Results of the Training Needs Assessment

3.1 Profiles of the respondents.

The respondents were 25 in number (7 women, 18 men). All respondents reported having received post-graduate training (68 percent doctoral degree, 32 percent masters degree). Regarding age, the majority (52 percent) reported being between 35 and 44 years. One respondent was above 55 years of age and there wasn't any respondent below 24 years.
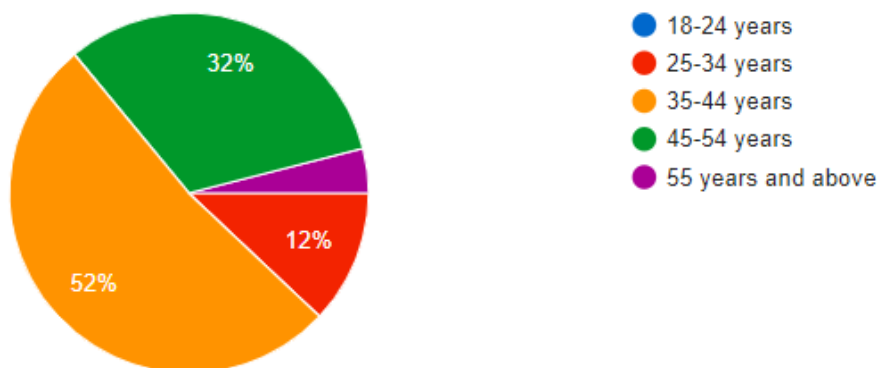

Figure 1: Age range of the respondents (n=25)

Institutional Affiliation

The respondents were from 15 institutions, and most of these were International Agricultural Research Institutions (CGIAR) (7). Others were International non-governmental Organizations (4), academia (3), and one government program. The highest number of respondents (5) came from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, followed by The Alliance of Bioversity

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[1] Haley Zaremba, Marlène Elias, Anne Rietveld, Pricilla Marimo, and Wietske Kropff. 2022. Capacities and Needs Assessment of Gender Research in CGIAR. Nairobi, Kenya: CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform. https://hdl.handle.net/10568/121980

International and CIAT(4), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) (2), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and Digital Green (2). Other institutions had one respondent each.

Table 1: Distribution of Survey respondents by institution

Institution	No. of respondents	% of overall respondents
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)	5	20
Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT	4	16
International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)	2	8
International Potato Center (CIP)	2	8
AfricaRice	1	4
The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)	1	4
The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)	1	4
International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)	1	4
Digital Green	2	8
Sub-Department of Crop Production and Plant Protection - Can Tho	1	4
Sasakawa Africa Association	1	4
Bayero University Kano, Nigeria	1	4
Tien Giang University	1	4
Nong Lam University Ho Chi Minh City	1	4
Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society, BRLPS- JEEVIKA	1	4
Total	**25**	**100**

Countries of work

The survey respondents work in eighteen countries located in Africa (11) and Asia (7) continents. Some respondents indicated that they work in more than one country. Countries with the highest number of respondents were Vietnam (4) followed by Ghana (3), Nigeria (3), Cote d'Ivoire (2), India (2), Cambodia (2), Mozambique (2), and Zambia (2). The other countries had only one respondent.
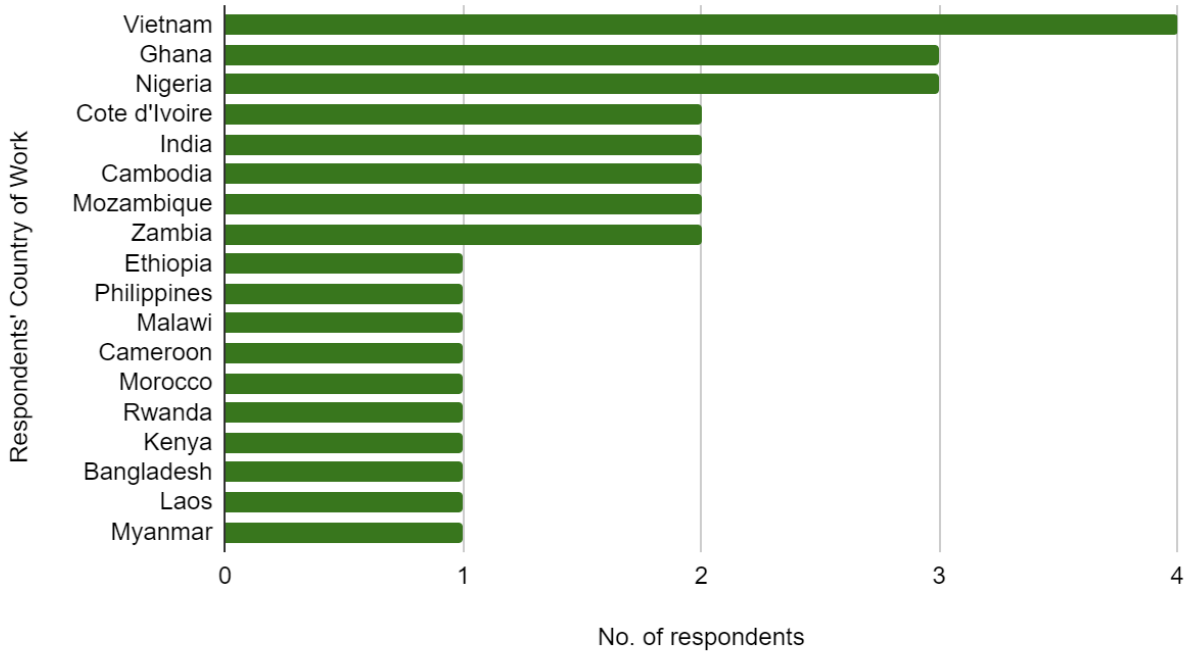
Figure 2: Respondents' countries of work (n=25).

Roles at the institution

At the respondents' workplaces, eight out of the 25 (36 percent) were senior scientists, five (22 percent) mid-level scientists, four leaders/Directors, three early career scientists, and two research assistants.
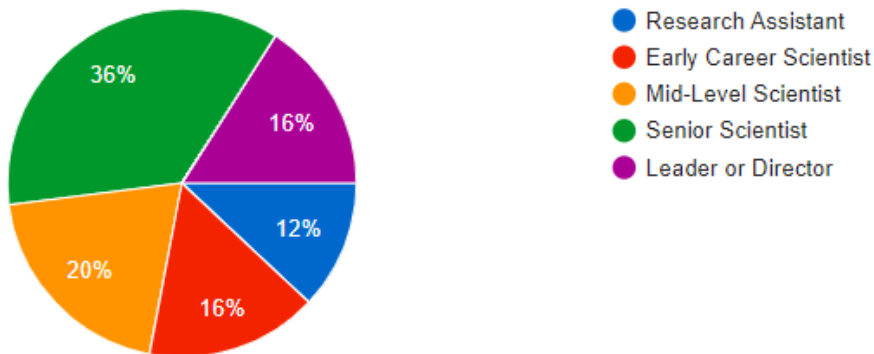

Figure 3: Respondents' roles at their institution (n=25).

The respondents reported holding various roles within the EiA structure including Use Case leaders/facilitators, center focal points, activities coordinators and implementers, trainers, and data managers among others.

Areas of specialization

The majority of respondents identified themselves as soil scientists and agronomists (13). These were followed by Geographic Information System (GIS) experts (7) and agricultural mechanization specialists (6). The least number of respondents identified themselves as extension specialists, plant breeders, and gender specialists (1). (*Please note that this question allowed multiple responses*)
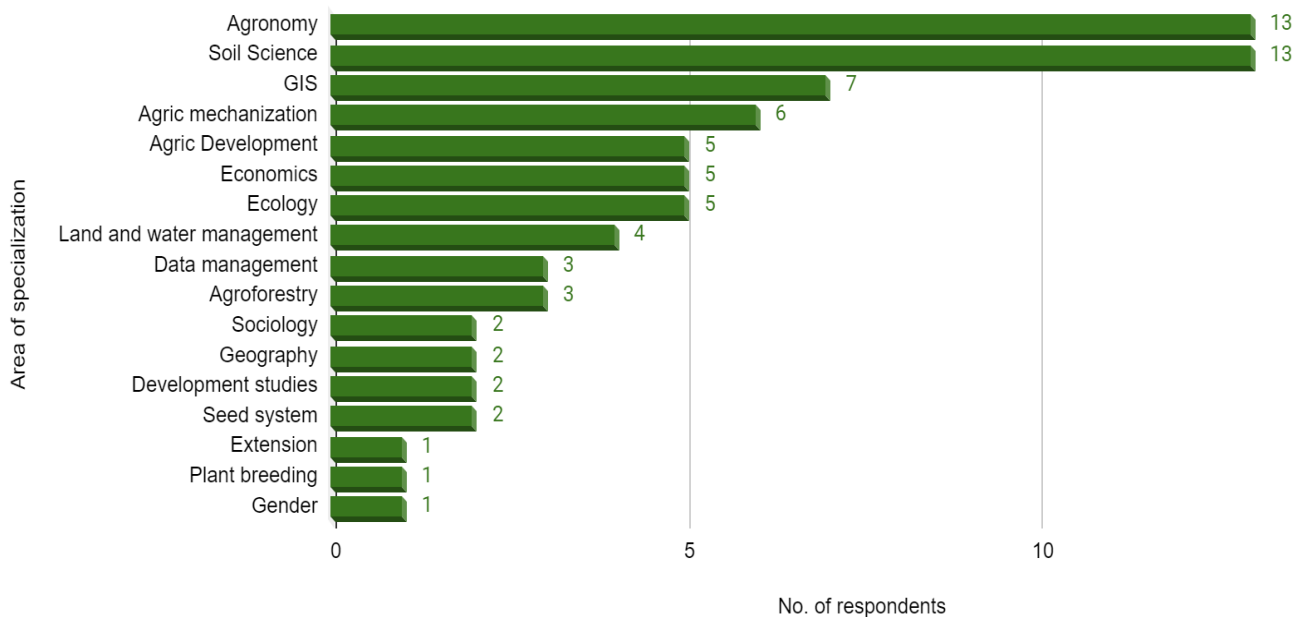

Figure 4: Respondents' areas of specialization (n=25).

3.2 Organizational culture

Slightly more than half of the respondents (13) strongly agreed that their organizations were supportive of work that explicitly seeks to enhance gender equality, gender equality and social inclusion were firmly embedded as outcomes in the organization's mission and strategy and social inclusion which are firmly embedded in their mission and strategy, the organizations value providing services/products/innovations that meet the needs of women, men, and youth, and that immediate colleagues/ peers also believe that integrating gender in research and development is important. While about 10 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with some of the statements, no respondent disagreed with the statement that immediate colleagues/ peers believe integrating gender in research and development is important.

Integrating gender into their work/activities

- All participants (100 percent) reported having attempted integrating gender in their work. A possible explanation could be that those who opted to take the survey had experience integrating gender in the past.
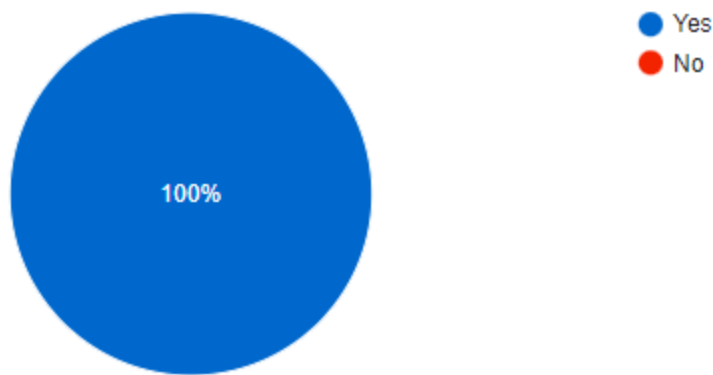
Figure 5: Respondents integrating gender in their work (n=25)

- Key issues they had worked with include:
    - Gender knowledge, preferences, and priorities (e.g., gender-specific end-user preferences) (64 percent)
    - Women's empowerment (60 percent)
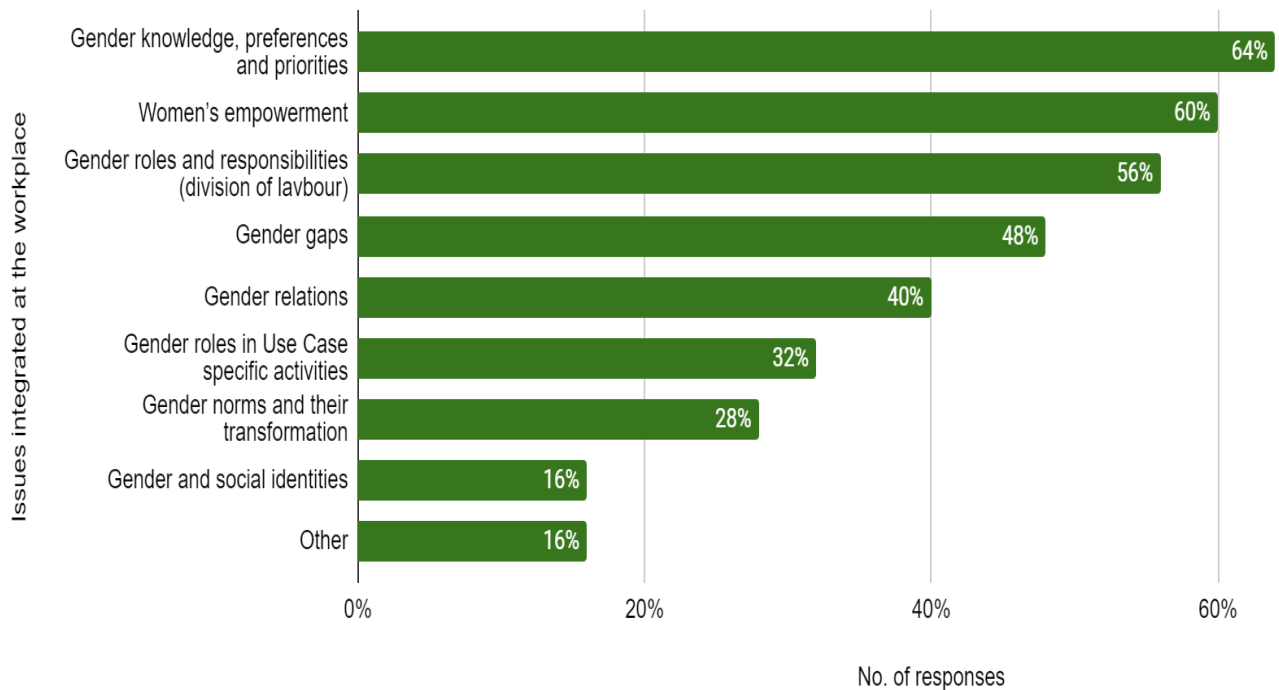   - Gender roles and responsibilities (gender division of labor) (56 percent)

Figure 6: Issues around which respondents work in integrating gender at their workplace(n=25)

- The majority of respondents (52 percent) reported having not produced any publications (e.g., policy briefs, manuals, articles, reports, etc.) that incorporated gender in the previous five years preceding the survey. A total of 28 percent had published 1-2 articles and an equal proportion had produced more than three publications integrating gender.

Challenges linked to integrating gender into their work/activities and coping strategies

● All respondents reported at least one challenge in integrating gender at the workplace, with a majority citing inadequate gender integration competencies (48 percent). Other challenges mentioned were time constraints (32 percent), budget constraints (32 percent), and limited support from senior-level management (12 percent). Other challenges indicated by the respondents were limited participation of women farmers, and limited capacity of partners the latter with the quote below:

> *"We engage with government partners, particularly DAs, and there is a gender capability gap among DAs, which has made our integration effort difficult"*

It is worth noting that none of the respondents cited non-conducive attitudes of team members as a hindrance to gender integration at work.

For technical support regarding gender integration, respondents noted seeking the help of the EIA support team on gender and youth (54 percent), adding an internal gender specialist to the project, and allocating resources appropriately (44 percent). Other strategies cited included seeking support from organization gender specialists and partner organizations. Only one respondent cited self-sufficiency and comfort in integrating gender for the response *'I do not need anyone; I feel comfortable doing this myself.'* In addition, one respondent (a gender specialist) turns to a global gender working group for technical support when needed.

3.3 Consideration of social differentiation in their work

The majority of respondents (64 percent) reported considering social differentiation other than gender in their work. Other social differentiation parameters reported were: socio-economic status (72 percent), age/generation (62 percent), ethnicity (30 percent), and disability (20 percent).
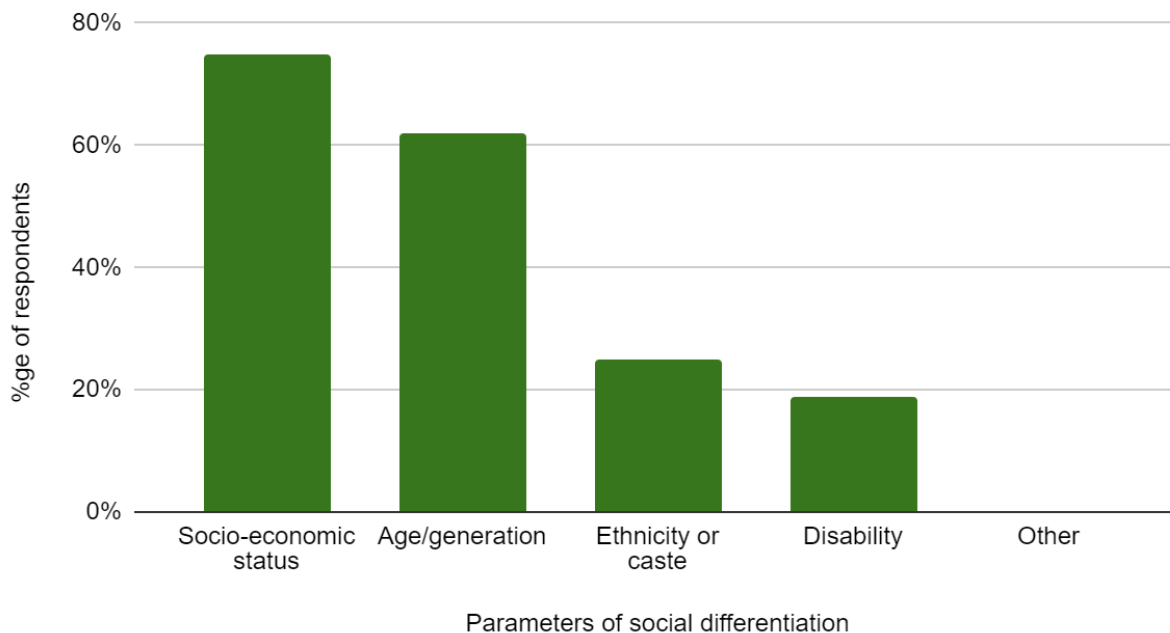

Figure 7: Distribution of social differentiation parameters considered by respondents in their work (n=16)

3.4 Knowledge and skills, gender training needs

Gender training

The majority (73 percent) reported having never participated in gender training *(Figure 8)* although all had attempted to integrate gender in their work (*Figure 5*). In determining the impact of the training, it would be important to assess whether and how the quality of gender research and products has improved.

Out of the seven individuals that reported having attended gender training, four attended two or fewer training courses and three attended at least three in the preceding five years. Prior training mentioned lasted a range of 2 days to 1 week, and the content covered included:

- introduction to Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion in the CGIAR's Workplaces;
- unconscious Bias in CGIAR's Workplaces,
- integration of Gender in Agricultural Research,
- gender mainstreaming strategies,
- gender-sensitive facilitation, women's rights, and,
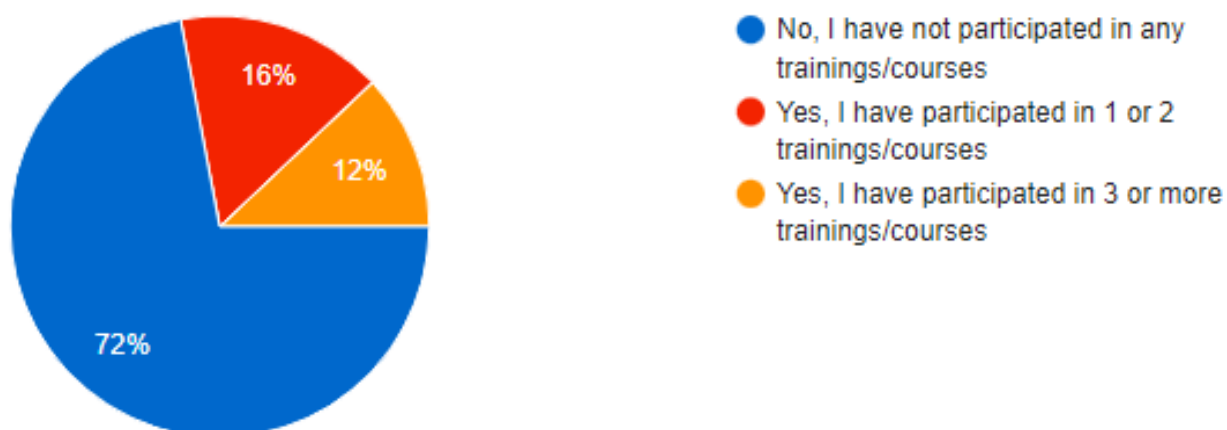- a virtual Pro WEAI fieldwork training.

Figure 8: Respondent's participation in gender training (n=25)

Knowledge and skills

Participants were presented with various topics of gender training. The majority underscored the importance of gender integration in agricultural research as well as the design and implementation of Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) in MVP design, piloting, and scaling but cited lack of skills in this area. This justifies the need for training and piloting these approaches. All participants reported that articulating the importance of addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in agronomy innovations design, piloting, and scaling was relevant to their work. On the other hand, topics that some participants felt were not relevant to their work were; using qualitative social research methods (5), using quantitative social research methods (4), and integrating mixed methods (4).

Interest in future gender training

Nearly all the respondents (96 percent) expressed interest in participating in future training opportunities related to gender and/or social inclusion. Training topics of interest to the majority included:

i. effectively identifying gender considerations that are relevant to respondents' EiA Use Cases (86 percent),
ii. design and implementation of Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) in MVP design, piloting, and scaling (76 percent), and,
iii. operationalizing gender-responsive agricultural research principles in the EiA MVP workflow (66 percent).

On the other hand, topics of least interest to respondents were:

i. social research methods i.e., using quantitative and qualitative research methods (33 percent) and,
ii. integrating mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) for gender research (43 percent).

Details of topics and preference rate are in the table below:

Table 2: Respondents' preference of topics for a future training course (n=24)

Topics	% response
1. Effectively identifying gender considerations that are relevant to my EiA Use Case role	83%
2. Design and implementation of Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) in MVP design, dissemination, and scaling	71%
3. How to use and incorporate results of gender and social analysis in the agronomy innovation design, dissemination, and scaling	63%
4. Gender analysis for agronomy innovation design, dissemination, and scaling	58%
5. Approaches and tools for field-level gender-responsive agricultural services delivery that target women and youth (e.g., extension, input delivery, digital services)	58%
6. Operationalizing gender-responsive agricultural research principles in the EiA MVP cycle	58%
7. Developing a theory of change and assessing changes (M&E) in gender equality outcomes	54%
8. Fieldwork skills to collect reliable and valid qualitative and quantitative gender data (e.g Issues related to culture, diversity, sampling, data collection supervision, etc..)	50%
9. Working in interdisciplinary teams of biophysical and social scientists	50%
10. Defining basic gender concepts (e.g gender, gender relations, gender equality, gender stereotypes, gender norms, intersectionality)	48%
11. Articulating the importance of addressing gender inequality and women's empowerment in agronomy innovations design, dissemination, and scaling	48%
12. Integrating mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) for gender research	43%

13. Using quantitative-research methods for gender research	33%
14. Using qualitative research methods for gender research	33%

4.0 Summary of results and implications for course design

Note: This assumes that the respondents are representative of the course participants

Key findings	Implication
Majority of respondents were biophysical scientists in the areas of agronomy, soil science	Content ● Content for most sessions to show clear linkages and application of gender to agronomy products and complementary biophysical disciplines, especially soil science, land and water management, ecology, agricultural mechanization, data science, and GIS, through examples, illustrations, and exercises. ● Include a session on interdisciplinarity ● Gender and social normative constraints to gender inequality along agricultural activities and value chains could be considered Trainer team ● Trainer team composition: include individuals with expertise in gender-responsive agronomy/soil science
Majority of respondents (73 percent) had never attended gender training	Content ● Design the course starting from first principles, concepts Training methods ● Build on content that some participants already know, weave it in the course or make mention of it
All respondents have attempted to integrate gender in their work	Training methods ● Use training methodologies that draw on participants' experiences
The following social science topics were listed by some respondents as not relevant and preferred. ● Using qualitative and quantitative social research methods, ● Integrating mixed social science methods	Content ● Course not to include in-depth coverage of the social science research methods ● Engage the EiA program design team (Steve, Marlene, Francois) to get their perspectives on the need for social science methods ● If social science topics are considered necessary, they could be delivered in a subsequent phase or in a brief session/module

Nearly all the participants showed interest in future training on gender/social inclusion	Course participant selection ● Select course participants from Use Cases of the respondents to the survey. This would include the interested respondents and their team members
Content preferences. Topics where most respondents required training listed in the table above.	● The preferred content will inform major aspects of the outline with careful alignment to the EiA program objectives ● Emphasis on Use Case teams and the workflow for the training course, with practical examples.
Slightly more than half of the respondents strongly agreed that their organizations were supportive of work that explicitly seeks to enhance gender equality and social inclusion. However, 2 participants strongly disagreed.	● A subsequent phase of the training could include a focus on gender-responsive institutional transformation
Most respondents turn to the EiA gender support team for technical support	● Course design will assume that the EiA gender support team will support the post-training field application phase. Program Management to ensure that the support team is adequate and available.
Most respondents face the following challenges in integrating gender in their work ● inadequate gender integration competencies (55 percent). ● time constraints (36 percent) ● budget constraints (36 percent)	● Program management could consider workload management and budget provisions to allow integration of gender in the mainstream work packages.

5.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uvIt8T-PIrRcCRI89QlQPeN4pQ1sYxL_/edit

Appendix 2: Draft course schedule

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_R4Pcflknh4fFq14WrIotX_nE7AFkw5q/edit