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MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE ROUND I WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT ACTIVITY PORTFOLIO

October 2021

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ABSTRACT

A National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM-16) established the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative, which directly tied women's economic empowerment with U.S. national security and stated, "Societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful."

This W-GDP initiative was the first-ever, whole-of-government approach to advancing women's economic empowerment, with ten United States Government (USG) Departments and Agencies (interagency)¹ working toward the goal of reaching 50 million women by 2025. The W-GDP focuses on three pillars: 1) Women Thriving in the Workforce, 2) Women Succeeding as Entrepreneurs, and 3) Women Enabled in the Economy.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a women's economic empowerment (WEE) multi-year portfolio of 45 activities supported by the W-GDP Fund under the former W-GDP Initiative. The WEE portfolio of activities is coordinated by the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI), Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev). The WEE mid-term portfolio performance evaluation report assesses 45 of the initial 48² activities, designated as WEE Round I activities. The evaluation examines whether these 45 activities were technically sound and the extent to which the activities contributed to women's economic empowerment outcomes and aligned with achieving the goals of the three pillars. The evaluation assesses the ability of the former W-GDP Initiative and its funding to deliver on the goals outlined in the W-GDP pillars and corresponding constraints.

The evaluation is divided into two phases and will generate two separate reports: Phase I, a mid-term evaluation and Phase 2, a final evaluation to be completed in 2023. The mid-term evaluation assesses the WEE Round I activity designs, formative implementation experiences, and early results through March 30, 2021. The mid-term evaluation assessed the extent to which the WEE Round I activities have achieved the WEE goals, identified challenges and opportunities, and provided key learnings. The Evaluation Team (ET) conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis, which included a desk review of nearly 300 documents

provided by USAID and implementing partners (IP),³ data collected from online surveys and key informant interviews with USAID/Washington, missions, IP staff, and partners. The ET developed case studies of four WEE activities to obtain important feedback from beneficiaries and local partners located in multiple countries. The case studies provide deep insights into how complex development interventions are being implemented locally, regionally, and globally (see [Annex IV](#) for links).

The ET recommends that USAID should incorporate the key lessons from this portfolio mid-term evaluation into the design and implementation of current and future WEE-focused programs and policies.

KEY LESSONS

1. Ensure WEE is a foreign policy priority by continuously raising the status and importance of the issue;
2. Engage civil society, women's organizations, community, business, and religious leaders as important partners;
3. Balance investments in addressing long-term systemic changes in the enabling environment with immediate needs;
4. Contribute thoughtful improvements in WEE-funded activities that can be scaled, replicated, and institutionalized;
5. Understand the causes and socio-cultural dynamics that perpetuate the gender gap in employment, business opportunities, education, access to finance, property use and ownership, legal and regulatory framework;
6. Consider the importance of gender-based violence because it is very catalytic; and
7. Mobilize men and boys as allies, advocates, role models, change agents, and partners in designing, implementing, and evaluating WEE activities.

¹ Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Department of State, Department of Treasury, Inter-American Foundation, Millennium Challenge Corporation, Peace Corps, U.S. Africa Development Foundation, USAID, and U.S. International Development Finance Corporation.

² The 48 activities funded in Round I include this mid-term evaluation, the final evaluation, and one other learning activity, not included with the other 45 activities under review.

³ The document review may be found at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KF09SLhURPoTthXmDUolwMbCLzNRz_ZgplAQK5SM9QI/edit#gid=0



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In commissioning this mid-term performance evaluation of the Women's Economic Empowerment Portfolio, USAID's Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev) designed a complex portfolio evaluation of 45 activities similar to whole-of-government evaluations. This evaluation seeks to understand better the performance of multiple activities in multifaceted, multi-year efforts to improve women's economic empowerment.

The USAID Learning, Evaluation, and Analysis Project (LEAP III) would like to thank USAID's Activity Manager, Niloufer de Silva, for the evaluation and whose guidance and active engagement in all phases helped ensure that USAID's needs and expectations for this study were understood. The ET also thanks the many USAID staff, implementing partners, national partners, and beneficiary respondents who contributed time and insights to the evaluation, and the LEAP III Contracting Officer's Representative, Katie Qutub, and the Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative, Eric Hyman, for their support. The authors of this report drew on the collective efforts of many Integra team members, including LEAP III Chief of Party David Quinn and LEAP III Research Director Brenda L. Pearson.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AOR: Agreement Officer Representative

APS: Annual Program Statement

AM: (USAID) Activity Manager

CBO: Community Based Organization

CCBO: Clean Cities Blue Oceans

CDCS: Country Development Cooperation Strategy

COR: Contracting Officer's Representative

CSO: Civil Society Organization

DDI: USAID Bureau of Development, Democracy, and Innovation

EMD: Center of Economics and Market Development

ESF: USAID Economic Support Funds

EQ: Evaluation Question

ET: Evaluation Team

EU: Engendering Utilities

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

FY: Fiscal Year

GBV: Gender-based Violence

GenDev: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub

IP: Implementing Partner

ITR: Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub

JAPRI: Jadi Pendusaha Mandiri

KII: Key Informant Interview

KP: Key Performance Indicator

LEAP III: Learning, Evaluation, and Analysis Project

LFT: USAID's Local Faith and Transformative Partnership

LLG: Land Leasing Groups

MEL: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

NPI: New Partner Initiative

NSPM-16: National Security Presidential Memorandum

OCAT: Organizational Conflict Assessment Tool

POC: (USAID) technical point of contact

PPR: Performance Plan and Report

PSE: Private Sector Engagement

SHG: Self-help Groups

SME: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

SOW: Scope of Work

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

USG: United States Government

VSLA: Village Savings and Loans Associations

WAGE: Workplace Advancement for Gender Equality

WAITH: West Africa Trade Hub

WCC: Women Connect Challenge

WCC2: Women Connect Challenge Round 2

WCF: World Cocoa Foundation

WEE: Women's Economic Empowerment

W-GDP: Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM-16) established the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative, which directly tied women's economic empowerment with U.S. national security and stated, "Societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful."

This W-GDP initiative was the first-ever, whole-of-government approach to advancing women's economic empowerment, with ten United States Government (USG) Departments and Agencies (interagency)⁴ working toward the goal of reaching 50 million women by 2025. The W-GDP focuses on three pillars: 1) Women Thriving in the Workforce, 2) Women Succeeding as Entrepreneurs, and 3) Women Enabled in the Economy.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a women's economic empowerment (WEE) multi-year portfolio of 45 activities supported by the W-GDP Fund under the former W-GDP Initiative. The WEE portfolio of activities is coordinated by the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI), Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev). The WEE mid-term portfolio performance evaluation report assesses 45 of the initial 48⁵ activities, designated as WEE Round I activities. The evaluation examines whether these 45 activities were technically sound and the extent to which the activities contributed to women's economic empowerment outcomes and aligned with achieving the goals of the three pillars. The evaluation assesses the ability of the former W-GDP Initiative and its funding to deliver on the goals outlined in the W-GDP pillars and corresponding constraints.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The Learning, Evaluation, and Analysis Project (LEAP III) Evaluation Team (ET) will conduct this evaluation of Round I activities over two phases and produce two separate evaluation reports: a mid-term portfolio performance evaluation completed in phase 1 and a final evaluation to be completed in phase 2 in 2023. In phase 1, to answer five evaluation questions (EQs) and 33 sub-questions, the ET reviewed 288 USAID and Implementing Partner (IP) documents, analyzed key performance indicators, collected data from online surveys and telephone interviews with 115 respondents from USAID/Washington, and missions,

IP staff, and other partners. The ET developed case studies of four WEE activities to obtain important feedback from beneficiaries and local partners located in multiple countries. The case studies provide deep insights into how complex development interventions are being implemented locally, regionally, and globally. Links to the separate reports can be found on [Annex IV](#).

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the WEE Portfolio is meaningful and effective, USAID should incorporate the key lessons from this portfolio mid-term evaluation into the design and implementation of current and future WEE-focused programs and policies:

KEY LESSONS

1. Ensure WEE is a foreign policy priority by continuously raising the status and importance of the issue;
2. Engage civil society, women's organizations, community, business, and religious leaders as important partners;
3. Balance investments in addressing long-term systemic changes in the enabling environment with immediate needs;
4. Contribute thoughtful improvements in WEE-funded activities that can be scaled, replicated, and institutionalized;
5. Understand the causes and socio-cultural dynamics that perpetuate the gender gap in employment, business opportunities, education, access to finance, property use and ownership, legal and regulatory framework;
6. Consider the importance of gender-based violence because it is very catalytic; and
7. Mobilize men and boys as allies, advocates, role models, change agents, and partners in designing, implementing, and evaluating WEE activities.

⁴ Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Department of State, Department of Treasury, Inter-American Foundation, Millennium Challenge Corporation, Peace Corps, U.S. Africa Development Foundation, USAID, and U.S. International Development Finance Corporation.

⁵ The 48 activities funded in Round I include this mid-term evaluation, the final evaluation, and one other learning activity, not included with the other 45 activities under review.

The top-line findings and recommendations are organized according to the five EQs, presented as follows.

EQ1: How are USAID's Round I activities contributing to achieving USAID's WEE priorities?

Findings

- The Round I activities support USAID's WEE and broader gender policy priorities through investments in 34 activities for women prospering in the workforce, 23 activities for women entrepreneurs; and 32 activities enabling women in the economy.
- Key characteristics of Round I activities align with USAID's women's economic empowerment and economic growth priorities.
- The largest funded WEE Round I activities strongly favored finance for Women's Entrepreneurship and pre-existing programs.
- WEE investments catalyzed USAID and other agencies' thinking and learning about WEE.

Recommendations

- Assess the trade-offs of investing one-half of the WEE Portfolio in existing USAID flagship programs through buy-in mechanisms with large, well-established IPs who provide sub-awards to local organizations or directly into new USAID partners, including partner country governments, women's organizations, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).
- Optimize opportunities and mitigate risks of large and smaller investments by improving the quality of MEL data that helps GenDev staff understand the past performances and management capacities of the contracts and agreements under consideration.
- Integrate WEE activities with other USG and host government programs to support other gender equality programming that support women's organizations and community-based organizations leadership in office, public sector, civil society, and political parties to amplify women's agency in decision-making, based on findings from the case studies.
- Ensure proven gender-transformational approaches are embedded in the design to support legal, regulatory, policy, and social changes. This is important because WEE is inextricably linked to other essential human rights, such as living lives free of violence and exploitation; benefiting from formal and informal education; and having access to registration, identification, and citizenship documents.

- USAID/DDI/GenDev should provide guidance and assist each WEE activity in preparing a gender-sensitive baseline to measure progress in achieving women's economic empowerment,
- Assess whether GenDev needs more staff under hiring mechanisms that can become certified to serve as AOR/CORs to strengthen the overall management capacity for rapid-expansion WEE activities.

EQ2: How effectively are internal and external partners supporting the funding, design, and implementation of the Round I activities?

Findings

- Establishing and strengthening partnerships is a key strength.
- Availability of WEE Round I investments incentivized attention to gender across USAID.
- Interagency partnering is complicated and slow to launch.
- Partners' technical and management capacities increased despite some challenges and constraints.
- Nearly all of the 62 IP respondents reported requests for ad hoc data collection as burdensome.
- Under the New Partnership Initiative (NPI), there were four modalities to partner with new and underutilized partners, including funding a larger IP which then provided sub-awards to new partners.

Recommendations

- Assessing the quality of different partnership models is limited during this mid-term evaluation. Therefore, it is important to examine various partnership models in the final evaluation.
- Leverage the new ecosystems and partner networks to build stronger links among the private sector, partner governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and NGOs to address legal, regulatory, and institutional barriers perpetuating gender gaps in the business enabling environment.
- Take advantage of the increased technical and managerial capacity of all prime and sub-award partners in mainstreaming WEE and broader gender equality priorities to foster locally owned and sustainable solutions with new national partners.
- Adjust technical selection criteria found in the March 2019 Round I Call for Concept Proposals to account for interagency collaboration with partners that may require much longer timeframes and technical support for implementing WEE activities.

- GenDev should be provided more staff to collaborate more closely and systematically, and on an ongoing basis, with other USAID Centers and Hubs such as the Local Faith and Transformative Partnership (LFT), the Center of Economics and Market Development (EMD), and the Private Sector Engagement (PSE) Hub to keep a finger on the pulse and share learnings about WEE partnerships.

EQ3: How Effectively are the Round I activities addressing economic gender gaps and WEE needs?

Findings

- Although 32 activities are supposed to be implementing Pillar 3 interventions, respondents said addressing systemic issues required more outcome indicators. They noted that their activity designs did not focus on gender transformational approaches that would address gender norms and culture in Pillar 3 issues.
- The WEE three-pillar conceptual framework has limitations according to IPs and some USAID staff. In Round I, the model emphasized PSE and undervalued local partner and host governments' participation to support Pillar 3 goals.
- Preventing and mitigating gender-based violence is a strength of the portfolio.
- Mobilizing men and boys as allies, advocates, role models, change agents, and partners is critical in WEE design, implementation, and evaluation of WEE activities.
- WEE activities can benefit from local partners, women's organizations, and gender specialists participating in designing enabling environment activities in culturally sensitive ways through the co-creation process.

Recommendations

- USAID should invest more gender expertise through dedicated staff to provide specific technical assistance in activity design. Similarly, IPs should be required in most activities to hire gender experts with their WEE funding.
- WEE activities can benefit from the participation of local partners, women's organizations, and gender specialists in designing enabling environment activities in culturally sensitive ways through co-creation processes.
- USAID should include partner governments in the co-creation approaches to encourage local solutions and embedded planning for sustainability.
- Prioritize funding to integrate and encourage collaboration with local WEE partners to implement sustainable gender-based violence (GBV) prevention

and response programming. A multisectoral approach is necessary to promote changing gender norms and strengthen local systems' capacity to respond to GBV and support GBV response care in the workplace and communities.

- Consider best practices and promising interventions to engage community leaders and male champions in energy, utilities, information technology, waste management, biodiversity, and conservation. Engaging male champions to change male-dominated culture has been a central element in the activities that promote women's hiring and advancement.
- USAID and selected interagency partners should hold a reflection session with IPs and data services to assess and share ongoing technical and operational adaptations occurring in the Round I Portfolio and ensure that the USAID data management system can track this information.

EQ4: Are the Round I activities achieving expected results?

Findings

- Activities are generally perceived to be achieving MEL plan outputs and outcome targets.
- Outputs and outcomes related to micro-enterprises, female entrepreneurs, and the number of participants were most frequently reported.
- Reporting on Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators (referenced henceforth as standard indicators) have limitations because they do not always enable WEE activities to report their results comprehensively.
- The cumulative number of women reached reported by the Round I activities is not a clear indicator of the portfolio's results.

Recommendations

- To aggregate results across the portfolio, several technical adjustments need to be made. USAID should strengthen MEL support to help IPs report on standard indicators accurately, consistently, and comprehensively. More MEL support can also help IPs identify ways to adapt existing indicators to standard indicators and then accurately report on those. The example of USAID/ Georgia and **Supporting Entrepreneurial Skills (YES-Georgia)** should be emulated.
- USAID should ensure that all appropriate targets for activities in FY 2020, FY 2021, or FY 2022 are reported, even if results cannot be reported. Conversely, USAID should ensure that any results are reported on targets and, if not, resolve these discrepancies as they arise.

- USAID could require activities that do not report any results to indicate a reason via a multiple-choice question, including the following options: 1) too early to report, 2) COVID-19 related start-up or implementation challenges, or 3) other [open ended].
 - Existing activities that focus on institutional or systemic change need adapted measurement criteria, as these types of changes take much longer to achieve expected results. These indicators should not be collected monthly or quarterly, as it is unlikely progress will be made in such short periods. Qualitative measurement tools can be useful to capture progress toward institutional or systemic change.
 - USAID should review and adjust its indicators to emphasize outcome indicators rather than output indicators that measure the cumulative number of women reached.
 - To ensure the accuracy of output indicators that track the cumulative number of women reached, the data should be independently audited through selected data quality assessments to ensure that this figure is accurate.
 - Embed self-financing interventions into activity designs and cost-recovery. Different activity approaches such as self-financing, cost-recovery, and buy-ins to existing programs would benefit from tailored sustainability plans. Like the technical guidance provided in developing MEL plans, integrating sustainability planning into the activity design is important.
 - Involve national and local partners in carrying out activity interventions and providing inputs. USAID should work closely with national and local partner governments to overcome barriers faced by women in the economy, reform and enforce legislation and regulations, and have national, regional, and partner country government development plans and interventions to integrate WEE priorities.
 - Early activity findings indicated that buy-in to larger programs reduced risks that activities will not meet their targets because start-ups are quicker, monitoring systems are in place, and female beneficiaries consider networks very important. However, the drawback is that the relatively modest sum of a WEE award could disappear within the larger budget of the mechanism it is bought into, unless the WEE activities and results are carefully tracked within the larger project or program.
 - Promote socially and culturally sensitive interventions that address systemic gender barriers such as discriminatory legislation, unequal access to justice, and the lack of representation in local or national decision-making structures. Many new opportunities potentially exist for collaboration and cross-cutting approaches for GenDev to explore in the USAID Bureau for Development, Democracy and Innovation, which houses both GenDev and Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance.
- EQ5: What are the early findings regarding the sustainability of the WEE activities?**

Findings

- Twenty-nine Round I activities are showing early evidence of sustainability; the online survey indicated that 83 percent of IP staff (n = 29) indicated that they are implementing a sustainability plan, 11 percent are not (n = 4), and 6 percent responded that they “don’t know” (n = 2).
- Case study findings show potential sustainability, but gender-transformative approaches are likely required.
- Five sustainability factors were evidenced in Round I activities and are listed below as recommendations.

Recommendations

- Integrate women’s organizations and gender specialists in the activity design phase. Early engagement with local partners and women’s organizations was a common element in activity results. Specifically, including female and male gender champions and community leaders in the co-design of interventions ensured that local development priorities were addressed in WEE-focused activities. Allocate sufficient resources to align local development and gender goals interventions that complement and support other international, regional, and community partners.

INTRODUCTION

PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

A National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM-16) established the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative, which directly tied women's economic empowerment with U.S. national security and stated, "Societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful." This W-GDP initiative was the first-ever, whole-of-government approach to advancing women's economic empowerment (WEE), with ten United States Government (USG) Departments and Agencies (interagency)⁶ working toward the goal of reaching 50 million women by 2025. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a women's economic empowerment (WEE) multi-year portfolio of 45 activities supported by the W-GDP Fund under the former W-GDP Initiative. The WEE portfolio of activities is coordinated by the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI), Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev). The WEE mid-term portfolio performance evaluation report examines 45 of the initial 48⁷ activities, designated as WEE Round I activities. The evaluation assesses the ability of the former W-GDP Initiative and its funding to deliver on the goals outlined in the W-GDP pillars (see below) and corresponding constraints. It was commissioned to help USAID understand the characteristics, effectiveness, partnership models, and sustainability effects of the 45 WEE Round I activities.

⁶ Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Department of State, Department of Treasury, Inter-American Foundation, Millennium Challenge Corporation, Peace Corps, U.S. Africa Development Foundation, USAID, and U.S. International Development Finance Corporation.

⁷ The 48 activities funded in Round I include this mid-term evaluation, final evaluation, and one other learning activity, which are not included with the other 45 activities under review.

The former W-GDP Initiative defined the women's economic empowerment priorities in three pillars:

Pillar 1 – Women Prospering in the Workforce:

Advancing women in the workforce by improving access to quality vocational and skills training and enabling women to secure jobs in their local economies;

Pillar 2 – Women Succeeding as Entrepreneurs:

Increasing women's access to capital, markets, networks, and mentorship to aid women in establishing and growing their businesses; and

Pillar 3 – Women Enabled in the Economy:

Removing restrictive legal, regulatory, and cultural barriers to facilitate women's meaningful participation in the economy.

The WEE Portfolio advanced the three pillars through mission-led programming, impact-driven grants, innovative partnerships with USG agencies, private sector companies, non-profit and faith-based organizations, and other donors. The Portfolio identified investment opportunities aligned with the initiative, demonstrated effectiveness and opportunities to scale, and delivered measurable impact. The emphasis on private sector engagement (PSE) supported USAID's efforts to help countries implement market-based, enterprise solutions that contribute to self-sustaining growth.

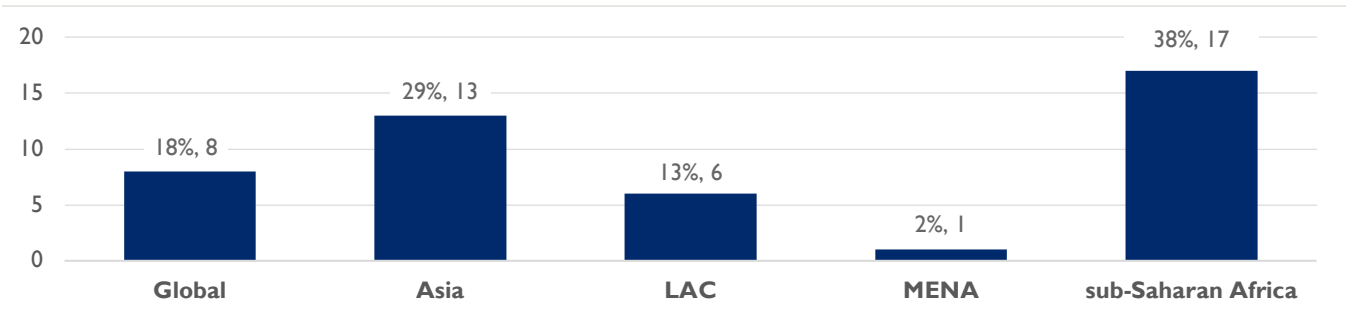
"Women's empowerment is a core facet of U.S. foreign policy and a stated priority action in our National Security Strategy. We know that women's full and free participation is critical to sustaining peaceful and prosperous societies. And when women have access to opportunities and the ability to reach their potential, we all benefit. This is an agenda the United States is proud to champion at home and abroad."

– U.S. National Security Council

ROUND I WEE ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS

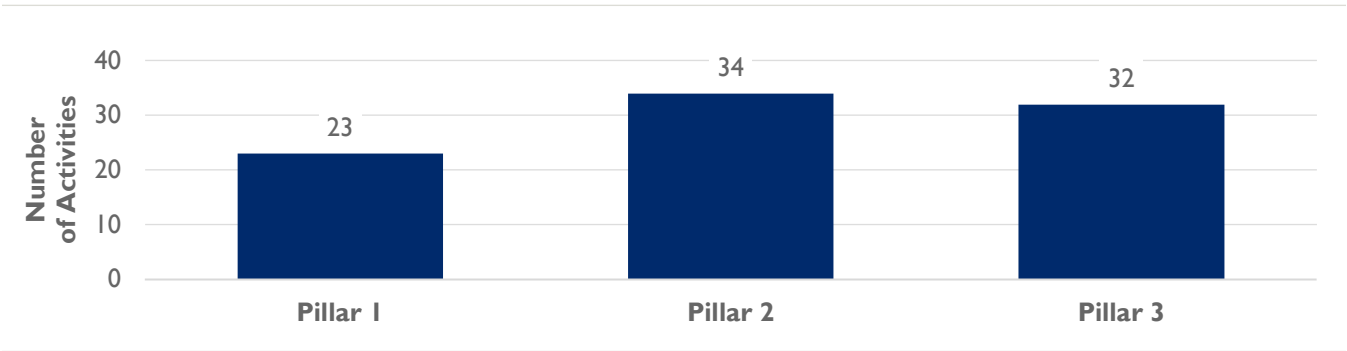
In Round I, the WEE Round I invested in 44 countries (Figure 1) and collaborated with a large, diverse group of 270 partners, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and partner country governments (see evaluation question (EQ) 2 as follows regarding partnerships). Based on the USAID activity profiles, 23 activities reported addressing Pillar 1, 34 activities reported addressing Pillar 2, and 32 activities reported addressing Pillar 3 (Figure 2). Host governments were the dominant partner (Figure 3). Annex II presents a full list of Round I Activities.

FIGURE 1: Round I WEE Activities by Region (n=45)



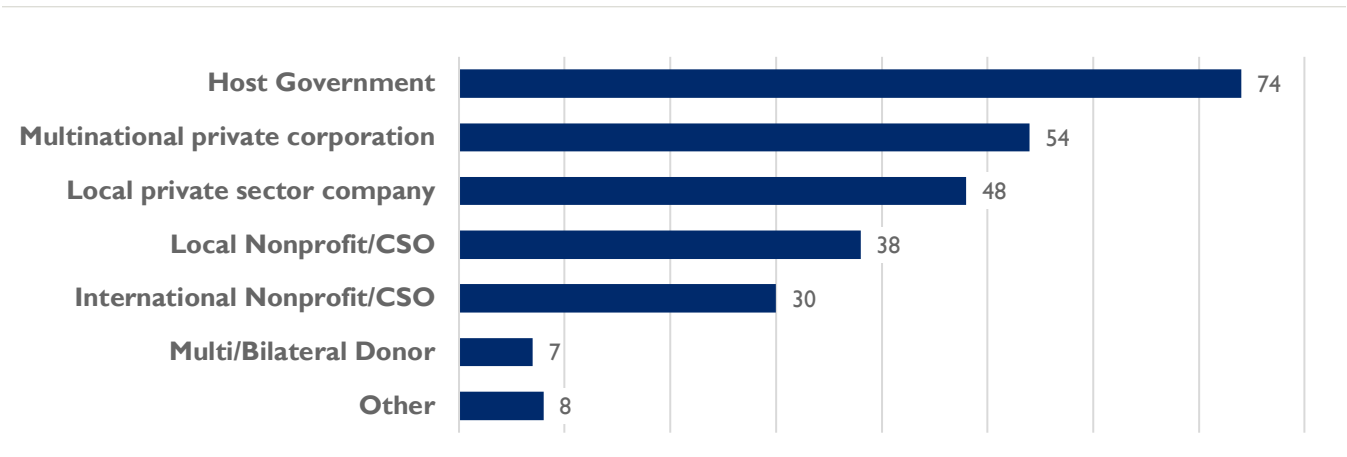
Source: GenDev, USAID. 2021. Note: LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA = Middle East and North Africa.

FIGURE 2: WEE Pillars Supported by Round I WEE Activities (n=45)



Source: GenDev, USAID. 2021.

FIGURE 3: Total Number of Partners by Category for Entire Round I Portfolio (n=45)



Source: GenDev, USAID. 2021. Note: CSO = civil society organization.

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The WEE Round I Portfolio of 45 activities is guided by a learning agenda that seeks to institutionalize WEE to achieve stronger development and bottom-line results for the private sector across the USG, international and local businesses, nonprofit organizations, other bilateral donors, and multilateral organizations. GenDev commissioned the mid-term evaluation in 2020 to help understand the characteristics, effectiveness, partnerships, results, and sustainability effects of the first set of WEE activities supported with FY 2018 funds, which are referred to as the “Round I activities.” This whole-of-government evaluation seeks to understand the performance of multiple activities in multifaceted, multi-year efforts to improve women’s economic empowerment, which are complex. A follow-on final evaluation will be completed in 2023.

The primary audiences for this evaluation are the USAID staff and offices that manage and distribute the funding, notably the GenDev⁸ and interagency leads located at the White House, the U.S. Department of State, and other government agencies supporting WEE. This mid-term evaluation is intended to understand better USAID’s WEE-focused programming and results to the larger development community. Other important audiences include USAID missions and operating units, implementing partners (IPs), beneficiaries, and stakeholders that implement and are affected by the activities. Evaluation findings and recommendations are also relevant to USAID offices that support WEE work, such as the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning; the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs; other USAID operating units engaged in gender equality and women’s empowerment programming.

⁸ Based in Washington, DC, within the DDI Bureau, GenDev provides strategic leadership, training, and technical assistance for USAID’s gender equality and women’s empowerment programming worldwide and works to shape and institutionalize policies that empower women and girls.



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This mid-term evaluation addresses five evaluation questions (EQs) and 33 sub-questions designated in GenDev's Statement of Work (see Annex I). This report incorporates relevant information for each sub-question into significant findings for each EQ, rather than addressing each sub-question separately.

EQ1: How are USAID's Round I activities contributing to achieving USAID's WEE priorities?

- What WEE objectives, technical criteria, and USAID policy priorities are being met in funding these activities?
- What are the characteristics of the Round I activities, including, but not limited to, alignment with the WEE pillars, themes, sectors, countries, and regions; funds received; partner funds catalyzed; and new and continuing activities?
- Are the designed and implemented activities meeting WEE priorities' technical criteria and relevant USAID policy priorities?
- Is USAID's support for these activities meeting the expectations of key stakeholders, such as the activity Award Officer's Representatives (AORs)/Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs)/Activity Managers (AMs) and IPs?
- What are recommendations for strengthening the selection and management of Round I activities in the future?

EQ2: How effectively are internal and external partners supporting the funding, design, and implementation of the Round I activities?

- Broadly categorize the types of partnerships established through the activities, including USAID internal partners.
- How are different categories of partners adding value financially, materially, and technically to the activities? Discuss with reference to internal USAID partners (including synergies with other activities managed by the awardee operating unit) and to external partners, such as other USG agencies, host country government agencies, local non-profit organizations and community-based organizations, local women's organizations, private sector entities, other donor organizations, and international non-profit organizations.
- Are the Round I activities increasing the partners' technical and management capacities to design, implement, measure, and communicate the results of WEE interventions?

- What challenges and constraints do the activity partnerships face?
- What are the recommendations for strengthening Round I activity partnerships with host country government agencies, the private sector, international and local non-profit organizations, and USAID internal partners?



Honeycomb harvested using beekeeping techniques learned through AMSATI training.
PHOTO: Asociación Agropecuaria de Mujeres Produciendo en la Tierra R.L. (AMSATI)

EQ3: How effectively are the Round I activities addressing economic gender gaps and WEE needs?

- What regional and in-country gender gaps and WEE needs do the Round I activities address?
- What are the characteristics of the gender gaps and women's economic empowerment needs, for example, by type of need and economic barrier; whether widespread within region/country or niche based; rooted in tradition or new/emerging; and levels of associated advocacy and activism?
- What types of WEE pillar-aligned interventions are being used to address these gender gaps and needs?
- Are these interventions meeting activity objectives, and are they cost-efficient? Discuss strengths and weaknesses.
- Are the interventions providing real solutions given country and community contexts and the specific gender economic gaps and needs the activity addresses?
- Are the interventions practically feasible, given the activity budget, timeline, USAID and IP staff capacities, and ground realities?
- Are the interventions culturally sensitive?
- Are the interventions helping to expand women's economic programming within the operating unit portfolio?
- How effectively are the activities integrating 1) GBV prevention and response interventions and 2) actions to mobilize male champions?
- What are the recommendations for improving the relevance, effectiveness, and cost-efficiency gains of Round I activity interventions?

EQ4: Are the Round I activities achieving expected results?

- What WEE pillar-aligned outputs and outcomes are being achieved? Consider using the overall women reached metric and the interagency pillar metrics to aggregate results.
- Are the Round I activities achieving monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan output and outcome targets?
- What are the internal and external opportunities and challenges faced in achieving targets? Are these challenges being overcome?
- What can be learned from not reaching MEL plan targets?
- Are there any actual or potentially harmful Round I programming effects (e.g., GBV and gender backlash)? What steps are being taken to prevent/mitigate these harmful impacts?
- What are the recommendations for improving results?
- Have the activities led to adaptation, replication, scale-up, and institutionalization of women's economic empowerment programming within 1) USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS)/ or programs and 2) host country public, private, non-profit organizations, and CBO institutions?
- How will the development results be sustained after the period of performance of the award ends?
- Do any general sustainability effects have regional or global implications?
- Does sustainability differ by activity types, implementing partners, or institutional and country context?
- What conditions increase the likelihood of sustainability or continuation of the development results beyond the grant-funded period?
- Do opportunities exist to scale existing activities with an emphasis on encouraging additional private sector support?
- What are the recommendations for improving the sustainability of the Round I activities?

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This section provides a brief overview of the methodology and approach for the mid-term evaluation. Annex III provides a more detailed evaluation methodology.

The ET conducted the phase I mid-term evaluation between April 2020 and June 2021. For this evaluation, primary and secondary data were collected using a mixed-methods approach. The data collection methods included 1) document review of the WEE Portfolio data, 2) key performance indicator (KPI) assessments, 3) electronic survey, 4) key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), and 5) case studies. Data analysis methods included refining the descriptive statistics and content analysis. Whenever possible, existing quantitative data such as the Portfolio's performance indicators were utilized. The ET also conducted case studies of four Round I activities in close collaboration with USAID staff and implementing partners (see Annex III for more details on COVID-19 data collection protocols).

SELECTION OF A SAMPLE OF ROUND I WEE PORTFOLIO ACTIVITIES

In conjunction with USAID, the ET grouped the 45 Round I activities into two sub-groups based on their project cycle stage (i.e., whether they were in the implementation stage or still in the procurement and design stage). The ET worked closely with USAID Data Services to create a database with profiles for each of the 45 Round I activities to organize this information. As of September 30, 2020, 13 of the 45 Round I activities were in the procurement stage or the co-creation process with USAID missions. The other 32 Round I activities were in implementation. The ET included all 45 activities in its online survey and desk review but limited KIIs to the USAID and IP key stakeholders of 32 activities that had started implementation. The ET then analyzed the 32 activities in-depth to identify gaps in coverage of the three Portfolio pillars, partnership models,⁹ regional locations,¹⁰ and country income levels.¹¹ The ET found that the

purposive sampling¹² of 32 activities included all three pillar objectives, three types of partnership models, all USAID regions, and country income levels.

It is important to note that the sample sizes presented throughout the report vary to reflect the accurate number of activities represented by respondent categories of specific data collection methods. As this is a portfolio performance evaluation, the unit of analysis is the WEE activity and not the total number of respondents and is cited as such throughout the report. Sample sizes vary based on the total number of activities represented by the respondent category and the data. Total sample sizes for each data collection method are described below.

DATA COLLECTION

Desk Review

The ET reviewed 288 available documents related to all 45 WEE Round I activities. These documents were provided by either USAID Data Services or an activity's IP. The types of documents reviewed included, but were not limited to, activity reports, one-page activity summaries, MEL plans, baseline reports, activity websites or communication materials, country development cooperation strategies (CDCS), concept notes, progress reports (annual, monthly, or quarterly), and presentations. The desk review provided contextual and background information on each activity and identified data gaps in advance of the KIIs. The available quarterly reports provided the most comprehensive and rich data on the activities. In contrast, the original available application documents were most helpful in providing the activity's background and context, as these documents focused on the WEE aspects of each activity.

⁹ Partnership models include private sector partner, partner country government partner, nonprofit partner including civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors.

¹⁰ Regional locations include Africa, Asia, Europe/Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and global.

¹¹ The assigned country income level ranking was drawn from the World Bank's 2020 Global Rankings, which included four categories: low-income, low-middle income, upper-middle income, and high income. Several activities included in the shortlist are being implemented in more than one country, region, or continent. Accordingly, the ET indicated the country income level for each country implementing a common activity if this information is available.

¹² Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is nonprobability sampling. Researchers rely on their judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study.

Standard Indicators

USAID Data Services provided the ET with raw data from Round I activities on December 3, 2020. These raw data were used to inform the standard indicator analysis. The IPs reported on Standard Foreign Assistance indicators¹³ (standard indicators) relevant to their programming and provided the figures to USAID Data Services. Indicators were only included in this analysis if the activity had reported either a result or target for fiscal year (FY) 2020 or a target for FY 2021 and FY 2022 for the respective indicator. The ET's analysis of the key indicator reporting by activity can be found in the EQ4 findings section.

Online Surveys

The ET developed online surveys designed for three groups of key informants, including AORs or CORs, AMs¹⁴ and GenDev POCs, and IP staff. Representatives of all 45 Round I activities were invited to participate in the respective online survey. Of the 45 Round I activities, 23 were represented by AOR/COR responses, 13 AM/POC responses, and 35 IP staff responses. Overall, there were 106 total respondents. Of these 106 respondents, 66 were IP staff, and 40 were USAID staff. Data presented from the online survey will reflect the total sample size by respondent category throughout the report. When possible, AOR/COR and AM/POC responses were combined to reflect USAID Staff's perspective. Only one category of USAID Staff is represented in certain cases, and the sample size (n) reflects.

Key Informant Interviews

The ET conducted KIs with 115 representatives of all 32 Round I activities in the implementation stage.¹⁵ These KIs were conducted with 41 USAID staff (including activity AORs, CORs, POCs, AMs, Gender Advisors, and others) and 74 IP staff (including Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party, Gender Advisors, and other relevant technical staff). The purpose of these KIs was to gather perspectives and additional information about the WEE Portfolio process and activities. The interviews were conducted remotely using the Google Meet and Zoom platforms. With the respondents' permission, interviews were audio-recorded.

Interviewers took comprehensive notes of the respondents' answers to KI questions, which served as the raw qualitative data used for analysis.

Case Studies

Case studies were conducted on four WEE Round I activities to understand better the successes and challenges faced at the field level. The ET used purposive sampling of the three pillar objectives, types of partnership models, USAID regions, and country income levels to select four case studies.¹⁶ Based on input and suggestions from USAID, the following WEE Round I activities were selected:

- 1) USAID-PepsiCo Partnership in West Bengal, India,
- 2) Producer-Owned Women's Enterprises in Tamil Nadu, India,
- 3) World Cocoa Foundation in Côte d'Ivoire, and
- 4) Expansion of Engendering Utilities implemented globally.

The four selected case studies were critical for the evaluation because they provide important insights from in-country partners and direct beneficiaries of the WEE Portfolio activities. See Annex IV for an overview of key aggregate observations and findings and links to the full case study reports.

DATA ANALYSIS

The ET collected data from the desk review, KPIs, online surveys, KIs, and case studies. It then analyzed the data using descriptive statistics and content analysis with the five EQs. The quantitative data directly align the activities' described interventions with at least one of the three pillars and its objectives. The ET used descriptive statistics to produce a quantitative overview of the WEE Portfolio, including characteristics such as the number of pillars represented by each activity, number of regions, types of partnerships, and USAID sectors covered. The qualitative data, however, were a bit more challenging to assess for three reasons, including 1) the data were unreliable or not collected, 2) the data revealed that many respondents did not know or could not provide answers because the activities are too new to assess activity implementation, and 3) many of the activities are delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹³ The State Department Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (State/F), in concert with stakeholders from State and USAID, updated a series of standard foreign assistance indicators to promote the collection of consistent data across operating units. The indicators are mapped to the Foreign Assistance Framework *Standardized Program Structure and Definitions*, a listing of program categories that provide common definitions for using foreign assistance funds, around which the majority of U.S. foreign assistance programming is organized. Standard foreign assistance indicators are required as applicable and referred to as standard indicators.

¹⁴ Not all activities have Activity Managers; however, technical support is provided by the Portfolio's POC.

¹⁵ The list of 115 respondents may be found here: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vFgvjZK8qsIQGRAKv6pSmzLDLyKLSSp/edit#gid=1257692700>

¹⁶ The final selection criteria for shortlisting case study candidates were that activities 1) reflect core W-GDP programming; 2) have sufficient local partners and beneficiaries; 3) reflect USAID's partnership priorities and country investment priorities; 4) meet a budget activity threshold of \$1.5 million in FY 2018 funding; 5) represent a mixture of country income levels; and 6) represent WEE Portfolio pillars, partnership models, USAID geographic regions, and country income level rankings. Note that this sampling methodology does not mean that the cases selected are statistically representative or generalizable to the total population of WEE Round I activities.

The ET used standard qualitative analysis to review the data summaries, which involved coding the data to identify common themes and patterns across the activities. The ET prioritized the themes and patterns common across more activities, viewing them as more illustrative of the Portfolio. Secondary priority was given to less common themes and patterns that illustrated key characteristics relevant to the EQs. The ET triangulated data from the document review, performance monitoring, and primary data to find the 45 activities delivering results. To maximize the quality of the analysis, the ET's four evaluators cross-checked the data before finalizing the themes used to draw findings and conclusions.

The ET identified the most relevant findings to address each EQ using the most common themes and patterns. Key recommendations for each EQ draw on all findings and conclusions.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS LIMITATIONS

The ET took steps to mitigate data collection and analysis challenges as they arose.

Attribution: To date, no common baseline or theory of change for assessing overall progress in improving women's economic empowerment exists. Additionally, isolating the Portfolio's achievements in integrated activities that include buy-ins to pre-existing regional or global programs was challenging. The ET worked closely with USAID and IP staff and USAID Data Services to understand the value-added of the Portfolio to pre-existing programs.

Complex environment: The 45 Round I activities included in the Portfolio represent a wide array of socioeconomic complexities viewed at a macro level. WEE issues are highly complex and often fluctuate depending on the region, sector, and interlocutor. Gender issues intersect with and sometimes exacerbate other forms of social exclusion based on religious minority status, caste, ethnicity, race, sexual identity, disability, and others. These factors can affect the quality or reliability of the data collected. However, the ET developed four case studies to better understand the on-the-ground contextual realities of four distinct activities.

Limited fieldwork: Working during the COVID-19 pandemic required trade-offs in the number and depth of interviews and perspectives that could be captured and the depth of analysis performed. The ET recruited and trained three field-based teams of national evaluators to conduct interviews and FDGs in Tamil Nadu, India; West Bengal, India; and Côte d'Ivoire, supervised remotely by the U.S.-based ET.

Documentary evidence: The number of documents available to the ET for each activity varied significantly, and this variance did not necessarily correspond to the activity's implementation status. This inconsistency was partly due to recent start-up efforts, delays due to COVID-19, or activities implemented under larger USAID programs with different reporting requirements. The ET worked closely with USAID staff to obtain documentation as it became available throughout the period of performance of this evaluation.

Halo effect: Managers' overly positive views of a particular activity or implementing partner can affect the objectivity of responses. Managers' consistently high ratings fail to recognize areas for improvement. The ET found evidence of the halo effect and addresses it in EQ3.

Response bias: Guarding against response bias, or the possibility that interview subjects provide answers they think interviewers want to hear, is important in maintaining data reliability. This evaluation design was weighed to favor the opinions of the USAID managers and IP managers of all 45 activities. At the same time, feedback from direct beneficiaries and local partners was limited to just four case studies. The ET attempted to mitigate response bias by inviting USAID and IP staff to one-hour discussions related to each case study and circulated the case studies for their feedback.

Limited standard indicator data: In general, a significant limitation to the standard indicator data was the lack of reporting on targets and results in FY 2020, which impeded the possibility of a comprehensive performance monitoring analysis and assessment. Less than 25 percent of Round I activities submitted standard indicator data for at least one indicator. More than 75 percent of Round I activities did not submit standard indicator targets for FY 2020, FY 2021, or FY 2022. The ET notes where several inconsistencies in how the data were reported (discussed in detail in EQ4) have limited its ability to analyze the data comprehensively.

EQ I: HOW ARE USAID’S ROUND I ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTING TO ACHIEVING USAID’S WEE PRIORITIES?

In March 2019, GenDev issued a *Funding Opportunity: Call for Short Concept Notes* for proposals to “Address at least one of the three pillars of the initiative; include a credible plan for collaboration with the private sector, collaborate with Interagency partners, and collect indicators to be used for monitoring.” The WEE Round I invested nearly \$100 million in 48 activities through various procurement mechanisms.¹⁷ Approximately half of the funding was disbursed to USAID missions already implementing WEE activities or ongoing programs that could integrate WEE interventions. The selection criteria for the award requested activity designs that promote, expand, and scale the ability of women to participate in the economy on an equal basis with men as employees, managers, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and investors. USAID initially emphasized a preference for activities that address regulatory and legal reforms to promote systemic change. However, only three activities directly worked with partner country governments on legal reforms in the first year.¹⁸ This chapter describes the characteristics of the many innovative concepts that were funded in Round I.

The first EQ and its corresponding five sub-questions ask how USAID’s Round I activities contributed to implementing the overall WEE priorities and describes how the WEE Portfolio and its 45 activities funded in Round I:

1. Meet USAID’s WEE priorities and relevant gender policies;
2. Represent a broad range of approaches and key characteristics;
3. Utilize a range of funding and procurement mechanisms; and
4. Mainstream gender within large USAID programs in multiple sectors.

¹⁷ Annex II provides a complete list of all 48 activities funded in Round I, which has a total value of \$90,205,005.

¹⁸ Annex IV presents USAID Funding Call for Short Concept Notes: Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Fund Initiative ESF Incentives Funds, March 2019.

EQ I FINDINGS

FINDING I.1: Round I activities partially address USAID’s WEE and broader gender policy priorities.

The ET assessed the extent to which the WEE Portfolio of 45 activities furthered USAID’s WEE pillars and relevant USAID gender and economic growth policy priorities. It found that Round I activities strengthen USAID’s programming in promoting women’s economic empowerment globally. Its 45 activities included all three pillars, three types of partnership models—mainly representing the private sector, USAID regions, and country income levels. Many of the 45 Round I activities had multiple pillar objectives embedded in the activity design. USAID mission and operating unit staff who participated in the online survey agreed that the Portfolio met the goals of expanding WEE-focused programming throughout the 45 activities. In the same survey, IP staff agreed that the Portfolio met the expectations of USAID AMs, local partners, and female and male beneficiaries and that WEE objectives were being met (see Table I).

TABLE I: Extent to which USAID and IP Staff Agree that the Round I Portfolio Meets WEE Objectives

Stakeholder	USAID Staff (n=34)	IP Staff (n=35)
Extent of Agreement	5.45	5.58

Source: Online Survey, 2020.

Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 40 USAID staff and 66 IP staff responded to this question.

Scale: Strongly agree – 6 | Agree – 5 | Somewhat agree – 4 | Somewhat disagree – 3 | Disagree – 2 | Strongly disagree – 1

According to the online surveys and KIs, USAID AMs and GenDev POCs, on average, agreed slightly more than AOR/CORs that the referent Round I activities strongly integrated WEE into the activity portfolio of the management office unit. This slight variance is most likely attributable to the fact that AMs/POCs are more directly involved in technically supporting the activities and development of the MEL plans. WEE integration into pre-existing programs was easier to track and more visible to USAID staff. One AM noted that, due to COVID-19 related delays, assessing if expectations were being met was difficult.

However, KIIs presented a more nuanced description of how the Round I activities contributed to WEE goals. All 115 KII respondents, including USAID staff and IPs, agreed that the Round I activities contributed broadly to women's economic empowerment. About one-fifth of KII respondents did not agree with this statement because they found the Pillar 3 schema too narrowly focused on people outputs and not addressing systemic gender gaps. This tension between funding longer-term development goals and immediate needs will be addressed in EQ3. Several USAID/Washington staff commented that the former White House emphasis on economically empowering 50 million women in developing countries favored short-term training activities rather than addressing systemic changes. KII respondents generally agreed that policy reforms in the enabling environment require partner country governments and local civil society organizations to help build the dialogue, advocacy, trust, and momentum necessary to accelerate the removal of policy constraints and engage in the broader reform process.¹⁹

The KIIs also revealed less agreement among USAID staff on whether Round I activities and their heavy focus on access to finance contributed to broader gender equality²⁰ goals, such as achieving equal economic rights and more diverse economic opportunities for women and girls. According to the primary data analysis, respondents believed that the Portfolio addresses USAID's commonly used gender domains, but unevenly. Overall, USAID's gender domains specific to cultural norms and beliefs and control over assets, mainly property, were most frequently addressed by Round I activities. In contrast, the gender domains related to systems changes in laws, policies, regulations, institutional practices, and patterns of power and decision-making were only mentioned three times and twice, respectively, in the KIIs, as the highest activity priority.

¹⁹ USAID Policy Reform Lessons Learned: A Review of Economic Growth-Related Policy Reform Activities in Development Countries. June 2007.

²⁰ USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 205 lists six main domains of gender equality: 1) Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices, 2) cultural norms and beliefs, 3) gender roles, responsibilities, and time use, 4) access to and control over assets and resources, 5) patterns of power and decision-making, and 6) physical safety and security (GBV).

FINDING 1.2: Key characteristics of Round I activities align with USAID's women's economic empowerment and economic growth priorities.

All 115 of the KII respondents agreed that the Portfolio contributed to women's economic empowerment and that Round I activities have strong linkages to the three pillars and different types of partnership models and represent all USAID regions. The ET confirms that the WEE activities are being implemented in countries of all levels of income.²¹ The technical selection criteria for the funded activities categorized approaches to advancing women's economic empowerment in three pillars, which seek to fill a "Major and specific gap that existed in development assistance"²² in bolstering women's economic empowerment. The ET found that the Round I activities strengthen USAID's programming to promote women's empowerment globally through mission-led programming, impact-driven grants, innovative partnerships with the USG, private-sector companies, non-governmental and faith-based organizations, and other donors. All activities in Round I are implementing interventions that address USAID WEE priorities according to secondary data, online surveys, and KIIs. For example:

Engendering Utilities, VisionSpring, and Women Prospering in Technology in Latin America focus on advancing women in the workforce through capacity building, including workforce development, vocational education, and skills training. These activities prepare women for careers in the same jobs and sectors as men, including traditionally male-dominated industries such as energy and technology.

Jadi Pendusaha Mandiri (JAPRI), Women Connect Challenge Round 2, and Paraguay Value Chain Activity take very different approaches to increase women's entrepreneurship through access to capital, markets, digital technology, networks, and mentorship. **Women's Economic Empowerment in Papua New Guinea** and **Women in Peruvian Water Security** focus on embedding gender in USAID-funded projects in the male-dominated fields of conservation, water, and biodiversity to set a precedent for continuing to integrate gender into future program approaches. Table 2 highlights some examples of how specific activities address USAID's women's economic empowerment priorities.

²¹ World Bank defines country income levels as low income, lower-middle income, upper-middle income, and high income.

²² W-GDP Annual Report 2020–2021, page 10, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/W-GDP-Annual-Report-2020-2021.pdf>

TABLE 2: Illustrative Examples of Pillar-Aligned Round I Activities

Pillar	Activity	Illustrative Interventions
1. Women Prospering in the Workforce	Expansion of Engendering Utilities	Provides technical assistance to improve leadership and develop the skills and tools needed to increase gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in the energy and water utility sectors.
	VisionSpring	With help from Target, Levi Strauss & Co., and other industry leaders, VisionSpring supplies factory workers, mostly women, with eyeglasses critical to performing and keeping their jobs in the garment industry in Southeast Asia.
	Women Prospering in Technology in Latin America	Works with information and communications technology companies in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru to equip women with the skills needed for placement and promotion in tech sector jobs.
2. Women Succeeding as Entrepreneurs	JAPRI	Focuses on young women (aged 18–29) in selected business sectors to increase women-owned enterprises and support growth in income and revenue for 5,000 women in poultry supply chains.
	Women Connect Challenge Round 2 (WCC2)	Tekki Jigeeen, a WCC2 grantee, is a digital program providing rural women in Senegal with entrepreneurial training, resources, and banking services to help them overcome barriers they face in agricultural value chains. Solidaridad, another WCC2 grantee, links female dairy farmers in Bangladesh to formal supply chains and includes a mobile money component.
	Paraguay Value Chain Activity	Trains rural women to produce products for international buyers and local markets as part of farmer groups, which could transition to becoming cooperatives in global value chains.
3. Women Enabled in the Economy	Women's Economic Empowerment in Papua New Guinea	Partners with the Papua New Guinea Business Coalition for Women to reform laws and business practices to reduce gender-based violence.
	Women in Peruvian Water Security	Supports the drafting of national or sub-national policies, laws, regulations, and government plans to mainstream gender for natural infrastructure and water resources.

FINDING 1.3: WEE Round I activity investments strongly favored finance for women's entrepreneurship and pre-existing programs.

As noted in the introduction to EQI, the selection criteria for the awards emphasized USAID's strong interest in supporting activities with the potential for broadly transformative impact, including these criteria stated in the USAID Call for Proposals:

"Where applicable, activities should be designed to support or complement the relevant gender-related and sectoral priorities established by host country governments and civil society actors and to engage local actors in program design and implementation, including possible revisions to existing programs."

Only nine activities were funded solely by the WEE Portfolio versus buy-ins to existing programs in Round I due mainly to GenDev staffing and time constraints. All other procurements were added to existing programs

and programs supported by other sources of funding. This type of procurement, referred to as a "Buy-in," has many advantages in working with well-established partners with proven management capacity and reporting skills. It also allows for contractual flexibility that helps USAID missions and operating units to work more easily with the private sector. Respondents, especially USAID/Washington and mission staff, stated that buy-ins to global and regional procurement mechanisms accelerated WEE investments. According to the qualitative analysis, the activity design and consequent funding mechanism are important characteristics for implementing and managing activities. The AOR/CORs noted that buy-in mechanisms are easier to manage because the activity has USAID-compliant reporting mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation requirements in place (see the following text box). Some USAID staff state a preference for mechanisms based on time and materials contracts or cost plus fixed fee contracts because IPs had to meet specific milestones before receiving payments, thus making these types of awards and contracts easier to manage.

FEEDBACK FROM USAID AND IP STAFF ON UTILIZING BUY-IN MECHANICS

“Adding funds to the cooperative agreement means there is already a free-standing relationship between the grantee and USAID; we have confidence that the networks will expand and reach new beneficiaries in Asia and South Asia.” – USAID AOR

“The buy-in funding mechanism was very positive and allowed for piloting innovative loan practices to support female entrepreneurs.”

– IP

“This funding mechanism is great. The fixed amount award made it easy to manage because payment was tied to performance milestones.”

– USAID/Washington

About half of the WEE Round I funding went to large established IPs. For example, the largest funding is a \$10 million investment in USAID’s **INVEST**, a flagship program mobilizing investment into high-impact areas. DAI is implementing **INVEST**, Palladium is implementing **CATALYZE**, Tetra Tech is implementing **Engendering Utilities** and **Workplace Advancement for Gender Equality (WAGE)**, and Creative Associates is implementing **West Africa Investment Trade Hub**. The three largest activities, INVEST, CATALYZE, and WAGE, are in the \$9–10 million range of funding. Both INVEST and CATALYZE are USAID global flagship programs that use blended finance to leverage private capital and mobilize sustained private sector involvement for women-owned or businesses led by women. These businesses hire women and sell products and services particularly suited to female entrepreneurs.

The distribution of funding is presented in Table 3, and Figure 4, which show the median amount of funding for the Round I activities was \$1,100,000, while the average was \$2,004,556. Only five activities were funded in the \$5–10 million range. Eighty-nine percent of activities received less than \$3 million in funding, with 13 activities receiving less than \$1 million in funding (see Table 3 and Figure 4). The larger awards were global and based in USAID/Washington, while the smaller awards tended to be field-based activities awarded in the March 2019 Call for Concept Proposals.

FIGURE 3: Funding Allocated for Round I Activities (FY 2018) (n=45)

Median	Average	Maximum	Minimum
\$1,100,000	\$2,004,556	\$10,000,000	\$500,000

FIGURE 4: Distribution of Funding for 45 Round I Activities (FY 2018) (n=45)

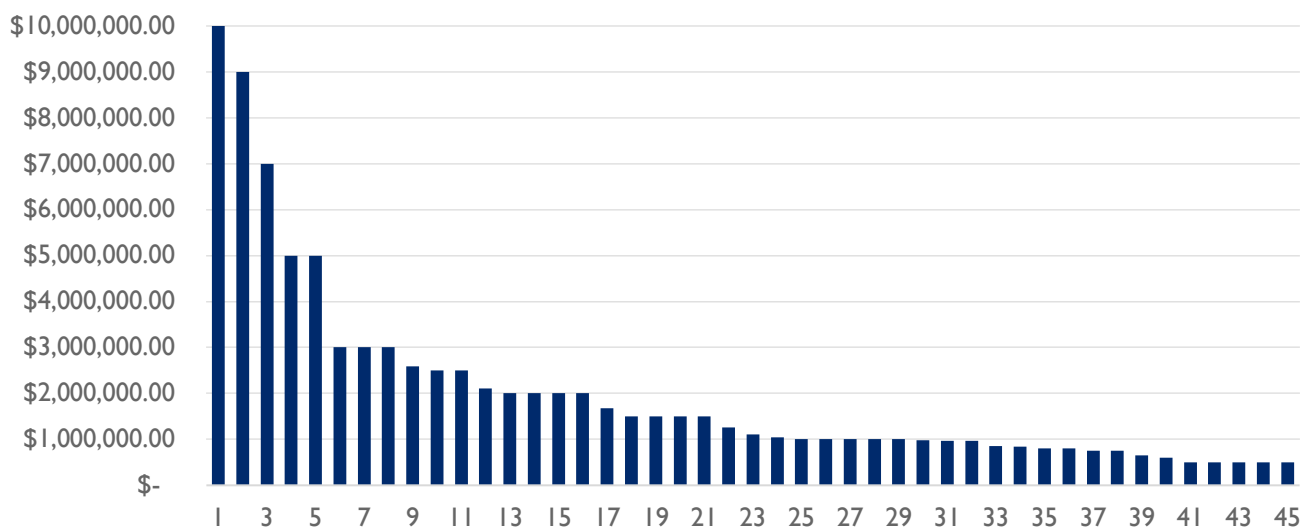


Table 4 shows the three activities that received the largest amount of funding. None of the other 42 activities received funding over \$4.2 million.

TABLE 4: Round I Activities that Received Largest Funding Awards

Activity	Funding Amount	Illustrative Interventions
INVEST	\$10 million	A flagship program mobilizing investment into high-impact areas. This buy-in has enabled INVEST to help the Women's World Banking Asset to raise \$100 million for gender-lens investing.
WAGE	\$10 million	Continues adapting and scaling up USAID's efforts to increase gender equality and women's economic empowerment opportunities within traditionally male-dominated sectors, as pioneered in USAID's Engendering Utilities model. Seeks to identify and implement gender equity best practices to help industries meet their core business goals.
CATALYZE	\$9 million	With the ultimate goal of driving significant private capital to support women in developing countries and close the gender finance gap at scale, the activity seeks to build greater financial resilience for women in the developing world.

The lower range of funding was characteristic of single country awards and NPIs,²³ such as the **Paraguay Value Chain** activity and **Women's Empowerment in Secondary Cities** activity in Tunisia. Several USAID staff and IPs recognized the relatively smaller level of funding available for new activities compared with the size of the investment in already existing USAID global programs that focus on access to finance and workforce development. Some of the reasons respondents cited for the large discrepancies in activity funding amounts included acknowledging the pressure from the end of the fiscal year deadlines to obligate funding. At the same time, the initiative was still being structurally developed.

Other remarks included:

"We wanted to bring in firms that have some level of expertise so that our activities could be scaled or were in a unique opportunity to replicate proven successes in new areas or sectors." – USAID COR

"The overall soundness of the technical criteria was influenced by the scaled impact—which was often very theoretical, especially with new for-profit partners and corporations." – USAID/Washington COR

By utilizing the buy-in mechanism, large amounts of funding could be distributed quickly to large, established IPs that had strong track records and operating and field systems in place, which likely guaranteed rapid start-up, proven and effective management and reporting, established networks, and in-house gender expertise. USAID staff noted that WEE investments in larger flagship programs made sense because these programs were already effective and had achieved results.

"Funding allowed us time to develop proof of concept for new financial services and products that had not been marketed previously in West Africa." – IP

Some of the disadvantages are that these larger IPs tend to recycle technical staff, are more expensive, and often run activities from headquarters rather than in the field, affecting agility and innovation. Sometimes bigger investments can be perceived as "too big to fail." Lastly, working with such large IPs also makes disaggregating WEE results difficult within larger USAID global and regional programs, so WEE results are hard to trace.

²³ USAID's NPI seeks to work with new partners, underutilized partners, local entities, and locally established partners; NPI simplifies access to USAID resources and makes it easier for partners to bring forward their ideas and innovation.

FINDING 1.4: WEE investments catalyzed USAID and other agencies' thinking and learning about WEE.

Three USAID gender advisors remarked that the high visibility of the W-GDP Initiative galvanized USAID to ensure that programs provide the resources, training, and support that women need to thrive in the economy. The first convening of all gender advisors and Washington leadership in November 2019 was an important milestone in raising the profile of WEE Round I activities and shared early learning about the requirements of the WEE Portfolio, the WEE funding, and best practices and resources in gender-related programming. The WEE Portfolio afforded new opportunities for GenDev to expand its reach globally and increase its technical capacity through new hires.

“\$100 million in new funding for gender is a massive opportunity. What is great about this program is that it is not Washington-centric and gives the missions a lot of latitude without much interference.”

– USAID/Washington

“WEE funds have the power to strengthen gender integration into existing activities so that it is on par with other focus issues. So that gender is in the toolkit.” – USAID/Washington

“WEE was a catalyst for many thoughtful improvements in the agency space and led to better interactions with USG agencies and multilateral organizations—all of which go at different speeds and are subject to different political pressures.”

– USAID/Washington

About two-thirds of the IPs commented that GenDev initially did not have sufficient staff to manage the ambitious launch and rollout because there were few GenDev staff and fewer who were certified as AOR/CORs. Some partners that were already implementing programs characterized the new investments in existing programs as *“Smooth with a few bumps.”* Two respondents characterized the funding as a *“Very slow process”* that required them to operate on the cost-share portion of their budgets for the first six months of implementation. USAID staff also commented on the unusually *“Pressurized rollout”* due to the high visibility of the initiative, too few staff, and ambitious timeline to stand up a new program.

Many IPs suggested that GenDev provide some orientation and access to WEE-focused gender analyses, sector-specific tools, training, MEL plans, sustainability plans, and other resources. The launch of the WEE Community of Practice during the evaluation period was viewed by GenDev and a few IPs as an important venue for sharing and understanding the benefits of advancing women's gains in the economy. This Community of Practice is a forum in which follow-up to IP suggestions can be addressed.

EQI CONCLUSIONS

The range of the WEE Portfolio of Round I activities is impressive in the size of its \$100 million annual investment, geographic reach to more than 60 countries, and the plethora of innovative approaches to supporting women's economic empowerment activities. All 115 of the KII respondents agreed that the Portfolio contributed to women's economic empowerment. About one-fifth of KII respondents—especially USAID and IP staff associated with the four case studies—tended to see the three pillar goals as narrowly defined and limiting gender-transformative approaches. These respondents suggested the pillar structure focused too much on training outputs and undervalued the importance of engaging with local partners and host governments. IPs stated that Pillar 3 objectives required longer-term investments before measuring results, so only short-term results were reported. No consensus existed on whether the WEE Round I activities had the right balance for addressing immediate needs with longer-term restrictive legal, regulatory, and systemic cultural barriers associated with Pillar 3.

There is always a balancing act in gender programming, “To go deep or go wide,” by tackling socio-economic and legally binding constraints that perpetuate the economic gender gaps or reach as many women as possible by addressing immediate needs such as accessing finance. More than \$30 million of Round 1 was targeted to reach already established female entrepreneurs under Pillar 2, emphasizing commercial finance for the “Missing middle.” This preference meant that the portfolio worked most closely with large national and regional commercial banks and lenders rather than transforming micro-lending into higher-value commercial lending, which likely would reach many more direct beneficiaries. Some of the smaller value activities secured commitments from the governments of Cote d’Ivoire, Morocco, and Colombia to address legal reforms, which could potentially benefit tens of millions of women in years ahead.

As noted earlier, the women’s economic empowerment activities were funded under the W-GDP Initiative through a National Security Presidential Memorandum, which mandated the participation of ten USG executive departments and agencies. Even under the best of circumstances, whole-of-government presidential initiatives require unusually extensive collaboration and communications efforts under ambitious timelines, and WEE was no exception. The WEE Portfolio provided increased financial resources to the staff of GenDev, USAID/Washington, and operating units to increase internal learning and capacity building across USAID to advance WEE and gender equality.



An AWE graduate from Kenya showcasing her products from Kaya Nuts, a socialenterprise cashew nuts brand that buys raw cashew nuts from local women farmers and processors.

PHOTO: Miswaleh Nlibaka Zingizi

EQI RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Assess the trade-offs of investing one-half of the WEE Portfolio in existing USAID flagship programs through buy-in mechanisms with large, well-established IPs who provide sub-awards to local organizations or directly into new USAID partners, including partner country governments, women’s organizations, NGOs, and CBOs.
2. Optimize opportunities and mitigate risks of large and smaller investments by improving the quality of MEL data that helps GenDev staff understand the past performances and management capacities of the contracts and agreements under consideration.
3. Integrate WEE activities with other USG and host government programs to support other gender equality programming that support women’s organizations and community-based organizations leadership in office, public sector, civil society, and political parties to amplify women’s agency in decision-making, based on findings from the case studies.
4. Ensure proven gender-transformational approaches are embedded in the design to support legal, regulatory, policy, and social changes. This is important because WEE is inextricably linked to other essential human rights, such as living lives free of violence and exploitation; benefiting from formal and informal education; and having access to registration, identification, and citizenship documents.
5. USAID/DDI/GenDev should provide guidance and assist each WEE activity in preparing a gender-sensitive baseline to measure progress in achieving women’s economic empowerment.
6. Assess whether GenDev needs more staff under hiring mechanisms that can become certified to serve as AOR/CORs to strengthen the overall management capacity for rapid-expansion WEE activities.

EQ2: HOW EFFECTIVELY ARE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS SUPPORTING THE FUNDING, DESIGN, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WEE ROUND I ACTIVITIES?

This section broadly categorizes the types of partnerships established or utilized through the WEE Round I activities. In most activities, USAID worked with United States–based private contractors or international NGOs. These two categories of partners implemented 81 percent of activities. The WEE Round I activities benefited from USAID’s 2018 Private Sector Engagement (PSE) Policy, a strategic approach to planning and programming with the private sector for greater scale, sustainability, and effectiveness of development outcomes. The new policy was a call to action for USAID staff and partners to increase and deepen engagement with the private sector and emphasize market-based approaches. This context is important in understanding why the Portfolio emphasized partnering with the private sector.²⁴ This chapter assesses the opportunities, challenges, and constraints partners faced and how the Round I activities:

1. Established and strengthened partnerships with the private sector, partner country governments, and nonprofit organizations;
2. Collaborated internally with other USAID operating units and USG partners;
3. Increased partners’ technical and management capacity despite challenges in reporting and procurement; and
4. Utilized new partners under USAID’s NPI.

EQ2 FINDINGS

FINDING 2.1: Establishing and strengthening partnerships is a key strength.

USAID has a strong history of utilizing diverse partnership models to foster economic growth and mainstream gender through close collaboration with the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Nearly all 115 respondents said that USAID effectively engaged different partners in piloting new approaches and scaling up the best performers (see the next page for a discussion on USAID definition of partnerships).

²⁴ Defined as a for-profit, commercial entities and their affiliated foundations, financial institutions, investors, and intermediaries; business associations and cooperatives; micro, small, medium, and large enterprises that operate in the formal and informal sectors; American, local, regional, and multinational businesses; and for-profit approaches that generate sustainable income, such as ventures run by an NGO or a social enterprise.

The WEE funding allowed for flexible, specialized activity design and implementation. According to one USAID/ Washington staff member, the strengths of the Round I activities are their focus on learning and adaption to drive innovation and “*Scale up targets of opportunity quickly.*”

The number of partnerships (270²⁵) supported by Round I funding is a key strength of the Portfolio. Based on the characteristics of the main implementing partners, the ET grouped the partnerships into three categories: private sector, partner country governments, and nonprofit organizations (including other donors). As noted in the preceding section, the technical selection criteria for awards tilted in favor of private sector partnerships, which implemented two-thirds of the Portfolio’s activities. Thirteen of the 45 Round I activities (38 percent) feature formal arrangements with host country governments.²⁶

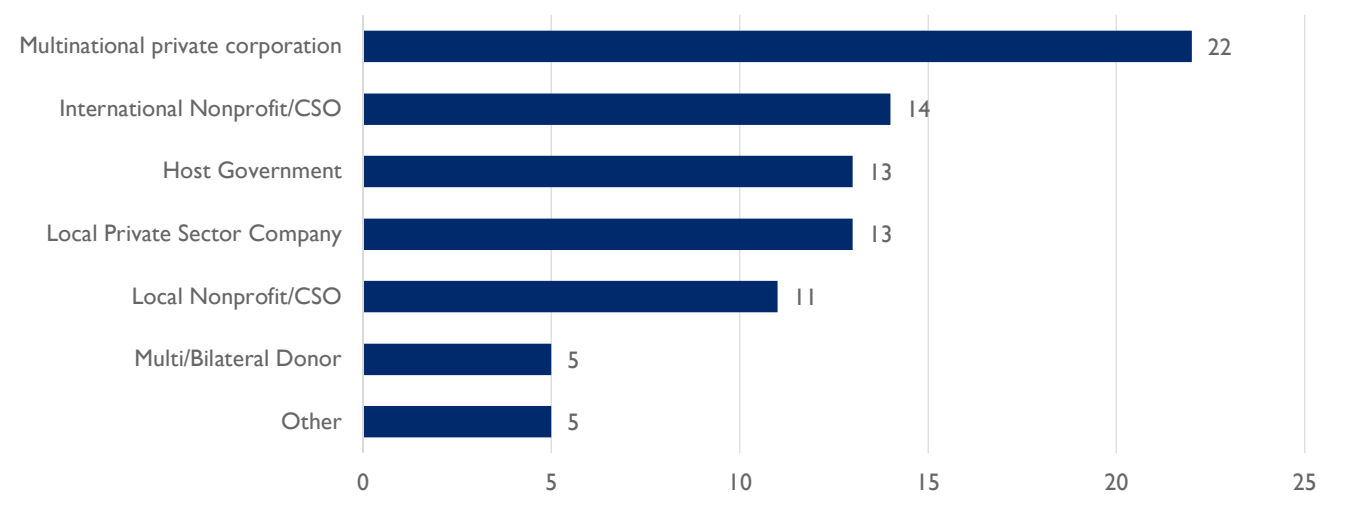
Many activities have multiple partners involved in specific interventions. The **West Africa Trade Hub (WAITH)** and **E-PESO** have partnerships with the private sector, partner country governments, and local NGOs. In contrast, **VisionSpring** and **WECconnect International** have only private sector partners. Although most IPs could identify the different types of partnerships involved in their activities, some IPs were unclear about how USAID defined partnerships. About half of the activities are reported to have subgrantees and subcontractors from the nonprofit sector.

Figure 5 shows that IPs, sub-awards, and activity collaborators partnered most frequently with the private sector in Round I activities; 22 are partnering with multinational private sector partners, and 13 activities are partnering with national private sector partners. In addition to the private sector, five activities partner with multi and bilateral donors, 13 with host country governments, 11 with national nonprofits/civil society, and 14 with international nonprofits/civil society. In the online surveys, each IP was asked to characterize the types of partners engaged in their activity; their characterizations of the types of partnerships is represented in Figure 5 on the next page.

²⁵ USAID reported this figure in March 2021.

²⁶ The WEE Round I solicitation did not specify the definitions and parameters of partnerships, so some types of partnerships may be mischaracterized in the activity profiles administered by USAID.

FIGURE 5: Number of Round I Activities with Types of Partners (n=45)



Source: Data Services, USAID, 2021. Note: CSO = civil society organization.

RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON PARTNERSHIPS

“Many of our local partners provide financial services and products to women who would not have any other sources of capital investment. These partners know the banking regulations and biases against female entrepreneurs, we have to trust their caution in changing lending practices.” – IP

“Some countries, more than others, have low tolerance for financial risks, so it is important that we engage the government as a partner in granting concessional lines of credit and helping eliminate lots of regulations and credit conditions.” – IP

“The private sector can be an important partner because firms can host young women as apprentices and help break gender stereotypes across male-dominated industries.” – IP

“The private sector can be an important partner because firms can host young women as apprentices and help break gender stereotypes across male-dominated industries.” – USAID/Washington

TABLE 5: Illustrative Examples of Partnership Structures

Activity	Pillar(s) Supported	Illustrative Interventions
Self-Empowerment and Equity for Change (SEE Change)	1, 2, 3	USAID is partnering with Johns Hopkins University to replicate the SEE Change women's leadership training in WEE activities Engendering Utilities and Clean Cities Blue Oceans (CCBO) and with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), women's groups, and governmental organizations.
Protect Wildlife in Philippines	1, 2, 3	Integrated partner country government gender focal points in the activity design, gender analysis, and implementation; the activity also encouraged indigenous men to share domestic responsibilities with women.
World Cocoa Foundation (WCF)	2, 3	In partnership with CARE International and Vert+, international and national NGOs, WCF established about 400 new Village Savings and Loan Associations in Côte d'Ivoire, which directly benefit nearly 21,000 female members.
Women Empowered in Recycling and Waste Management	1, 2, 3	The private sector and NGO partners invest in WEE interventions such as workforce development and training for women, establishing childcare centers at material recovery facilities, and finance and capacity building for women entrepreneurs.

FINDING 2.2: Availability of WEE funds incentivized attention to gender across USAID.

The 2018 Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act requires USAID to ensure that gender equality and female empowerment considerations are integrated into its strategy, programs, and activities. The new law and the former W-GDP Initiative greatly boosted internal and external collaboration across technical sectors, missions, bureaus, and offices to integrate WEE and gender considerations into existent programming across economic growth, agriculture, land reform, energy, resilience and food security, and conservation. Other strong advancements were gained in women's mobility and halting workplace sexual harassment through new partnerships. The Round I investments allowed several USAID missions to utilize Round I funding to expand their gender portfolios across multiple sectors and set more ambitious strategic goals. Mission support was critical in bringing together local and national government partners, women's organizations, and other development partners that had been previously working adjacently in the target communities. USAID missions that reported strong relationships with national and partner country governments leveraged these relationships on behalf of the Round I activities, notably those focused on access to finance for women entrepreneurs, such as **PACE in Colombia** and **WAITH**.

USAID/Philippines leveraged WEE funds to mainstream gender interventions in four distinct activities: **E-PESO**, **RESPOND**, **SURGE**, and **Protect Wildlife**,

facilitated by the close cooperation between the USAID/Philippines gender advisor and the COR, who are both based in Manila, and work closely together. USAID/Ghana supported the IP of **WAITH** in adapting the Organizational Conflict Assessment Tool (OCAT) to identify potential problems affecting firms and building the pipeline. According to the IP, this tool, in combination with more traditional activity-level gender analysis,

"Helped us understand the importance of community engagement and support. The OCAT findings led to the development of check lists, monitoring, due diligence and institutionalization of good practices adopted by private sector as well as the design of training, mentoring and targeted support for women and senior management."

USAID/Paraguay's support of the **Paraguay Value Chain** activity and USAID/Indonesia's support of **JAPRI** helped steer WEE funds to existing rural development and agricultural programs that support rural women in producing products for international buyers and local markets as part of farmer groups that can become cooperatives in global value chains. **PACE** collaborated with USAID to identify financial institutions that could be potential loan partners for female entrepreneurs, change the lending model in Colombia, support co-lending, and integrate a gender lens into all steps of the loan cycle.

Four Round I activities bought into a suite of related programs managed under three separate contracts: **Women Powering Africa, Expansion of Engendering Utilities, WAGE, and Women in African Power Network.** The WEE investments allowed expansion to 29 utility partners in 21 countries and the piloting of accelerated courses for female and male beneficiaries.

“Without W-GDP funding they would have followed a more typical USAID path—good faith effort to include gender but it probably would not have included a full-time gender advisor. Gender probably wouldn’t have been so integrated.” – USAID/COR

“Normally USAID projects include gender in certain project goals. W-GDP funding allows gender to be more fully integrated into all aspects of the activity.” – USAID/COR

GenDev has traditionally worked closely with the Innovation, Technology, and Research (ITR) Hub and sourced its Annual Program Statement (APS) to identify potential investments. The agency-wide PSE focus on leveraging the private sector’s value-added is prominent in Round I activities. The WEE Portfolio activities contributed significantly to increasing PSE. These advances were evident in entrepreneurial support to women through increased access to finance and collateral. Women’s participation in the labor market and traditionally male-dominated industries is funded globally and implemented in more than 30 countries. The ET did not hear from respondents that GenDev is collaborating with other USAID operating units on an ongoing basis, especially with USAID’s Local Faith and Transformative Partnership (LFT) Hub, which leads on new partnerships, and collaboration with the Center of Economics and Market Development (EMD), which was likely related to staffing constraints during Round I.

FINDING 2.3: Interagency and other USG partnering is complicated and slow to launch.

Not all the Round I activities are in the implementation stage because 13 of the 45 Round I activities have yet to launch, despite being awarded FY 2018 funds well before COVID-19 created other obstacles. There is not a consistent pattern in which types of partnership models have been slow to start except for the four activities involving internal USG interagency collaboration. None of the 32 activities in the implementation stage were terminated.

The Round I technical selection criteria did not define “Interagency partner” but did state that this factor will be considered in scoring:

“Collaboration with InterAgency partners in design, implementation, funding or evaluation of the proposed activities.”²⁷

However, the practicality of partnering with other government agencies presented many operational challenges, especially in the design stage. Respondents noted that other USG agencies were less equipped to work with the private sector designing WEE activities. The interagency partnerships at the headquarters and mission level were slow to launch and remain in the design and procurement stage since receiving FY 2018 funding, including the partnerships with the Millennium Challenge Corporation in Côte d’Ivoire, Peace Corps collaboration for digital literacy training, and the U.S. Department of Commerce in the Dominican Republic. According to one respondent,

“Multi-agency start-ups are really complicated. It matters where a program or project sits because the whole ecosystem involves staffing, budgeting, monitoring, reporting, and placing the project within the big picture of that agency’s goals, so it makes sense to their senior leadership.” – USAID/Washington

²⁷ See Annex VIII – USAID Call for Proposals.

For example, NASA,²⁸ USAID, and regional technical institutions worldwide, through the global SERVIR network, are trying to close the gap between higher education and employment and the advancement of women in STEM careers. Despite the award of \$970,000 allocated FY 2018 and applied in FY 20019, this activity was not in the implementation stage during the evaluation period. Another activity that remains in the design stage is collaborating with the U.S. Department of Commerce to work with the Dominican Republic Government to revise procurement laws and practices to create greater opportunities for women-led businesses and provide technical assistance to help women-led businesses take advantage of those opportunities. This activity remains in the design stage.

The ET did not conduct KIIs with interagency partners because these activities were not in the implementation stage of the project cycle. Therefore, assessing the quality of interagency partnerships during the evaluation period is limited.

FINDING 2.4: Partners' technical and management capacities increased despite some challenges and constraints.

The Round I activities covered a wide spectrum of partnering relationships with USAID. GenDev does not track which activities involve new partners but based on KIIs, the ET estimates that 30 percent of the activities included secondary partners²⁹ that had never partnered with USAID previously. In contrast, the activities that received the most funding, such as **INVEST**, **CATALYZE**, **Engendering Utilities**, and **WAITH**, are managed by partners with decades of experience implementing USAID projects and activities. Therefore, the management capacity of the partners varied widely and was a critical factor in determining what kind of support USAID provided. The main challenges and constraints secondary partners expressed were related to start-up, procurement processes, and reporting requirements.

Most partners said they had positive interactions with their USAID counterparts. According to the online survey, all 16 AMs and POCs representing 13 Portfolio activities who answered the survey question agreed or strongly agreed that USAID and other agencies effectively support the Portfolios' funding, design, and implementation. KII respondents overwhelmingly said that USAID/Washington and missions provided significant technical assistance to the activity. However, some IPs noted GenDev sometimes did not

have the bandwidth or information from the Administration to respond quickly to queries about when funds would be disbursed. Many private-sector partners found the USAID processes and procedures to be cumbersome and duplicative in the early stage of Round I activity implementation.

"Our AOR was fantastic! She provided ideas, introductions to the missions, and identified potential partners in several countries." – IP

"The MEL plan was very complicated, and it took a long time to make the dashboard, but our COR helped us and found another person in GenDev to help us understand the indicators." – IP

"The reporting requirements were a heavy burden. There were so many indicators and then other demands for information. The communications aspect of the partnership was the worst." – IP

In order of frequently mentioned types of technical support, the IPs said that USAID's support was most critical during start-up and in developing the activity's MEL plan. The next most frequently mentioned type of support relates to USAID-designed tools and resources needed to conduct gender analyses and assessments that measure gender gaps in specific sectors and value chains. Other IPs noted that without USAID support, making inroads with government officials and securing partnering agreements would have taken much longer.

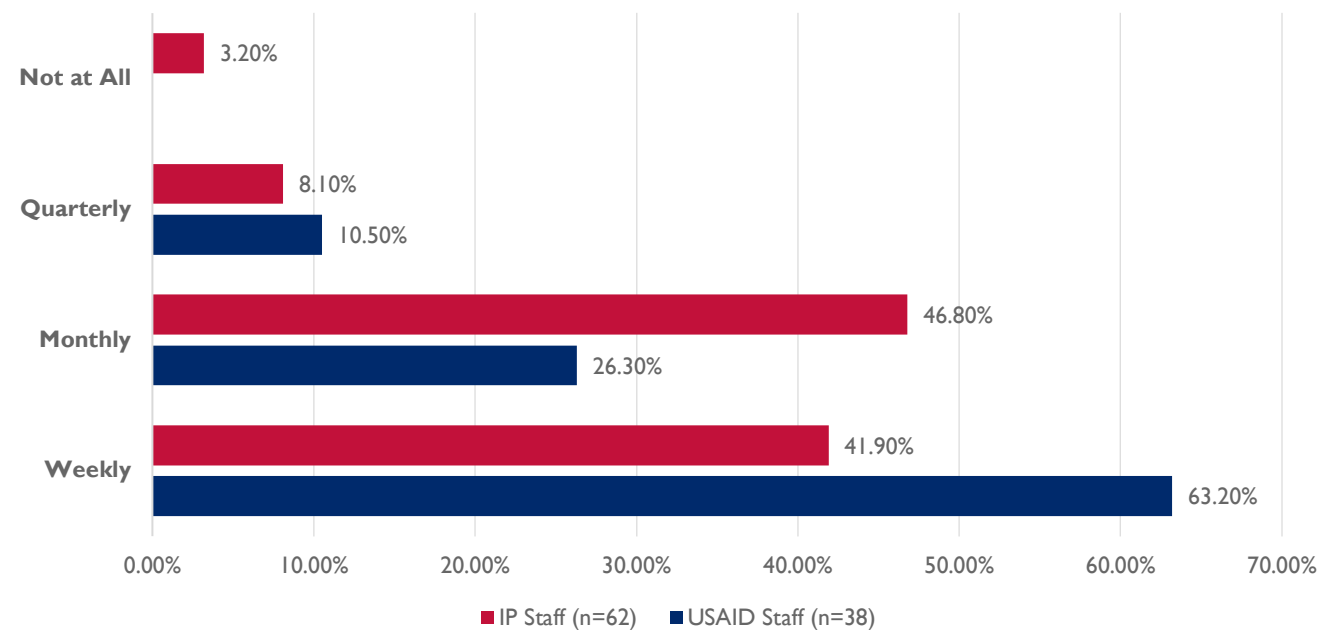
Several IPs stated that weekly and monthly meetings with USAID managers and gender advisors were especially valuable during the design and start-up phases. According to the online survey, most USAID staff (more than 60 percent) said that they communicate weekly with the primary IP about the activity. In comparison, most IP staff (47 percent) said they communicate with a USAID POC monthly (Figure 6). Two IP staff indicated that they did not communicate with a USAID POC but had regular communication with the missions.

In general, the IP respondents indicated that weekly communication by email or in person with USAID staff was the most efficient frequency of communication and more frequently during peak periods around the submissions of quarterly and annual reports.

²⁸ NASA is not among the 10 interagency partners.

²⁹ Secondary partners may be subcontractors or subgrantees as related to the terms of the contract or award.

FIGURE 6: Frequency of Communication about the Activity between IP Partners and USAID Staff



Source: Online Survey, 2020.

Note: This figure depicts responses by total respondents in the survey, not by activity, as activities with multiple respondents shared a diversity in responses. The total respondents of USAID staff for this survey question are 38 as two respondents did not complete this question.

FINDING 2.5: Respondents report data fatigue as a major constraint.

Nearly all IPs—both well-established and new partners and a fair number of USAID staff—complained of “Data fatigue” due to the continual requests for information from USAID on behalf of the former White House. According to some USAID and IP respondents, the engagement of the former White House and the Portfolio Working Group encouraged gender mainstreaming initiatives in new sectors but at the same time resulted in excessive calls for data and inordinate amounts of time spent on communications and activity branding. Respondents said the demands for data were often not well articulated and caused tension among the partners. This was especially true for private-sector partners who wanted to know the exact purpose of the request and how confidential information would be used. Several IPs noted that the request for monthly reports was “Too much,” whereas quarterly reporting had a “Better rhythm.” GenDev dispensed with the monthly reporting requirement during the period of this evaluation.

“Reporting is burdensome, no clear chain of command... unclear who is calling the shots ... so difficult to know what is expected.” – IP

“Branding is challenging. The problem seems to be no clear guidance is provided and no one knows who has the right answer.” – IP

“The requests for data were relentless in the first two years, we were constantly responding to calls for data—often at the last minute.” – IP

“Branding was not part of the milestone contract. It is an added burden for IP staff” – USAID/Washington

FINDING 2.6: Four partners with capacity-building needs utilized NPI.

USAID defines new partners as:

“An individual or organization that has not received any funding from USAID as a prime partner over the last five years.”³⁰

Four primary IPs fit this definition. The benefit of bringing on new partners to address WEE and gender equality gaps is that they bring new perspectives, methods, and a broader reach to the Portfolio’s activities. These new partners were especially strong in leveraging local funds, rapidly launching field implementation, and tapping into local networks to access markets and value chains. Four new partners qualifying under the NPI program applied for Round I funding. As it was their first experience working with USAID, they had some difficulty implementing gender actions, and meeting all the reporting requirements in the first six months was challenging. NPI respondents said they anticipated simpler access to USAID resources and ways to advance their ideas and innovations. Many of the new partners relied upon strong local partners to develop and implement the gender interventions. According to KII respondents, none of the new partners accessed assistance from USAID’s NPI Incubator.

EQ2 CONCLUSIONS

The management capacity of the partners varied widely and was a critical factor in determining what kind of support USAID provided. The ET estimates that 30 percent of the activities included new secondary partners cooperating with IPs with decades of experience implementing USAID activities. The main challenges and constraints secondary partners expressed were related to start-up, procurement processes, and reporting requirements. Some delays can be attributed partially to the unreadiness of new partners to operationalize project designs without substantial technical inputs from USAID for gender and MEL support. Whether the significant delays in start-up can be attributed completely or only partially to the current operating environment is difficult to assess.

USAID has a strong network of local, regional, and global NGOs, civil society groups, and foundations with convening power across sectors and geographies that could expand the universe of internal and external partners. The USAID staff also sought to strengthen relationships with partner governments and build their capacity alongside community interests and civil society. However, in three of the case studies, these interventions were often folded into PSE-focused activities and implemented by subcontractors.

Internal collaboration is important because it helps ensure that USAID and other USG departments and agencies collect the right information to understand results. Almost one-third or 13 of the 45 Round I activities have yet to launch, despite being awarded FY 2018 funds well before COVID-19 created other obstacles. Round I was designed to increase collaboration among interagency partners to leverage funding, reach, and influence. Yet, the initiative failed to meet its stated goal of coordinating a growing portfolio of WEE collaborations with other USG agencies. None of the Round I activities with interagency partners reached the implementation stage during this mid-term evaluation.

Missions and other operating units played important roles in providing technical support by building an ecosystem in many countries that took advantage of existing networks and introductions to government partners and other local development partners. The IPs could tap into technical and managerial support at the mission level without a cumbersome bureaucratic process. The ET noted a missed opportunity for GenDev to collaborate more closely and systematically with other USAID operating units such as the LFT Hub and EMD, which could guide the strengthening of various partnership models. With few exceptions, all partners stated their increased capacity to fulfill WEE reporting requirements, but many partners also referenced the unexpectedly onerous reporting requirements. The main issues for some primary partners and secondary partners are the inconsistency in data requests, expectations for reporting, and confusing branding and communications requirements.

³⁰ USAID NPI key definitions:
[https://www.usaid.gov/npi/npi-key-definitions#:~:text=The%20New%20Partnerships%20Initiative%20\(NPI,partners%20to%20work%20with%20USAID.&text=Is%20majority%20Downed%20by%20individuals,ceiving%20assistance%20from%20USAID%3B%20](https://www.usaid.gov/npi/npi-key-definitions#:~:text=The%20New%20Partnerships%20Initiative%20(NPI,partners%20to%20work%20with%20USAID.&text=Is%20majority%20Downed%20by%20individuals,ceiving%20assistance%20from%20USAID%3B%20)

EQ2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Assessing the quality of different partnership models is limited during this mid-term evaluation. Therefore, it is important to examine various partnership models in the final evaluation.
2. Leverage the new ecosystems and partner networks to build stronger links among the private sector, partner governments, CSOs, and NGOs to address legal, regulatory, and institutional barriers perpetuating gender gaps in the business enabling environment.
3. Take advantage of the increased technical and managerial capacity of all prime and sub-award partners in mainstreaming WEE and broader gender equality priorities to foster locally owned and sustainable solutions with new national partners.
4. Adjust technical selection criteria found in the March 2019 Round I Call for Concept Proposals to account for interagency collaboration with partners that may require much longer timeframes and technical support for implementing WEE activities.
5. GenDev should be provided more staff to collaborate more closely and systematically, and on an ongoing basis, with other USAID Centers and Hubs such as the LFT, the EMD, and the PSE Hub to keep a finger on the pulse and share learnings about WEE partnerships.



Participants from USAID's "YES-Georgia" program learn to start and expand their businesses, build professional networks, and contribute to Georgia's economic growth.

PHOTO: USAID and the Crystal Fund

EQ3: HOW EFFECTIVELY ARE THE WEE ROUND 1 ACTIVITIES ADDRESSING ECONOMIC GENDER GAPS AND WEE NEEDS?

The WEE Round 1 Portfolio contains a very broad and diverse range of 45 activities that aim to reduce gender gaps by providing opportunities for women to prosper in the workplace, succeed as entrepreneurs, and improve the enabling environment. The ET found somewhat contradictory findings on whether USAID and IP staff believed their activities were implementing interventions that would improve the enabling environment by addressing systemic gender barriers. An important finding was the catalytic effect of gender-based violence in all regions, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This section discusses the characteristics of the gender gaps being addressed by Round 1 funding, the design of the interventions, cultural sensitivity, and if these interventions expand WEE-focused programming within USAID operating units. The following section assesses if the Round 1 activities are:

1. Providing real solutions in the local context with the participation of local partners;
2. Adapting multisectoral approaches to promote gender norms change and strengthen local systems' capacities to respond to GBV;
3. Mobilizing male champions and other community leaders to support WEE outcomes;
4. Implementing gender-transformative approaches to WEE-focused programming; and
5. Being effective in terms of feasibility, budget, timeline, staff and IP capacity, and local context.

EQ3 FINDINGS

FINDING 3.1: Round 1 activities address WEE needs and indirectly address gender gaps.

Most WEE Round 1 activities claim to address gender norms holding women back, but only a handful of activities have adopted clearly articulated gender-transformative approaches to WEE-focused programming. This is a major weakness found in the Round 1 Portfolio.³¹ USAID's technical selection criteria for an award favors linkages between concepts in Pillars 1 and 2 more than activities specific to Pillar 3 (enabling environment).

³¹ Gender-transformative approaches aim to change existing power dynamics, structures, and social norms that are the root causes of gender-based inequality to achieve development objectives.

The Pillar 3 activities were not recognized as standalone activities deserving award but rather as supporting the outcomes of Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 activities. Therefore, many of the activity designs included Pillar 3 objectives as secondary priorities. Subsequently, about one-third of the 32 IPs stated that they experienced pressure from USAID counterparts to include the Pillar 3 objectives related to the enabling environment in their activity designs. The IPs viewed outcomes in Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 as more realistic goals rather than reporting longer-term systemic changes with small awards. The variance in expectations regarding Pillar 3 goals between the IPs and USAID staff is illustrated in Figure 7 on the next page.

“Our activity only touches the surface of the enabling environment, we are not focused on the regulatory or legal barriers, which makes it hard to report Pillar 3 results because there are none.” – IP

The ET observed that only a few activities are going beyond the kind of programming yielding economic benefits for women to take on the challenges of closing gender gaps. Activities such as the **Promoting WEE in Papua New Guinea** and **WEConnect Challenge** tackled inherent biases of suppliers toward women-owned businesses by building thriving networks, identifying diversified suppliers, and conducting market studies. For example, the **Rwanda WIRE** activity supports young women as apprentices in the energy sector because women are usually sidelined in the back offices or hired as secretaries because good-paying jobs are “Reserved for men.” These interventions focus on soft skills training such as developing workplace readiness, crafting resumes, negotiating for job titles and salaries, and interacting in the work environment. This activity and Engendering Utilities touch upon human resource policies but do not address the broader regulatory policy constraints affecting women in the energy sector.

Only four of the 45 activities directly addressed legal differences based on gender, including two activities, focused on land rights for women. **Women in Peruvian Water Security**, for example, supports drafting national or sub-national policies, laws, regulations, and government plans to mainstream gender for natural infrastructure and water resources. This highly visible activity is co-financed by Canada and has forged solid relationships with Peruvian ministries, the national water authority, and utilities, which gives it a big advantage in mainstreaming gender in public policy.

The ET found two somewhat contradictory findings of whether USAID and IP staff believed their activities were implementing interventions to improve the enabling environment by addressing systemic gender barriers. About 85 percent of USAID staff that responded to the survey question believed activities addressed restrictive gender norms, while only 60 percent of the IPs said the same thing about their activity. A divergence in opinion also concerns whether activities address new or emerging economic needs in a region or country. Only about 30 percent of USAID respondents supported this claim, while about 70 percent of the IPs believed their activity addressed new and emerging economic empowerment needs.

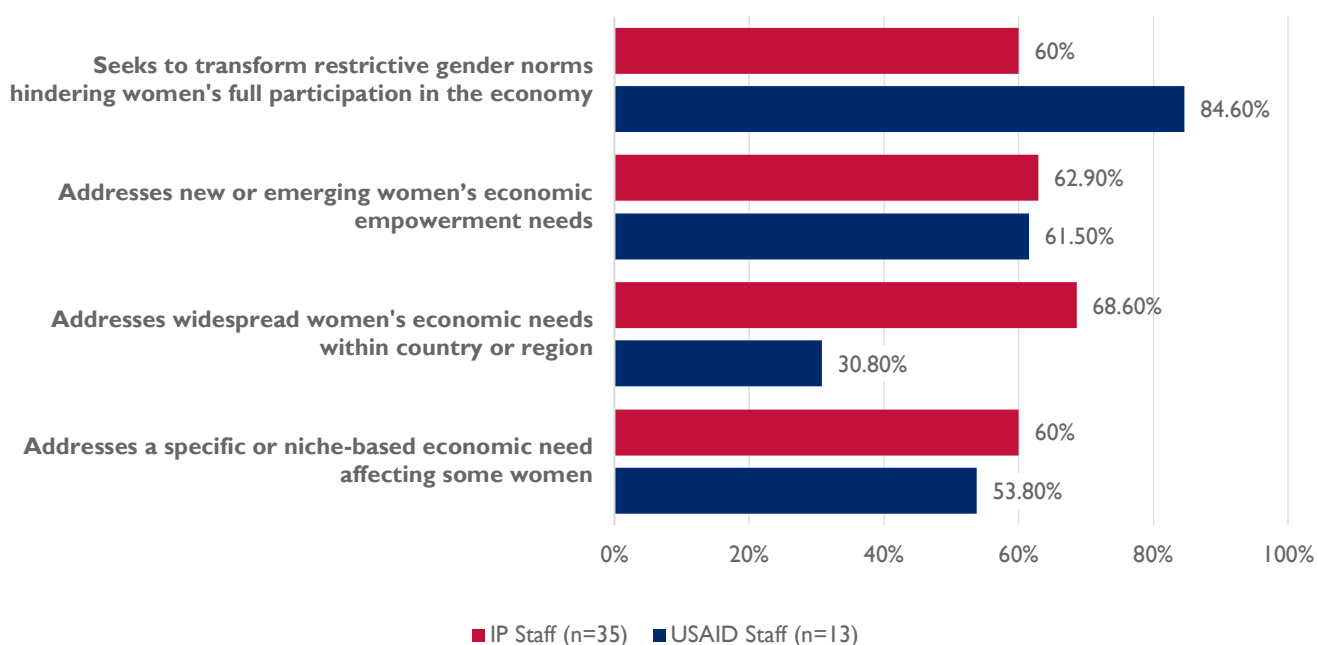
According to the direct beneficiaries in the two activities in India, increasing women's self-confidence and community support is a precursor to economic gains in farming and artisan skills, control of assets, and increased income. These case studies discuss how the activities use various

models, including village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), self-help groups (SHGs), and other group lending and leasing models to encourage and support increased economic and community participation for women.

Figure 7 shows the divergence in opinion between USAID gender specialists and the IPs regarding transformational approaches to improve and strengthen women's full economic participation through changes in the enabling environment.³² As stated previously, given that this is a portfolio evaluation, the unit of the analysis presented in figures throughout this section (and the report more broadly) is the WEE activity. As such, the figures reflect the number of activities instead of the number of respondents, with total sample sizes reflected in the notes below each figure.

³² The four responses in the electronic survey question do not represent all possible objectives, but these are the four options provided to respondents.

FIGURE 7: Descriptions of the Round I Activities' Objectives



Source: Online Survey, 2020.

Note: For this survey question, respondents could choose multiple options. Data in this figure reflect the percentage of activities by the stakeholder group that selected that response. The n corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 66 IP staff and 17 USAID staff (AMs/POCs) responded to this question.

Progress in addressing systemic issues also has been slow, largely due to COVID-19 delays, according to IP and USAID respondents. More than half of the Portfolio's activities broadly focus on supporting female entrepreneurs through access to finance and networks, increased labor market participation through improved human resource policies and procedures, and support for women's professional and community networks. Many of these workforce activities focus on soft skills, such as preparing women for the recruitment and application procedures, developing women's professional skills, and building management and leadership capacity. Connecting women to professional and self-help networks is also an important intervention supported by one-fourth of the 45 activities.

FINDING 3.2: The WEE three pillar conceptual framework has limitations.

Although 32 activities are supposed to be implementing Pillar 3 interventions, respondents cited three reasons why their activities were not delivering results on Pillar 3 issues: 1) addressing systemic issues takes too much time, 2) their activity design did not focus on gender transformational approaches that would address gender norms and culture in Pillar 3 issues, and 3) the selection criteria of Round 1 activities emphasized PSE and undervalued the participation of local partners and host governments.

According to respondents, many Round 1 Portfolio activities and corresponding interventions do not address the gender gaps that systematically disadvantage women because the Round 1 activities were designed to reach a cumulative number of 50 million women. This focus on reaching a specific number of women prevented a focus on systemic issues.

“Changing the mindset of the old traditional structures in terms of gender roles. It takes a lot of long-term work to change these.” – IP

“Presidential initiatives are always complicated ... we can't explain to the White House that systemic changes are not always reflected in numbers and the constant drive for numbers of women reached detracted from important changes that are happening.” – USAID/Washington

In contrast, Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 priorities were much more clearly defined. Pillar 1 activities address some of the gender domains defined in ADS Chapter 205 by advancing women in the workforce through training, elevating women into formal sector jobs, increasing women's professional mobility, improving working conditions, creating safe working environments, and changing human resource policies in male-dominated industries. For example, the **Supporting the Philippines' through Women's Economic Empowerment—Philippines (Protect Wildlife)** activity targets women-led, local conservation organizations to strengthen their organizational capacity and leadership and improve access to necessary resources in the Philippines. Conservation is a traditionally male-dominated industry, and by supporting women-led organizations, this activity improves women's ability to influence community decision-making in conservation at the local level.

Under Pillar 2, the Portfolio of activities addresses four of the six ADS gender domains (cultural norms and beliefs, gender roles, responsibilities and time use, access to and control over assets and resources, and patterns of power and decision-making) to support women succeeding as entrepreneurs. This is done by improving gender-sensitive financial products, women's access to credit, and blended finance models, supporting women-owned businesses in the global value chain, increasing women's access to market linkages and networks, and facilitating women's access to information and technology to increase efficiency. For example, the **Paraguay Value Chain** activity, which the WEE Portfolio incorporated into the existing **USAID Inclusive Value Chains for Rural Development Program**, focuses on training rural women to produce quality products that meet international standards for buyers and local markets as part of farmer groups that can formalize into cooperatives in global value chains.

WEE can be achieved to some degree without really closing gender gaps according to both IPs and USAID staff, especially in terms of Pillar 2 and Pillar 3 results. Respondents in an online survey question stated that Round 1 activities effectively respond to WEE needs and close gender gaps in their programming. One USAID respondent noted that it was too early in the intervention's implementation to assess whether the activity was doing so effectively. Three IP staff noted that while their activities planned to address gender gaps effectively, it was too early to assess their effectiveness. One activity's IP staff elaborated,

“This activity is effectively addressing the skills gaps needed to enter the job market, only that in countries where unemployment is high, and job opportunities are less. Further women’s empowerment to access capital investments for starting their own enterprises is the greater need.”

[LEAP III Mid-term Evaluation Online Survey, 2020.]

FINDING 3.3: Preventing and mitigating gender-based violence is a strength of the portfolio.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19,³³ emerging data and reports from women’s organizations have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, have intensified.³⁴ Many IPs and USAID staff expressed concerns that COVID-19 would disproportionately affect women’s safety and security. Women are more likely to work in the informal sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. In addition, women are shouldering additional domestic responsibilities because children are home from school, childcare options have closed, and other care work has increased, with little or no access to social safety nets. These factors were a catalyst for some activities to integrate GBV counseling services and adapt other support systems for beneficiaries. The USAID-PepsiCo Partnership activity in West Bengal, India, began broadcasting weekly live phone-in programs on radio and putting out social media messaging related to preventing and mitigating GBV and increased the focus on its training curriculum at the onset of COVID-19.

Partners can contribute to GBV prevention and response through education, community mobilization, physical and mental health services, legal services, justice response, law enforcement, or other services to support victims and deter future violence. Many of the IPs and USAID staff were able to pivot and develop new interventions to prevent and mitigate escalating incidences of GBV affecting their direct beneficiaries, households, and communities. About half of the Round I activities introduced or strengthened interventions that explicitly focus on GBV prevention and response. Two activities stand out in their explicit GBV focus, as illustrated in the following textbox.

³³ John et al. 2020, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/dewb.12261>.

³⁴ United Nations Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>.

The Lesotho Levi Strauss & Co.

Partnership brings together the United States–based Solidary Center, Kontoor Brands, Levi Strauss & Co., and The Children’s Place; local labor unions; and women’s organizations to create “collective power” for 10,000 female employees at four major manufacturing facilities located in Lesotho. The activity reduces GBV by improving safe transportation for women and guaranteeing workplace safety through a union-administered monitoring program that enforces human resource practices, stronger policies and protocols to handle safety complaints, adherence to international labor standards, and zero tolerance for workplace sexual harassment and GBV. The activity supports a full-time complaint assessor, support staff, and a 24-hour complaint hotline to remediate dangerous workplace environments.

Economic Reintegration for Victims of Gender-Based Violence

in Benin is working to reintegrate 170 female victims of GBV into the economy with employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. The WEE Portfolio contributed about \$800,000, while the local partners, including the Government of Benin, also contributed about \$700,000 to support the ongoing Integrated Health Services activity. The Government of Benin has committed to funding the operational expenses for three One-Stop Care centers, and other donors, including UNICEF and Médecins du Monde Suisse, are engaged in complementary projects with shared objectives.

Four USAID respondents expressed their beliefs that the senior leadership within the USG did not support more robust programming for GBV. According to one USAID/Washington respondent, the leadership did not like the “Messaging of GBV.” Accordingly, the selection criteria did not weigh as heavily in favor of GBV interventions as they did for PSE considerations. The narrow focus on GBV and transformational gender approaches was viewed as intentional, despite many USAID staff expressing that freedom from GBV is a human right and a health issue with significant mental, emotional, and physical repercussions. The KIs revealed that many USAID/Washington staff members believed the narrow economic empowerment focus of Round I activities through the three pillars resulted in fewer GBV prevention and response actions.

“The White House messaging created a narrow parameter of what we could do with GBV programming—they did not accept it as the right messaging for economic empowerment. We resorted to a ‘do no harm principle’ to address the inherent GBV concerns.” – USAID/Washington

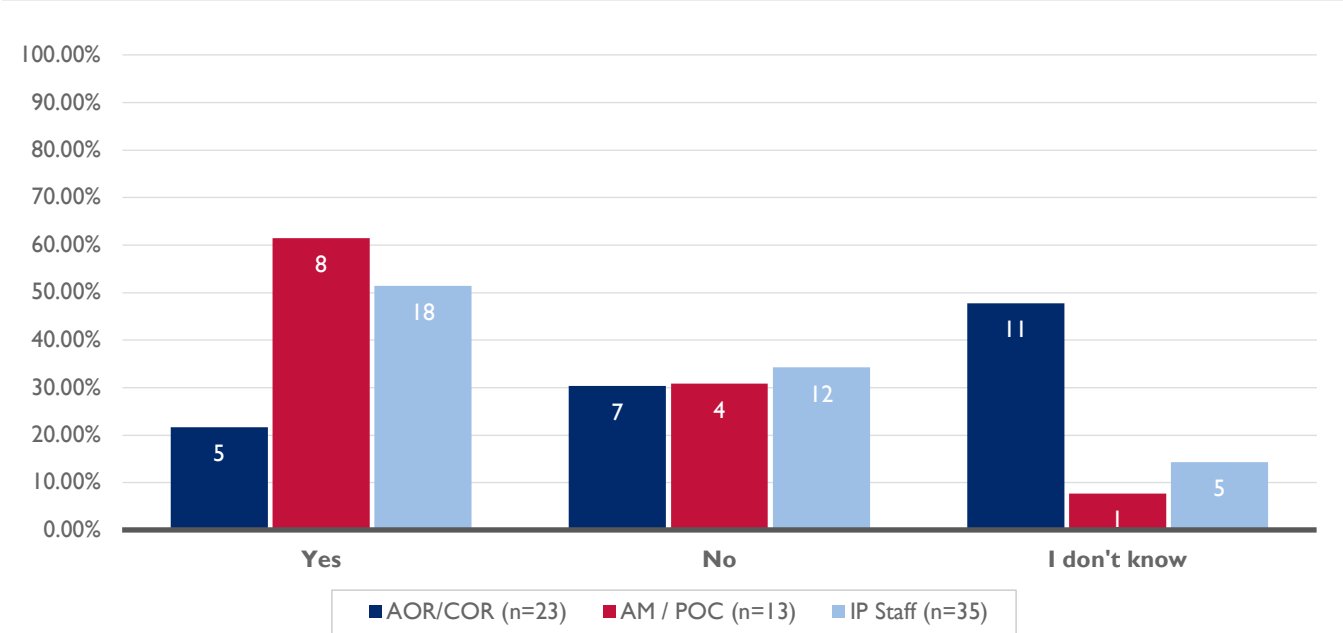
No baseline or evidence is available to assess the degree to which scale-up of interventions could have been achieved or whether the absence of clear guidance and prioritization of GBV may have resulted in lost opportunities to respond rapidly to global spikes in GBV. During the KIIs, no one from the IPs, USAID/Washington, or missions reported unintended GBV consequences due to the Portfolio’s activities. Interviews and FGDs during the field-based research reported some instances of GBV affecting beneficiaries. For example, in Tamil Nadu, India, beneficiaries reported that GBV in the home was reduced due to the activity, but in other cases, GBV in the home continued.

The ET intentionally disaggregated responses by AOR/CORs and AMs/POCs to highlight differences in whether prevention and mitigation of GBV are included in activity interventions. A majority of AMs/POCs (61 percent) and IP staff (51 percent) believed the activity effectively contributed to the prevention and mitigation of GBV. In comparison, a majority of AOR/CORs (49 percent) did not know.

The unit of the analysis presented in Figures 8 and 9 is the WEE activity (not the number of respondents), and the total sample sizes are reflected in the notes below each figure. A larger number of respondents referred to a smaller number of activities.

Figure 8 shows key stakeholders’ perspectives on how the Round I activities effectively integrate GBV prevention and response interventions.

FIGURE 8: Key Stakeholders’ Perspectives on Whether the Activity Is Effectively Contributing to the Prevention and Mitigation of GBV



Source: Online Survey, 2020.

Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 40 USAID staff and 66 IP staff responded to this question.

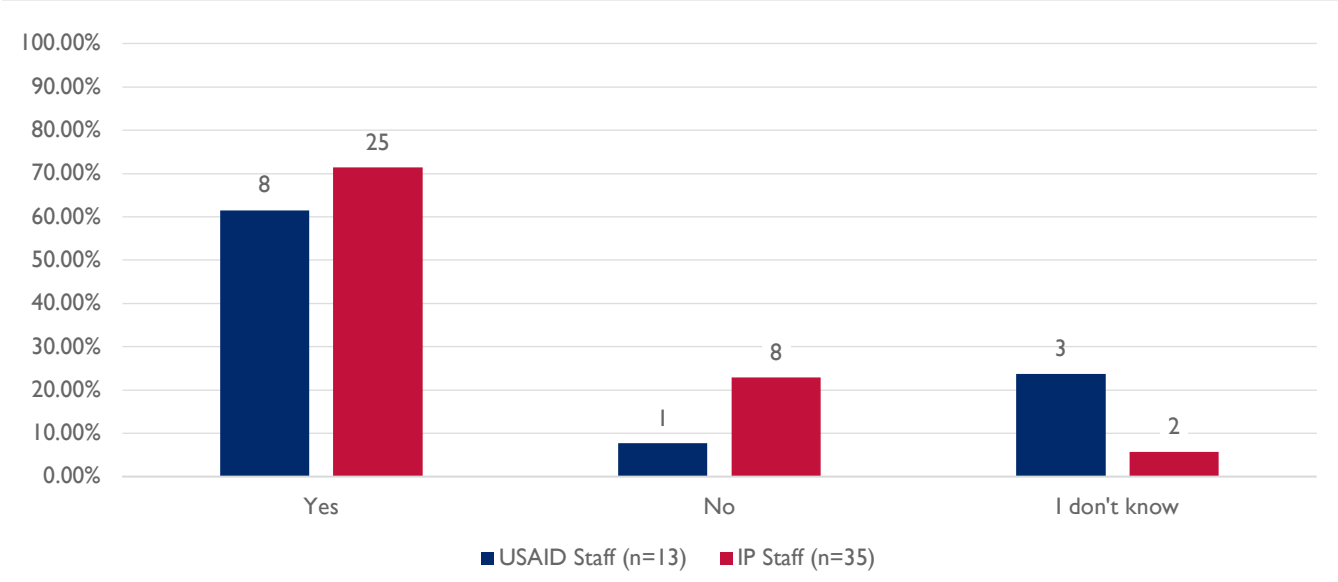
FINDING 3.4: Mobilizing men and boys as allies, advocates, role models, change agents, and partners is critical in wee design, implementation, and evaluation of WEE-focused programs.

Another significant strength of the Portfolio is the number of activities that mobilize male champions and other community leaders. Many respondents in the KIIs and online surveys noted that, while early in the project cycle, indications show that mobilizing male champions is an important intervention, especially in male-dominated industries like the energy and utility sectors. Engaging both male and female leaders as gender champions is an effective way to transform gender norms, explore power and masculinity, acknowledge the costs of violence against

women, and improve economic well-being. Transforming sociocultural beliefs around gender roles is critical to improving economic empowerment for women. According to IP and USAID respondents, the gender champion approach identifies men well-known in their communities for gender-equitable practices. It equips them with the knowledge and tools to advocate for gender equality. As men take on this role, they become recognized as leaders and influence others to follow their example.

According to the online survey, a majority of AMs/POCs (61 percent) and IP staff (71 percent) believed the Portfolio’s activity was effectively integrating actions to mobilize male champions (Figure 9). Note that AOR/CORs were not asked this survey question, so only 17 USAID staff responded to this question.

FIGURE 9: Key Stakeholders’ Perspectives of Whether the Round I WEE Activities Effectively Integrates Actions to Mobilize Male Champions



Source: Online Survey, 2020.

Note: The n corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 66 IP staff and 17 USAID staff (AMs/POCs) responded to this question.

Seven activities focused on women in male-dominated industries and sectors, including Engendering Utilities, Rwanda WIRE, Women Prospering in Technology, Women Connect Challenge, Clean Cities Blue Oceans, National Infrastructure for Water Security, and Advancing Women's Empowerment in Partnership with Power Africa. These activities provide customized training and coaching, foster professional networks, and encourage male champions to support gender equality. Each of these activities is piloting or replicating innovative approaches focused on improving human resource practices and policies and showing that gender equality is a good value for the business's bottom line. Three male IPs who serve as Chiefs of Party for Round I activities noted that they became male champions of gender integration into the design and implementation of their activities.

Engendering Utilities (EU) provides global best practices and practical resources to integrate gender equality throughout male-dominated industries. The target audience for this framework includes human resource and operations professionals. Each energy company selects three employees, including at least one male utility worker, to participate in leadership training, which ensures the development of male champions of gender equality. The Protect Wildlife activity in the Philippines integrated both GBV and the mobilization of male champions into training.

FINDING 3.5: Co-creation of activity design involving national partners can bring forward groundbreaking solutions to solving local development challenges.

WEE Round I activities with the highest level of funding utilized both a buy-in procurement mechanism and a co-creation process in activity design³⁵ and implementation. Guidance from the USAID Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning, advises that co-creation can lower the programmatic risk that USAID will not achieve its intended results. There is a strong consensus among USAID and IP staff regarding the benefits of including partner governments and knowledgeable national stakeholders in the early stages is very important because they prove a range of opinions and first-hand experience of local solutions. Bringing all of these stakeholders together early in the process likely widened the networks of the stakeholders and may have contributed to the maintenance of these networks beyond the USAID-funding activity.

³⁵ The co-creation process is time-limited and participatory with USAID and potential implementing partners. End users engaged in defining a problem collaboratively, identifying new and existing solutions, building consensus around action, and refining plans to move forward with programs and projects.

One benefit of the co-creation process was the newly constructed networks within economic ecosystems.

The co-creation process allowed the Round I portfolio to involve others in problem identification more deliberately and ensure that Round I activities were better informed of the local context. The activity design and implementation were informed by engagement with various stakeholders, including local organizations, women's networks and organizations, the private sector, traditional USAID implementing partners, and host country government officials. The most common platform for co-creation was a facilitated multi-stakeholder workshop that brought together organizations and individuals to find solutions to contextual development challenges while encouraging local ownership.

For example, the USAID–Mastercard co-design workshop in August 2019 brought USAID staff and Mastercard employees together to develop a framework for improving female entrepreneurs' access to formal financial services through skills training, business development, and advocacy efforts. Although this activity is still in the design stage, it shows USAID working with both established and new USAID partners. The Portfolio's co-creation activities sought to be more collaborative and less prescriptive.

USAID respondents who oversaw or implemented access to finance activities favored a co-creation process in the activity design to bring in private enterprises as co-creators of market-oriented solutions with shared risk and shared reward. According to USAID and IP staff, the co-creation process for the larger, already-existing activities such as INVEST, CATALYZE, CCBO, and PACE, encouraged strong leadership and spawned new gender champions within USAID and with external partners. For example, the INVEST activity worked closely with USAID/Washington and selected missions in a co-creation process. According to participants, USAID staff played a strong role as thought partners. They helped cast a wide net for the involvement of missions and networks that could be leveraged to support the NPI. According to the IP and USAID staff involved in the co-creation, the missions brought in the local development context and identified specific capacity building and training needed by local partners.

USAID managers described many activities included in the Portfolio as cost-efficient because they were buy-ins to pre-existing programs that had already completed start-up, were fully staffed, and had monitoring systems in place. The co-creation process, however, has limitations for different reasons, according to IPs and USAID respondents.

Larger IPs tend to push for solutions that are easier to implement, according to three USAID respondents. At the same time, two IPs noted that the co-creation process could extend the start-up period without having a contractual commitment or award from USAID.

FEEDBACK FROM IP STAFF ON CO-CREATION PROCESSES

“Co-creation approach was significant in mobilizing capital and recruiting finance institutions. We could leverage USAID’s already existing partnership networks to our advantage. We cast a wider net and brought in deep expertise, no doubt.” – IP

“Through the co-creation process, we were able to work hand-in-glove with USAID to leverage the important partnership networks. USAID Mission staff literally opened doors for us.” – IP

The activity design guidance in ADS Chapter 201 emphasizes that USAID teams “Are encouraged to incorporate approaches that support innovation, co-creation, and co-design” when appropriate. Under the NPI, national

partners are essentially mirroring a co-creation process because they bring in-country expertise, resources, and a diverse array of partners to engage directly with beneficiaries. Investing in new partners to launch start-from-scratch standalone activities can be very time-consuming according to mission staff that supported the four NPIs, which is a drawback.

The ET found the co-creation process an important factor in designing locally-owned and potentially sustainable solutions regardless of the funding mechanism or NPI status.

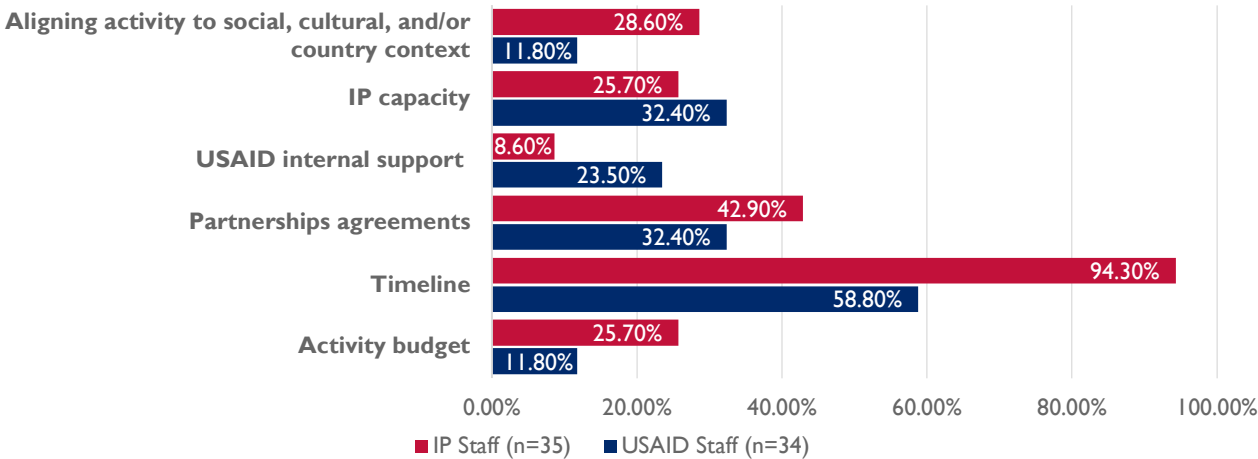
FINDING 3.6: IPs implementing Round I activities continuously make operational adjustments.

Despite start-up adjustments and delays, the ET found IPs were able to adjust effectively.

Start-up: Key stakeholders indicated that the activities’ start-up timeline needed to be adjusted for various factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, communication delays with USAID staff, and difficulties in developing MEL plans. For example, one AOR/COR shared, “There have been significant delays in USAID staff responding to requests for approvals and other input needed which has delayed the implementation of the funded interventions.” [Online Survey, 2020.]

Figure 10 shows that the most important factors that delayed start-up and the signing of partnership agreements.

FIGURE 10: Factors That Delayed Start-up and the Signing of Partnership Agreements



Source: Online Survey, December 2020.

Note: For this survey question, respondents could choose multiple options. Therefore, data in this figure reflect the percentage of activities by the stakeholder group that selected that response. The “n” corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 66 IP staff and 40 USAID staff responded to this question.

None of the 32 activities in the implementation stage were terminated. Thirteen of the 45 Round I activities have yet to launch, despite receiving FY 2018 funds well before COVID-19 created other obstacles. IP staff from 11 activities indicated that the start-up did not proceed according to the work plan and timeline.

Cost-efficiency: Given the broad diversity of the Portfolio and different funding mechanisms, assessing the cost-efficiency of the overall Portfolio is difficult. One COR said that a specific activity was efficient because eight private-sector firms implemented both gender and economic growth interventions under a single contract. As Table 6 illustrates, the AORs, CORs, AMs, and POCs generally agree that the activities’ implementation is cost-efficient, although AOR/ CORs agree slightly less than the AMs/POCs.

TABLE 6: Average Level of Agreeance of the Extent to Which Key Stakeholders Agree That Activity Implementation is Cost Effective

Question	Average Score of USAID Staff (n=34)
To what extent do you agree that the activity implementation is cost-efficient?	5.25

Source: Online Survey, 2020.

[Scale: Strongly agree – 6 | Agree – 5 | Somewhat agree – 4 | Somewhat disagree – 3 | Disagree – 2 | Strongly disagree – 1]

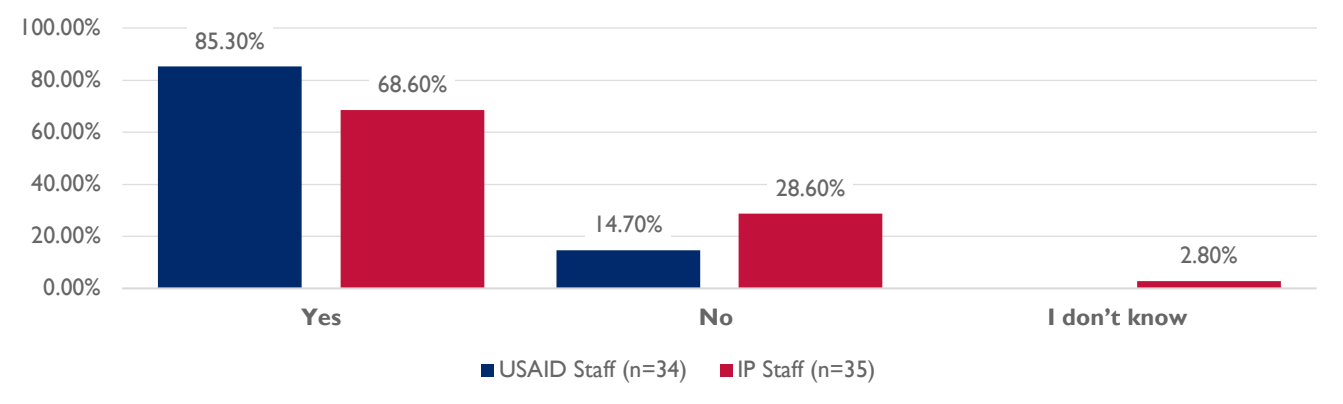
Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 40 USAID staff responded to this question. Respondents representing two WEE Round I activities indicated “I don’t know.” This table presents a cumulative average rating.

It is worth noting that respondents provide more definite responses to this survey question than in KIIs. AOR/CORs had less visibility into the actual cost-effectiveness of the activities because they are milestone-based contracts (i.e., they did not know the actual cost or effort level necessary for meeting the milestone). AOR/CORs of WEE Portfolio activity buy-ins based their assessment on the previous track record of well-known IPs.

The IPs had little to say about this and were focused on meeting the milestones. The ET frequently heard that the continual and often inconsistent requirements for reporting, branding, and communications strained their milestone-based budgets because these requirements did not have an adequate “reporting budget” allocation, so limited resources had to be reallocated. Staff time was reallocated from implementing the activity and meeting WEE Portfolio requirements that were not clearly articulated when the funding was awarded.

Reaching beneficiaries: As has been noted, only 32 of the 45 WEE Round I activities are in the implementation stage. The perception as to whether the activities are reaching direct beneficiaries differs significantly. According to the online survey, most activities are reaching beneficiaries (Figure 11). About 70 percent of the IPs said the activity reached direct beneficiaries and end-users, while almost 90 percent of USAID staff believed this to be the case. This discrepancy may be due to a data limitation called the “Halo Effect” that occurs when managers have an overly positive view of a particular activity or implementing partner. This can affect the objectivity of responses, such as USAID managers’ consistently high ratings and failure to recognize areas for improvement.

FIGURE 11: Key Stakeholders’ Perspective on Whether WEE Round I Activities Are Reaching Beneficiaries



Source: Online Survey, 2020.

Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 40 USAID staff and 66 IP staff responded to this question.

EQ3 CONCLUSIONS

The Round I Portfolio of activities effectively addresses WEE needs that align with Pillars 1 and 2, which relate to workforce development and entrepreneurial support. More than half of the activities broadly focus on supporting female entrepreneurs through access to finance and networks, increased labor market participation through improved human resource policies and procedures, and support for women's professional and community networks. However, few activities apply gender-transformative approaches, which is the major weakness of the Portfolio's approach to closing gender gaps and improving economic empowerment.

The tension between a more narrowly focused WEE approach and broader gender-transformative approaches emerged as a common theme in the KIs and the FGDs conducted during the field-based research for the case studies. The enabling environment plays a significant part in shaping women's empowerment, given its role in designing and enforcing most formal rules. Where laws are responsive to gender issues, informal rules can undermine their efficacy and result in uneven enforcement. Most countries still maintain legal differences based on sex constraining women's ability to exercise their rights and fully benefit from market systems.

The ET found that the conceptual framework of the three pillars has limitations. Pillar 3, in theory, covers all the barriers that women face, including systems change and social norms and behavior change. However, the Round I selection criteria did not emphasize addressing restrictive gender norms, and focused almost entirely on the importance of private sector engagement. Pillar 3 interventions needed to be more clearly defined and encouraged at the Concept Note stage to support a transformational change of the formal rules such as policies and regulations that undermine women's advancements in the economy. Due to the previous Administration's strong focus on economic gender gaps, there was little opportunity to integrate other gender gaps related to intersectionality, global health, youth, and GBV. Consequentially, few activities proposed gender transformative approaches to WEE in round I.

Two strengths of the diverse approaches in the Portfolio are the innovations in GBV prevention and response. Many IPs and USAID staff recognized that COVID-19 would disproportionately affect women's safety and security because women are more likely to work in the informal sectors hardest hit by the pandemic and have needed to shoulder additional domestic responsibilities. These factors have been a catalyst for integrating GBV counseling services and adapting other support systems for beneficiaries.

The focus on mobilizing male champions has proved to be an important intervention in more than half of the activities across various sectors and industries, especially in male-dominated sectors like energy, water, sanitation, and hygiene; conservation and wildlife management; and technology. Engaging both male and female leaders as gender champions is an effective way to transform gender norms, explore power and masculinity, acknowledge the costs of violence against women, and improve economic well-being.

Anecdotal insights from USAID and IP staff suggest that strong, deliberate multisectoral approaches promote gender norms change and strengthen local systems' capacities to respond to GBV, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Early evidence also suggests that engaging male champions in the community and workplace increases women's mobility to work outside the home and promotes the hiring and advancement of women in male-dominated industries.

A co-creation approach during activity design seems to have allowed the Portfolio to involve others in problem identification more deliberately and ensure that its activities are better informed by the local context, and have increased ownership by the three main development partners: the private sector, governments, and NGOs. The co-creation process builds trust among partners, which was especially important when the COVID-19 pandemic created many new obstacles to implementation.

The ET found that the Portfolio's interventions were believed to be cost-effective in terms of feasibility, budget, timeline, staff and IP capacity, and local context. However, according to IPs, about one-fourth of the activities were not reaching direct beneficiaries due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EQ3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. USAID should invest more gender expertise through dedicated staff to provide specific technical assistance in activity design. Similarly, IPs should be required in most activities to hire gender experts with their WEE funding.
2. WEE activities can benefit from the participation of local partners, women's organizations, and gender specialists in designing enabling environment activities in culturally sensitive ways through co-creation processes.
3. USAID should include partner governments in the co-creation approaches to encourage local solutions and embedded planning for sustainability.
4. Prioritize funding to integrate and encourage collaboration with local WEE partners to implement sustainable GBV prevention and response programming. A multisectoral approach is necessary to promote changing gender norms and strengthen local systems' capacity to respond to GBV and support GBV response care in the workplace and communities.
5. Consider best practices and promising interventions to engage community leaders and male champions in energy, utilities, information technology, waste management, biodiversity, and conservation. Engaging male champions to change male-dominated culture has been a central element in the activities that promote women's hiring and advancement.
6. USAID and selected interagency partners should hold a reflection session with IPs and data services to assess and share ongoing technical and operational adaptations occurring in the Round I Portfolio and ensure that the USAID data management system can track this information.



POWER entrepreneurs in Veeravanallur making lampshades.
PHOTO: Industree

EQ4: ARE THE ROUND 1 ACTIVITIES ACHIEVING EXPECTED RESULTS?

GenDev requested the WEE Round 1 activities to report FY 2020 results as applicable on a set of 36 Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators. The former W-GDP Initiative used the same set of standard indicators in the annual Agency-wide data call to USAID and State Department OUs. The WEE activities funded by GenDev were asked to identify applicable standard indicators in their MEL plans and prepare MEL plans. GenDev shared MEL plan preparation guidance with all the activities. This MEL guidance was based on USAID's standard MEL plan guidance and was customized to meet the information needs of the WEE activities. GenDev also provided MEL preparation technical assistance to at least 15 WEE Round 1 activities supported with incentive funds.

However, the findings for EQ4 are problematic because only 19 of 45 activities are reporting results, and only six of these 19 activities are reporting comprehensively. A second factor related to the scarcity of evidenced-based data is that even fewer activities are disaggregating results by sex, making it difficult to assess whether activities are meeting targets. It may be that indicators related to Pillar 3 results may not have adequately measured progress. This chapter examines IPs' reporting practices of the most frequently reported standard indicators and provides commentary on the results that have been reported.

The six sub-questions concern the overall number of women reached, whether the activities are achieving MEL plan outputs and outcome targets and what can be learned, the types of challenges and opportunities faced in achieving targets, and whether the activities have any actual or potentially harmful effects. This section discusses how the WEE Portfolio is:

1. Meeting MEL plan outputs and outcome targets;
2. Demonstrating outputs and outcomes related to micro-enterprises, female entrepreneurs, and the total percentage of participation;
3. Reporting on indicators and related limitations of the standard indicators;
4. Adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic; and
5. Assessing the women reached metric.

EQ4 FINDINGS

FINDING 4.1: Activities are generally perceived to be achieving MEL plan outputs and outcome targets.

More than half of the Round 1 activities (65.7 percent) were meeting their MEL output and outcome targets at the time of the evaluation according to USAID staff (Figure 12). COVID-19 delays affected the implementing partners' abilities to meet targets. A few IPs were able to pivot and achieve MEL targets with adjustments to the MEL plan timeline. Several IPs indicated it was too early to tell if their activity would meet new MEL plan targets. The ET repeatedly heard that many activities missed their FY 2020 targets due to COVID-19, but measuring this impact is difficult. Data from the KIIs indicated that COVID-19 delayed start-ups because trainings or meetings could not occur in person, or the activity design had to pivot to an online format.

“COVID is the big factor in achieving results. Some activities have not been able to launch.”

– USAID/Mission

“COVID effected the implementation of the activity and really pointed out the different speeds that the private and public sector can handle problems. The private sector partners moved fast while the public sector was slower and less agile.” – IP

“COVID had a negative impact on the hiring by private sector firms. More indirectly, the economic impact of COVID made companies more risk adverse and dried up corporate social responsibility initiatives.” – IP

“The economic impact of COVID had many consequences. Currency fluctuations, for example, became a huge factor in lending to SMEs.”

– USAID/Mission

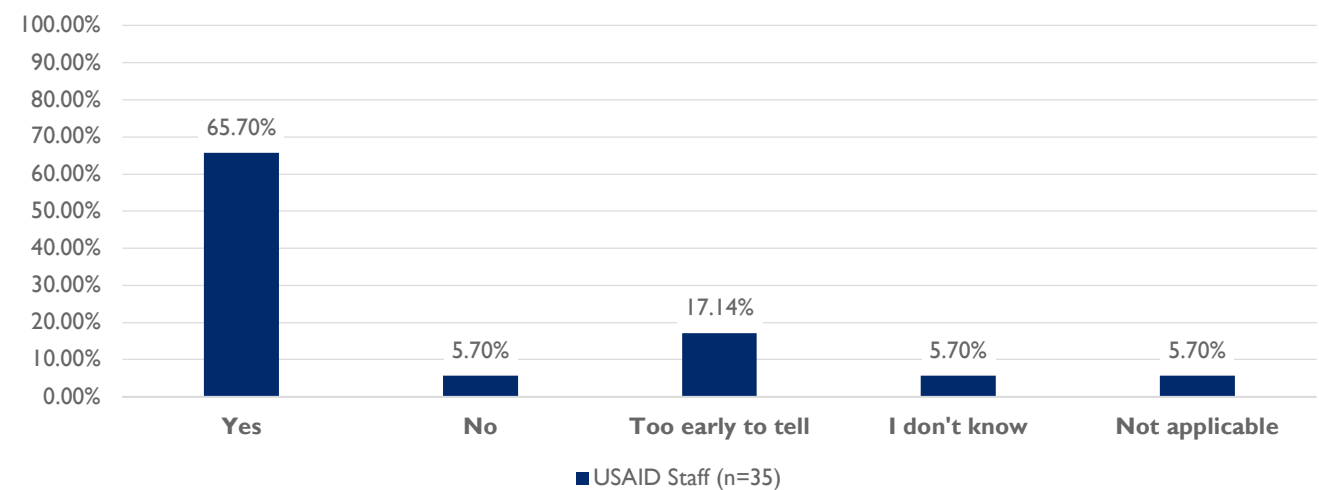
USAID respondents noted that two activities were not reaching their MEL plan targets due to significant COVID-19 delays in activity implementation and start-up. In contrast, two other USAID respondents said that not all activities require a MEL plan. Unleashing the Economic Leadership Power of Young Women, for example, is a research activity and therefore does not have a MEL plan. Two USAID staff shared that they did not know if activities were meeting MEL plan targets. Digital Frontiers, for example, manages several WEE activities under its award and could not provide an answer for the entire mechanism or the activity.

“The pandemic situation made it challenging to meet some of the targets.”

– USAID/Washington AOR/COR

Several USAID staff indicated that while it was too early in the activity’s implementation to tell if they would meet MEL outputs, their respective activity was meeting several milestones or was on track to meet their milestones (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12: Key Stakeholders’ Perspective on Whether WEE Round I Activities Are Reaching Beneficiaries



Source: Online Survey, 2020.

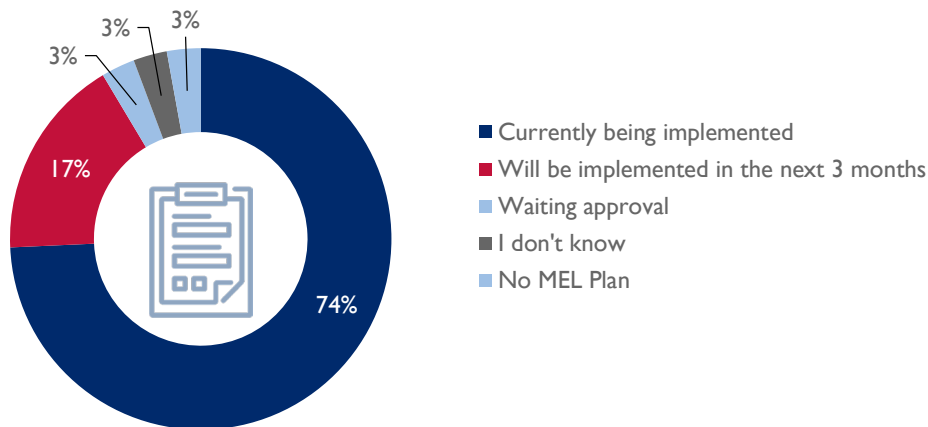
Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 40 USAID staff responded to this question.



Of the 35 Round I activities represented by the IP staff in the online survey, 30 activities' IP staff stated that the activity's custom performance indicators were sufficient to measure performance and results. One activity's IP stated that performance indicators were too few to measure performance and results, and one IP indicated it had not started data collection.

Of the 35 Round I activities represented by the IP staff in the online survey, 74 percent were currently implementing their MEL plan, and 17 percent would implement their MEL plan sometime between January and March 2021 (Figure 13). One IP is awaiting approval of its MEL plan, one IP did not know when it would be implementing its MEL plan, and as noted previously, one IP indicated it is a research program and therefore does not have a specific MEL plan (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13: Status of Activity MEL Plans According to IP Staff (n=35)

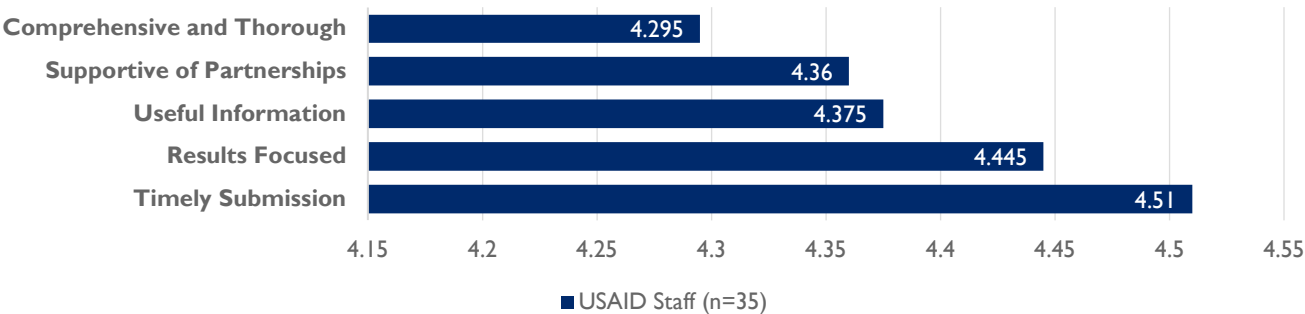


Source: Online Survey, 2020.

Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of Round I activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 66 IP staff responded to this question.

The ET asked USAID staff for their perspective of the utility of IP data reporting. USAID staff generally agreed that the IP reporting is of high quality across five categories: 1) the reports are results-focused, 2) the reports support partnerships and discuss opportunities and challenges, 3) the reports include useful information that can contribute to learnings, 4) the reports are comprehensive and thorough and discuss overall challenges and successes, and 5) the reports are timely (Figure 14).

FIGURE 14: Perceived Utility of Data Reporting According to USAID/Washington Staff



Source: Online Survey, 2020. [Scale: 1 – poor, 5 – very good].

Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of Round I activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 40 USAID staff responded to this question.

FINDING 4.2: Outputs and outcomes related to micro-enterprises, female entrepreneurs, and number of participants are most frequently reported.

About 80 percent of the Round I activities had MEL plans. However, only 19 Round I activities (42 percent of the Portfolio) reported results on standard indicators to GenDev, so it is not possible to aggregate activity results. Respondents, however, provided useful perspectives on how these results were achieved and identified some challenges, gaps, and recommendations for future programming. In interviews, about one-third of the IP respondents stated that the standard indicators did not align well with the results achieved.^{36, 37}

³⁶ The standard indicators changed in FY 2018, 2019, and 2020, which caused frustration among the IPs and USAID staff supporting different activities, as reported in several KIs.

Tables 7, 8, and 9 analyze the standard indicator results for three standard indicators for FY 2020. The most frequently reported standard indicator results are for EG.5-3: Number of micro-enterprises supported by USG assistance and GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, or employment), which both support Pillar 2 objectives. Table 9 presents targets and results for EG.6-12: Percentage of individuals with new employment following participation in USG-Assisted workforce development programs, supporting Pillar 1 objectives.

³⁷ Standard foreign assistance indicators include both parent and disaggregated indicators. For example, a parent indicator measures aggregated data reported on the indicator, such as "EG.5-3: Number of micro-enterprises supported by USG assistance." Most parent indicators reported sub-indicators to disaggregate the data captured under the parent indicator, such as "EG.5-3a: Male entrepreneurs and EG.5-3b: Female entrepreneurs," which disaggregates the total number of male entrepreneurs and female entrepreneurs supported by USG assistance (under EG.5-3). <https://2009-2017.state.gov/f/indicators/index.htm>

TABLE 7: Results for EG.5-3: Number of Micro-Enterprises Supported by USG Assistance

Activity	Indicator Name	FY 20 Target	FY 20 Results
Inclusive Value Chains for Rural Development Program	EG.5-3: Number of microenterprises supported by USG assistance	500	651
	EG.5-3b: Female entrepreneurs	500	651
Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG) India	EG.5-3: Number of microenterprises supported by USG assistance	500	499
	EG.5-3b: Female entrepreneurs	500	499
Producer-Owned Women's Enterprises (POWER)	EG.5-3: Number of microenterprises supported by USG assistance	8	7
	EG.5-3b: Female entrepreneurs	8	7
Supporting Entrepreneurial Skills (YES-Georgia)	EG.5-3: Number of microenterprises supported by USG assistance	118	115
	EG.5-3b: Female entrepreneurs	82	87

Source: Data retrieved from GenDev, 2021.

Note: One activity reported results for FY 2020 but did not report targets for FY 2020. It was not included in this analysis.

Based on the EG.5-3 standard indicator data reported by the WEE Round I activities listed in Table 7 for FY 2020, 1,272 micro-enterprises were supported against an aggregated target of 1,126. Of these 1,272 micro-enterprises supported, 1,244 were female-led. Further, 1,244 female entrepreneurs were supported against an aggregated target of 1,090.

Regarding GNDR-2 (Table 8), the WEE activities reported data FY 2020 discussed the impact of COVID-19 on their ability to either exceed or fall short of expected targets.

One activity that exceeded its target cited COVID-19 associated challenges that drew more women into its programming,

“Due to COVID-19, many women lost their livelihoods and needed access to new employment opportunities. The training programs conducted and the consequent livelihood opportunities that opened up due drew many of these women into the program in these times of distress.” [Performance Analysis, GenDev]

TABLE 8: Results for GNDR-2: Percentage of Female Participants in USG-Assisted Programs Designed to Increase Access to Productive Economic Resources (Assets, Credit, Income, or Employment)

Activity	Indicator Name	FY 20 Target	FY 20 Results
Inclusive Value Chains for Rural Development Program	GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, or employment)	100%	100%
Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG)	GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, or employment)	40%	45%
PepsiCo Partnership	GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, or employment)	80%	100%
Producer-Owned Women's Enterprises (POWER)	GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, or employment)	85%	93%
Supporting Entrepreneurial Skills (YES-Georgia)	GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, or employment)	74%	2%

Source: Data retrieved from GenDev, March 2021.

NOTE: One activity reported results for FY 2020 for this indicator but did not report targets, while another activity reported targets but did not report results for FY 2020. These two activities were not included in this analysis.

Regarding EG.6-12: *Percentage of individuals with new employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs* (Table 9), activities that did not meet their targets indicated macro-economic challenges that triggered economic downturns faced by individuals in Indonesia and Georgia. **JAPRI** noted that participating women preferred to perfect their business plans and ideas rather than start new businesses, which hindered the activity's ability to reach its target for this indicator. But the activity recognized this shift in priorities for women

and pivoted its interventions to provide women with targeted business coaching and mentoring to improve business plans and ideas. In Georgia, many young people and employees of small businesses were laid off due to COVID-19 lockdowns. They could not find better jobs, which limited the activity's ability to reach its target for this indicator. **Supporting Entrepreneurial Skills** (YES-Georgia) pivoted to adjust its targets for FY 2021 and FY 2022 to account for these macroeconomic challenges, as described in the text box on the next page.

TABLE 9: Results for EG.6-12 – Percentage of Individuals with New Employment Following Participation in USG-Assisted Workforce Development Programs

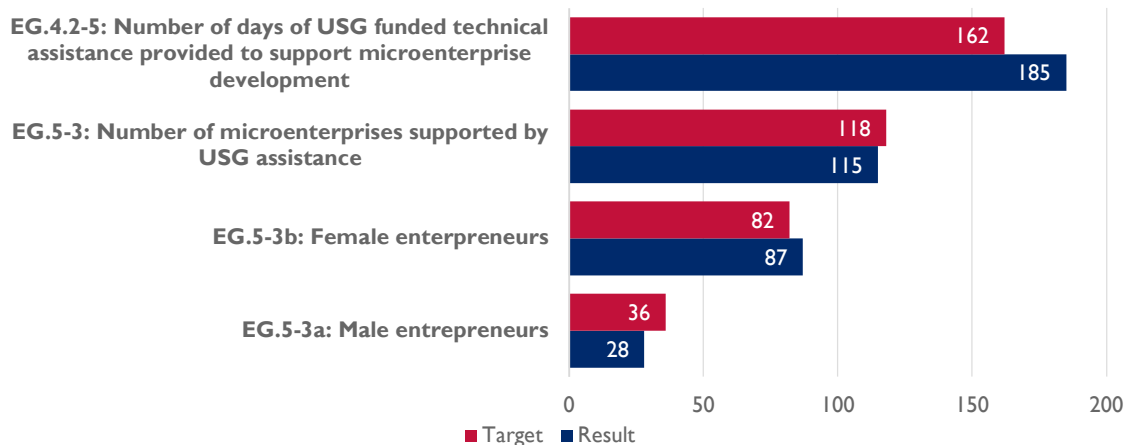
Activity	Indicator Name	FY 20 Target	FY 20 Results
A Micro-Journey to Self-Reliance	EG.6-12: Percentage of Individuals with New Employment Following Participation in USG-Assisted Workforce Development Programs	60%	63%
JAPRI (Jadi Pengusaha Mandiri)	EG.6-12: Percentage of Individuals with New Employment Following Participation in USG-Assisted Workforce Development Programs	20%	8%
Producer-Owned Women's Enterprises (POWER)	EG.6-12: Percentage of Individuals with New Employment Following Participation in USG-Assisted Workforce Development Programs	50%	54%
Supporting Entrepreneurial Skills (YES-Georgia)	EG.6-12: Percentage of Individuals with New Employment Following Participation in USG-Assisted Workforce Development Programs	25%	5%
Women Prospering in Technology	EG.6-12: Percentage of Individuals with New Employment Following Participation in USG-Assisted Workforce Development Programs	40%	40%

Source: Data retrieved from GenDev, March 2021.

Note: One activity reported targets for FY 2020 but did not report results. It was not included in this analysis.

SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS (YES-GEORGIA) COMPREHENSIVE REPORTING FOR FY 2020

YES-Georgia reported results for all targets listed for six parent standard indicators in FY 2020. This strong reporting is especially significant because the IP, Crystal Fund, is a Georgian private sector firm and a new partner for USAID. YES-Georgia exceeded two and fell short of two targets, respectively, for FY 2020. This example highlights the importance of activities comprehensively reporting on disaggregated indicators, particularly indicators disaggregated by gender.



FINDING 4.3: Reporting standard indicators is difficult, and key performance indicators have limitations.

USAID Operating units are required to report on Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators annually. Not doing so hinders USAID's ability to track activity results. The frequency of reporting requirements may vary by mission.

GenDev staff and a MEL expert worked with the Round I IPs in many ways, including providing guidance on MEL plans in plenary and small group sessions during an in-person workshop held by USAID/Washington, during which GenDev provided feedback after reviewing each activity's MEL plan. The GenDev team then provided MEL-related feedback to OUs and missions and the IPs. After this extensive hands-on support, the GenDev staff elected to work with the IPs through the former W-GDP Fund Management System that collected quarterly MEL information to flag any issues. GenDev also developed a written technical note for GenDev MEL guidance and sent frequent reminders to offer assistance in setting targets and reporting results.

“USAID seems hung up regarding the number of women who attend trainings and reporting on four indicators that don't make sense, but at the same time is very slow to provide feedback on substantive issues like agreeing to selection criteria for 200 loan applications.” – IP

“Accelerators take time to set-up. We need about 6-8 months after inception to train our partners before we can even begin to reach end-users.” – IP

“Even if you fund 80 – 100 WEE activities, is it really a problem that you can't get an aggregate that addresses the really important things that will make a difference in changing a system? Changing systems is difficult but that what makes changes in Pillar 1 and 2 possible.” – USAID/Washington

Almost two-thirds of the IPs stated that many standard indicators have limitations and do not accurately reflect many achievements that meet key performance targets. The IPs also noted that more than one outcome was possible for their activities, but the USAID recommended standard indicators did not always correspond with the reported results. Only 34 percent of the total observations for FY 2020 included both targets and results. Only three activities (**YES-Georgia**, **JAPRI**, and **Women Prospering in Technology**) comprehensively reported results on each target listed for FY 2020.

About one-third of the IPs stated that they experienced pressure from USAID to include the Pillar 3 objective (related to improving the business enabling environment) in their activity design. However, their activity did not include specific interventions to address broader enabling issues. According to the IPs, reporting on Pillar 3 presented the greatest difficulty because the expected results for some activities are not static but dynamic and may increase or decrease nonlinearly based on the target population. For example, women's voluntary participation in farmer groups may change from month to month due to seasonal crop demands. The IPs, however, are expected to work with USAID to find a way of measuring results.

As shown in Table 10 on the next page, a total of 240 total indicator measures observations were reported to GenDev FY 2020 by 19 Round I activities. These 240 indicator measures include data reported on parent and disaggregated standard indicators. In Round I, 26 activities did not report any data on standard indicators. Of the 19 activities that did report on standard indicators, 55 percent of the indicator measures reported did not include any data for FY 2020. Only 15 of the 19 activities reported targets and results for FY 2020 standard indicators, while four activities that reported standard indicators to GenDev did not report results or targets for FY 2020.

TABLE 10. Summary of Activities' Reporting on Standard Indicators for FY 2020

Activities Reporting on Standard Indicators (FY 2020)	
Number of activities (percent of portfolio)	19 (42)
Percent reporting only results	6
Percent reporting only targets	5
Percent reporting targets and results	34
Percent reporting neither targets nor results	55

Source: Data retrieved from GenDev, 2021. Note: Total number of observations for FY 2020 is 240.

Within these, the ET noted several inconsistencies in how data were reported and data reliability issues, including several Round I activities that incorrectly calculated targets. Some activities repeat several indicator measures for the same indicator, making it hard to decipher the activity's actual results or targets. Several indicator measures of disaggregated indicators do not report comprehensive numerator and denominator figures for standard indicators that record percentages. In about six percent of the indicator measures, only results and not targets were reported for standard indicators in FY 2020, suggesting targets were not set for expected results. Five percent of the indicator measures reported only targets and not results for standard indicators in FY 2020, suggesting that results have not yet been captured or could not be measured for FY 2020. Thus, 11 percent of the 240 indicator measures reported for FY 2020 could not be included in a performance monitoring analysis.

Although approximately 75 percent of the 45 Round I activities implemented a MEL plan, only 15 activities reported targets and results on standard indicators to GenDev. This suggests that while activities report on custom MEL indicators, they are not aligning these or collecting data for standard indicators.

FINDING 4.4: The cumulative number of women reached by WEE Round I activities is not a clear indicator of the portfolio's results.

To measure annual progress toward meeting the former W-GDP Initiative's target of reaching 50 million women by 2025, USAID and the U.S. State Department gathered Performance Plan, and Report (PPR) data from all OUs on a set of 32–36 recommended Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators. FY 2019 and FY 2020 standard indicator data was gathered through Agency-wide data

calls by USAID/Washington. Separately, during the FY20 PPR season, a narrowly focused, limited scale data call was issued by GenDev, asking the WEE Round I activities to report recommended standard indicator data as applicable, using a GenDev prepared template. This evaluation analyzes the standard indicator data gathered separately through GenDev's FY20 data call to the WEE Round I activities.

USAID Data Services calculated that the cumulative number of women reached through USAID's WEE Round I activities to be 181,543 in the calendar year 2020. This number is calculated through quarterly reports submitted to USAID GenDev by the IPs. However, the criteria under which women are considered to have been "Reached" are not clear. The definition of women "Reached" is ambiguous because IPs may not be consistent in tabulating the participation of direct beneficiaries (i.e., women who attend a training) or indirect beneficiaries (i.e., female employees who may benefit from company policy changes that address sexual harassment in the workplace).

GenDev instructs the IPs to only count individual women; however, neither GenDev nor the ET has verified this figure to ensure women were not multiple counted in the self-reported figures from the IPs. For example, the ET cannot verify that an IP held multiple trainings and cross-referenced each distinct participant list to ensure that any repeat attendees were only counted once. And further to this point, whether all IPs have the same understanding of how to calculate the number of women reached beyond not duplicating individual women is unclear. These calculations also may include male champions and nonbinary individuals, potentially decreasing the cumulative number of women reached.

EQ4 CONCLUSIONS

The WEE Round I activities report a wide range of activities that support the three pillars. However, the ET found that less than 50 percent (19 out of 45) of Round I activities reported targets or results against at least one standard indicator for FY 2020, FY 2021, and FY 2022. The IPs' reporting practices limited the ET's ability to conduct a comprehensive performance analysis of the WEE Round I activities. Additionally, of the 15 activities that did report on standard indicators, the ET found inconsistencies and unreliable figures that further limited a comprehensive analysis of the WEE Portfolio. The ET noted the tension between the IPs and USAID in terms of measuring results. The USAID standard indicators that measure actual activity outputs have limitations. Some activities under the NPI, such as YES-Georgia, received extensive support from the USAID mission in developing its MEL plan, which resulted in excellent reporting, as demonstrated by up-to-date reports, finalized MEL plans, and supporting materials.

Finally, the emphasis on reaching 50 million women does not contribute evidence-based insights into how interventions designed to include as many women as possible can advance women's economic empowerment. Measuring the cumulative number of women "Reached" by activities does not reflect the impact these activities may have in advancing women's empowerment.



WomenConnect Challenge grantee, Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT), partners with schools in Peru to train students to use new mapping and surveying tools to combat gender inequality using technology.

PHOTO: GAL Group, Medium.com

EQ4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations are listed to improve the quality and utility of data reporting of WEE Round I activities to improve standard indicator reporting and comprehensively capture how activities may or may not be achieving expected results.

1. To aggregate results across the portfolio, several technical adjustments need to be made. USAID should strengthen MEL support to help IPs report on standard indicators accurately, consistently, and comprehensively. More MEL support can also help IPs identify ways to adapt existing indicators to standard indicators and then accurately report on those. The example of **YES-Georgia** should be emulated.
2. USAID should ensure that all appropriate targets for activities in FY 2020, FY 2021, or FY 2022 are reported, even if results cannot be reported. Conversely, USAID should ensure that any results are reported on targets and, if not, resolve these discrepancies as they arise.
3. USAID could require activities that do not report any results to indicate a reason via a multiple-choice question, including the following options: 1) too early to report, 2) COVID-19 related start-up or implementation challenges, or 3) other [open ended].
4. Existing activities that focus on institutional or systemic change need adapted measurement criteria, as these types of changes take much longer to achieve expected results. These indicators should not be collected monthly or quarterly, as it is unlikely progress will be made in such short periods. Qualitative measurement tools can be useful to capture progress toward institutional or systemic change.
5. USAID should review and adjust its indicators to emphasize outcome indicators rather than output indicators that measure the cumulative number of women reached.
6. To ensure the accuracy of output indicators that track the cumulative number of women reached, the data should be independently audited through selected data quality assessments to ensure that this figure is accurate.

EQ5: WHAT ARE THE EARLY FINDINGS REGARDING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF WEE ACTIVITIES?

This section discusses evidence of different types of sustainability, both positive and negative. The ET referenced the ADS Chapter 201 definition of sustainability and the USAID's Project Design Sustainability Analysis Tool, which explains,

“Sustainability is achieved when host country partners and beneficiaries are empowered to take ownership of development processes, including financing, and maintain project results and impacts beyond the life of the USAID project.”³⁸

However, the ET could not measure actual sustainability outcomes against this definition of sustainability because so many activities in the Portfolio are too new to show more than early hints of sustainability. The ET did assess efforts to prepare and start implementing sustainability plans. The broad diversity of WEE activities demonstrate key methods through which USAID pursues sustainability, including but not limited to adaptation, replication, scale-up, and institutionalization of WEE programming through USAID programming and host country institutions.

EQ5 asks about the early learnings regarding the sustainability of the Round I activities. The seven corresponding sub-questions relate to how development results may be sustained after the award performance period ends. Within the COVID-19 context, discerning opportunities to scale existing activities is difficult because many activities had a delayed start. Therefore, the early lessons learned from the case studies largely inform the analysis. This section describes how the WEE funded activities are:

1. Implementing a sustainability plan and showing early evidence of sustainability;
2. Exhibiting five key themes that may be important indicators of sustainability; and
3. Integrating social and cultural dimensions for sustainability.

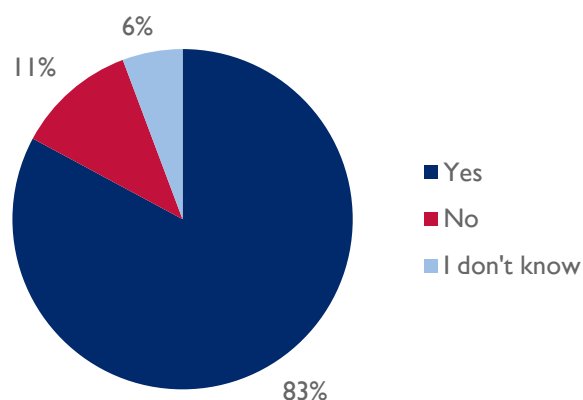
³⁸ USAID Project Design Guidance: Project Sustainability Tool, [page 1](#).

EQ5 FINDINGS

FINDING 5.1: 29 WEE Round I activities are showing early evidence of sustainability.

As a first step, the ET assessed whether activity design reflected planning for sustainability. The ET found strong evidence of written sustainability plans and concepts developed by IPs. Out of the 35 WEE Round I activities represented by IP staff in the online survey, 29 (83 percent) indicated that they are implementing a sustainability plan, four are not (11 percent), and two did not know (six percent) (Figure 15).³⁹

FIGURE 15: Breakdown of Activities with a Sustainability Plan According to IPs (n=35)



Source: Online Survey, 2020.

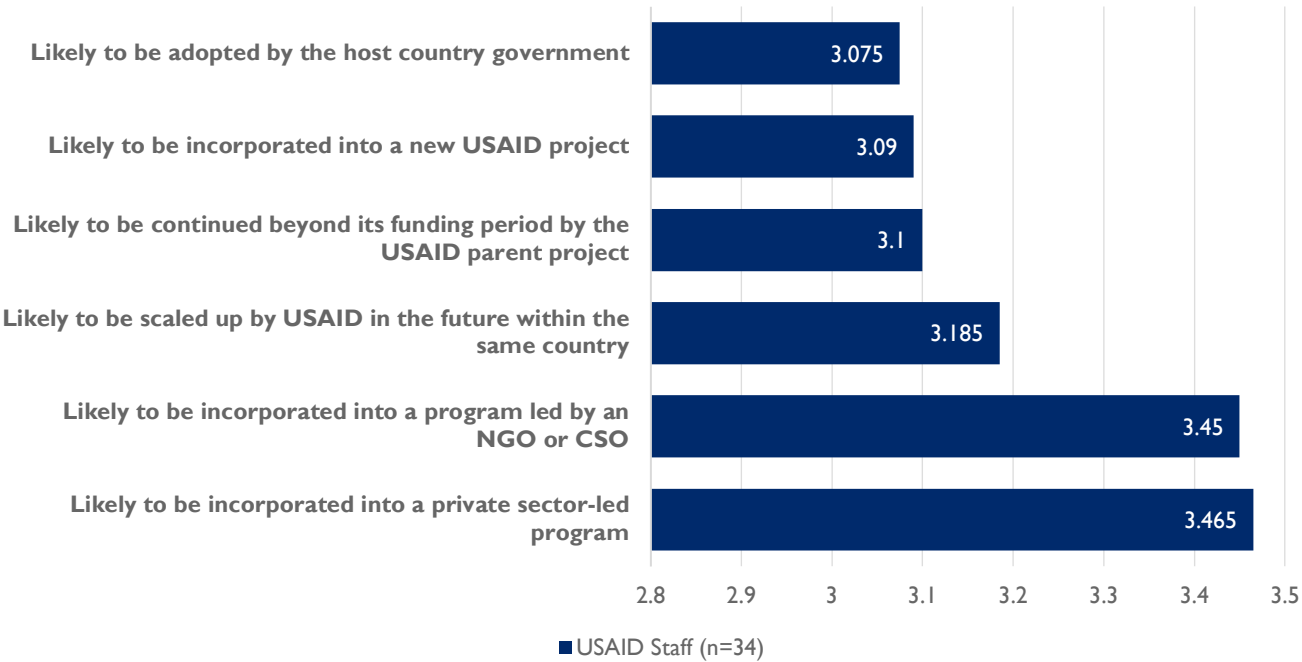
Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of Round I activities reflected by the IP surveys. A total of 66 IP staff responded to this question.

³⁹ Some IP staff of Round I activities noted that since the activity was a buy-in to an existing program, no sustainability plan existed as the project will continue integrating the activity after WEE funding ends.

In the online survey, USAID stakeholders were also asked to rate the likelihood that the WEE activity would be sustained via six possible outcomes (Figure 16). The first three possible outcomes relate to integrating the activity’s design elements and interventions into a pre-existing NGO, private sector firm, or partner country government institution. The next three possible outcomes relate to USAID’s continued involvement in the activity

by incorporating it into the pre-existing USAID program, continuing USAID funding for the activity, or scaling up the activity by USAID within the same country. Among USAID staff, none of these outcomes were rated as “Somewhat likely” (Figure 16) to lead to sustainability, suggesting that USAID staff may not have worked closely with IPs in developing sustainability plans.

FIGURE 16: How Likely Is this Activity to Be Sustained in the Future?



Source: Online Survey, 2020.

[Scale: 1 – not at all likely | 2 – somewhat unlikely | 3 – neither likely nor unlikely | 4 – somewhat likely | 5 – very likely]

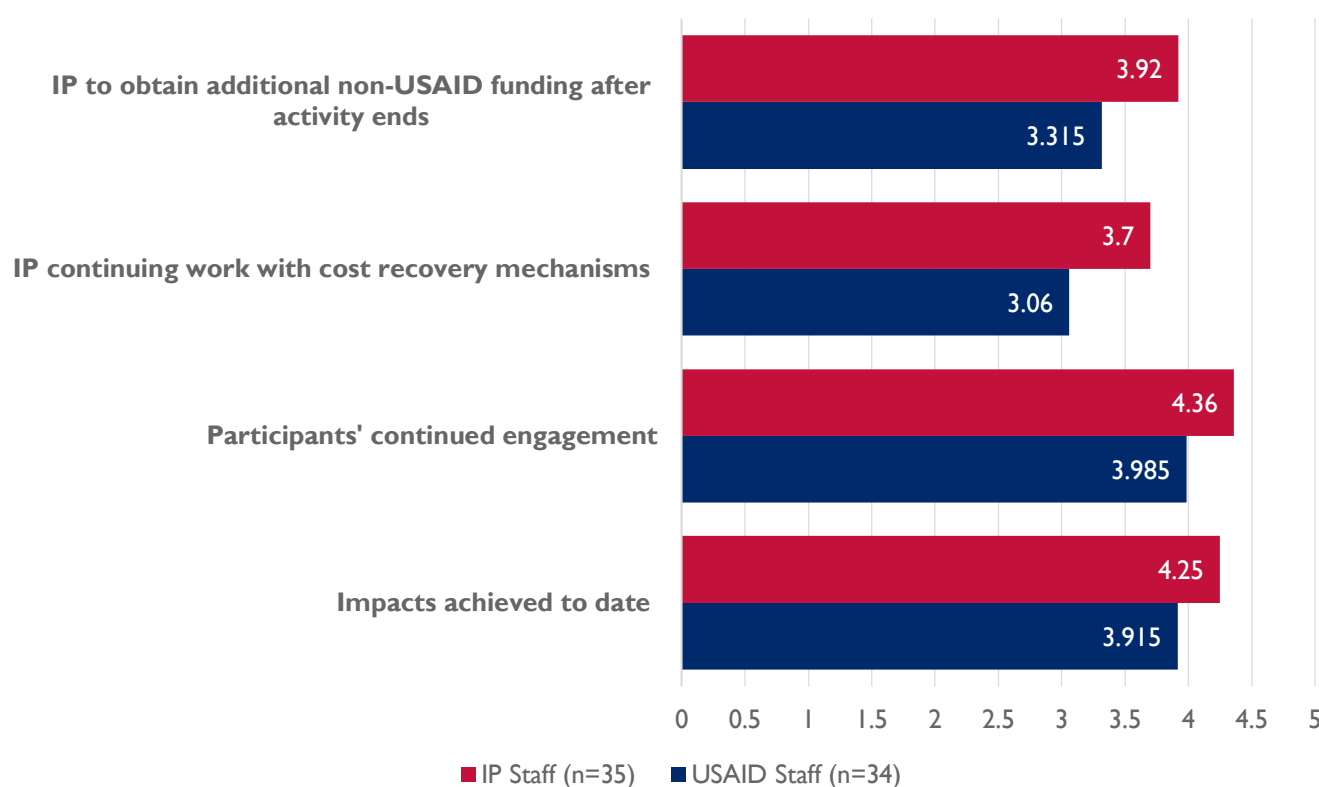
Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the USAID staff surveys. A total of 40 USAID staff responded to this question. CSO =civil society organization.

In the online survey, key stakeholders also rated a few factors that increased the likelihood that the activity would be sustained (Figure 17). IP staff, on average, expressed a higher likelihood of sustainability of activities across than USAID staff. Two issues likely influenced this variation in response patterns. First, this finding suggests that the IPs have more granular insight into how these factors influence sustainability than USAID stakeholders. Second, most activities were already being implemented, so the WEE funding effectively strengthened gender integration according to the IPs. Activity IPs and USAID staff

indicated that the most tangible aspects of the activity are “Somewhat likely” to be sustained in terms of “Impacts achieved to date” and “Participants’ continued engagement in this type of activity post-fund,” which indicates a tendency to rely on current activity results to inform the activity’s future sustainability instead of strategically planning and steering purposefully in the direction of establishing a particular sustainability model.

Figure 17 below describes IPs’ and their partners’ perceptions and self-directed continued engagement that they would continue without USAID support.

FIGURE 17: To What Extent Are the Following Factors Likely to Be Sustained Based on Achievements to Date?



Source: Online Survey, 2020.

[Scale: 1 – not at all likely | 2 – somewhat unlikely | 3 – neither likely nor unlikely | 4 – somewhat likely | 5 – very likely]

Note: The “n” corresponds to the total number of activities reflected by the respondent categories. A total of 40 USAID staff and 66 IP staff responded to this question.

The ET heard from large existing USAID programs that received WEE funding that WEE Portfolios were used to catalyze greater gender mainstreaming and WEE impact throughout existing projects. For example, GenDev ensured that gender was mainstreamed throughout CCBO as it was originally designed to achieve a broader goal. CCBO hired a gender advisor with WEE funding (which positively affected the entire project).

FINDING 5.2: Case study findings show potential sustainability.

The four WEE Round I activities developed into case studies demonstrated potential for sustainability based on design elements and partnering characteristics. Although, it is too early in the project cycle to determine if sustainability can be achieved without integrating gender-transformative approaches.⁴⁰ The following examples from the case studies highlight the importance of addressing systematic gender barriers—such as restrictive social norms or discriminatory practices—to ensure the sustainability of these activities.

The World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) seems likely to achieve some aspects of sustainability based on the proven track record of the VSLA model and early activity results. All 13 IP staff respondents attributed the strength of the activity to pre-existing community support and sustainability interventions⁴¹ embedded into the VSLA model and Community Action Plans, which included local priorities such as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions. These efforts intentionally aimed to establish trust and garner community support by soliciting meaningful inputs from male community members and husbands.

In the **USAID PepsiCo Partnership**, PepsiCo is the main actor in promoting sustainability and scaling. As one of the world's largest buyers and processors of potatoes, the potential longevity of this public-private partnership and its women's economic empowerment interventions is high. The activity aligned its interventions with the Government of India's West Bengal's State Rural Livelihoods program on women's land rights, which

accelerated early successes in adapting the land leasing model from the USAID-PepsiCo Partnership's self-help groups. The self-help groups (SHGs) provided a known, and sustained livelihoods support program to recruit women farmers into the activity's interventions.

All beneficiaries of the **Expansion of Engendering Utilities (EU)** activity indicated a high likelihood of continuing to practice what they learned from their participation in the activity. Several challenges persist and hinder the continued success of this activity, however, including 1) partner utility companies' inability to secure funding to implement gender initiatives, limited staff time, and organizational capacity to continue implementing gender initiatives, 2) restrictive legal frameworks, and 3) persistent discriminatory social biases that challenge progress toward gender equality and inclusion in the workplace. The EU activity will need to continue its adaptive management approach to address these challenges and ensure the long-term sustainability of the activity's success.

The **POWER India** activity, implemented by Industree Crafts Foundation, operating in four banana basketry production units in Tamil Nadu met its first-year targets in creating income generating opportunities for female producers. Based on this limited data collection, it was too early to predict if the Self-Help Group/Mutual Benefit Trust (SHG/MBT) model will be sustainable after the POWER activity funding ends. It is not clear that the POWER activity can leverage this approach to create a new cadre of women entrepreneurs who can count on a consistent income stream based on piece-rate payments. Respondents said that the POWER activity provided relevant technical skills development, life skills, and gender sensitization training but the beneficiaries were less aware of collaboration and support provided by government partners. The women producers were not fully aware of the future role of Greenkraft in supporting the micro enterprises under the MBT model or how global buyers such as IKEA Global functioned. Another challenge is the length of time it takes for MBTs to become self-reliant and profitable. To date, the MBTs are at different stages of development and only one MBT has reached the stage of profitability. The longer gestation period needed for some MBTs to reach profitability and financial sustainability is likely to necessitate continued support from Industree even after the POWER activity funding ends.

⁴⁰ Although field-based research informs the development of the case studies, a project-level evaluation was not conducted.

⁴¹ The Community of Practice for this activity reported that member company sustainability programs have an agronomy component. While WCF documents detail partnerships with research institutes, no evidence of agronomic trainings for farmers were not found in activity reports or mentioned by other staff or farmers interviewed.

FINDING 5.3: Five sustainability factors associated with early evidence for sustainability.

By triangulating primary and secondary data, the ET identified five key factors associated with activities that demonstrated early indications of sustainability:

1. Integrating inputs from women's organizations and gender specialists in the design phase encourages pragmatic and sustainable approaches;
2. Embedding self-financing and cost-recovery interventions into activity designs;
3. Collaborating with Partners with Established Track Records in Delivering WEE Results;
4. Taking buy-in action to integrate WEE programming into ongoing USAID activities; and
5. Promoting interventions that are socially and culturally sensitive.

SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR 1: Integrating inputs from women's organizations and gender specialists in the design phase.

The four case studies highlighted the importance of understanding the local context and meaningful engagement with community leaders during the design phase of an activity. Mobilizing local gender advocates and male champions was especially important as women entered the workforce and were required to work outside

of the home. These gender advocates were described as “Gate openers” within the community and were usually identified by conducting gender assessments or networking with local organizations. This dialogue with community leaders helped to identify and incorporate local development priorities, such as installing a water tank, into the activity design, which garnered early and crucial support for the WEE activity.

Several Round I activities partnered with large private sector companies for the first time—many multinational corporations—and NGOs that had established partnerships in the target communities. Local staff associated with the four case studies noted the importance of a comprehensive design phase in terms of a successful start-up, alignment of diverse partners with a unified approach, and sustainability of the WEE activities. All four case studies shared a common goal of developing and supporting a safe and prosperous workforce. Private sector partners, often competitors (like the cocoa companies for WCF), also needed time to establish trust among partners before sharing work plans, data, and reports. Staff respondents shared that collaborative efforts, with critical inputs from local partners early in the design phase, helped establish management and monitoring mechanisms that are critical components for long-term sustainability. The private sector partners working as subcontractors at the sub-prime level also benefited from orientations that explained the USAID Program Cycle and reporting requirements.



TABLE 11: Integrating Host Government Partners

Activity	Pillars Supported	Sustainability Findings
SURGE	2	SURGE has an extensive network of partners, especially women's organizations, developing and testing flexible solutions across the Philippines. These partners include women's organizations such as Women's Business Council of the Philippines, ASEAN Women's Entrepreneur Network, Philippine Women's Economic Network, Go Negosyo, and Echosi Foundation; public sector organizations such as the Department of Trade and Industry, the Philippine Commission on Women, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industries, the Cooperative Development Authority, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Department of Science and Technology, the Food and Drug Administration, and partner country government units of Cities Development Initiative cities; and private sector organizations such as UPS United Parcel Service, Coca-Cola, Development Bank of the Philippines, Land Bank of the Philippines, and Philippine Exporters Confederation.
JAPRI	2, 3	This activity supports extensive local partner networks across partner types: CBOs and private sector partners, including PT Cargill Indonesia, Bank Rakyat Indonesia, Provincial Government of East Java, and the State University of Trunojoyo in East Java to improve the digital literacy of female entrepreneurs. Other partners include public sector organizations such as provincial (East Java) and four regional governments (Blitar, Trenggalek, Sampang, Pacitan) and the State University of Trunojoyo in East Java to improve the digital literacy of female entrepreneurs; private sector partners include PT Cargill Indonesia and Bank Rakyat Indonesia; and local NGOs include Coaching Indonesia, Prestasi Junior Indonesia, Mien R Uno Foundation, and Kelompok Perempuan dan Sumber-Sumber Kehidupan.
E-PESO	2	Public sector partners include the Departments of Finance, Trade and Industry, and Social Welfare and Development, the Central Bank of the Philippines, and several partner country government units; private sector partners include the National Confederation of Cooperatives, the Bankers Association of the Philippines, Facebook, and Lazada and Shopee e-commerce sites; and other donors are KOICA Korean International Cooperation Agency.

SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR 2: Embedding self-financing and cost-recovery interventions into activity designs.

Some activities had self-financing mechanisms already in place at the time of this evaluation, a strong indicator of financial sustainability. Table 12 presents examples of two activities for which self-financing models are likely to be sustainable after the activity beneficiaries are trained and secure employment.

TABLE 12: Operationalization of Self-Financing Models

Activity	Pillar(s) Supported	Sustainability Findings
Women Prospering in Technology	1, 3	About 500 women have completed the information and communication technology training program since September 2019. Once these graduates successfully secure employment, they pay back the approximate \$3,000 in student fees in monthly installments. In this way, the activity is likely to be self-financing.
Protect Wildlife	2	Early results of successful micro-enterprises found that mechanized production sponsored by the WEE Portfolio showed 72 percent increases in abaca fiber production (used in medical masks), helping farmers command a better market price. In 2020, a partnership agreement was also signed with Kasangyanan Center for Community Development and Microfinance Development Foundation as a local provider of financial management training to fund micro-enterprises in Zamboanga City. Securing a local provider for financial management support is more likely to be sustainable than self-financing but should lead to self-financing results once beneficiaries complete training.

SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR 3: Collaborating with Partners with Established Track Records in Delivering WEE Results.

GenDev frequently leveraged and invested in ongoing USAID economic growth programs, enabling the Portfolio to finance additional gender components. One potential indicator of sustainability was leveraging existing gender partners and programs with proven track records rather than piloting new gender approaches.

The **WEAVE** activity, for example, partnered with the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women to lead gender activities (Table 13 on next page). Integrating proven gender-focused approaches showed early results of effectiveness in short timeframes. These quick wins may prove important to sustainability because private sector partners tend to view success in a much shorter timeframe than the development sector.

The ET found early but compelling evidence of sustainability largely due to private sector partner investment in WEE interventions implemented by government or other donor projects in the target areas. **VisionSpring** provides strong examples of institutionalization (Table 13) of activity interventions. IP staff indicated that the gender components financed by GenDev often folded into pre-existing employee-supported community development programs and benefited from private and public sector workplace discrimination policies. Therefore, it was not a “big ask” to establish mechanisms to replicate these efforts.

Several public-private partnerships included in WEE Round I activities can be viewed as pilots for WEE interventions to expand pre-existing partners’ corporate social responsibility investments. For example, the **Levi Strauss & Co. Lesotho** activity partners include Levi Strauss & Co., The Children’s Place, and Kontour Brands, which are investing in improving female garment workers’ safety and working conditions. VisionSpring, in partnership with Levi Strauss & Co. and Target, provides prescription glasses to female garment workers in Bangladesh, India, and Vietnam.

TABLE 13: Collaborating with Partners with Established Track Records in Delivering WEE Results

Activity	Pillar(s) Supported	Sustainability Findings
WCF	2, 3	The WCF-established VSLAs are likely to be sustained due to the strong track record of CARE, which by 2017 had established 330,000 VSLAs with more than seven million members, including 18,000 members in 800 VSLAs in Côte d'Ivoire. Research shows that 85 to 95 percent of VSLAs continue to function independently for a minimum of five years after formation. CARE had already partnered with WCF members, so pre-established relationships with known partners enhance sustainability.
WEAVE	2	The ASEAN-USAID IGNITE contract benefited from Round I funding to the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women to lead gender activities through WEAVE. The Foundation also leveraged its extensive in-country gender networks—the Centre for Social Initiatives Promotion, the Hanoi Association for Women Entrepreneurs, the Ho Chi Minh City Association for Women Executives and Entrepreneurs, and the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council—also lending to post-WEE funding sustainability.
VisionSpring	1	VisionSpring has garment industry multinational corporations as major partners (Levi Strauss & Co. and Target). VisionSpring staff surveyed indicated these partners would adopt and finance the WEE interventions (here, providing on-site eye exams and free prescription glasses to workers) as part of their standard operating processes across their operations and potentially globally.
SEE Change	1, 2	SEE Change methodology and training, originally developed at Johns Hopkins University, has been integrated into existing USAID activities. The Engendering Utilities activity, for example, offers the SEE Change leadership development interventions to partner utility companies. The SEE Change women's leadership training curriculum is also available for a fee to private sector companies.

Through many WEE Round I activities, GenDev invested in pre-existing USAID programs that had established partnerships with locally led development efforts and supported local actors in the targeted communities. For example, Round I funding to the Women Connect Challenge (WCC) activity supported nine grants to local NGOs for improving women's access to and use of technology to close the gender gap in mobile internet use. WCC then selected an additional three NGOs to replicate the approach in new communities.

Another factor indicating a high likelihood of post-WEE funding sustainability was a wide array of local partners associated with the Round I activities. Many activities in Asia were found to have extensive local partnerships, with public institutions and private sector partners actively engaged in their programs. For example, SURGE, JAPRI, and E-PESO leveraged extensive local partner networks to develop and test flexible solutions to overcome operational challenges and integrate systems approaches to achieve sustainability across partner types. See the list of partner networks for each activity in Table 14.

SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR 4: Taking buy-in action to integrate WEE programming into ongoing USAID activities.

All USAID activities are mandated to enhance women's empowerment and reduce gender gaps at the strategic level and include gender analysis and output indicators at the activity level. However, often the available funding does not match the needs. The Round I portfolio of activities included large regional and global gender investments in flagship USAID programs such as Power Africa, INVEST, CATALYZE, and WAITH that leveraged existing networks and country-level presence. CCBO, WEE in PNG (LGP), and Women in Peruvian Water Security (NIWS) are tackling major issues seen as country-level challenges (climate change, water scarcity, plastics pollution, biodiversity). They utilize WEE funding to mainstream gender in their activities and their partnerships and interactions with partner country governments, local NGOs, and the private sector.

TABLE 14: WEE Funding Buy-In to Existing USAID Programs

Activity	Pillar(s) Supported	Findings
CCBO	1, 2, 3	CCBO is USAID's global flagship program responding to the global marine plastic pollution crisis that is caused by mismanaged waste in urban and peri-urban areas in the developing world. Within the waste management and recycling sectors, gender inequality and women's empowerment opportunities are often overlooked. Round 1 funding allowed for a baseline assessment that identified key gender-related challenges and opportunities for women, regulations, and policies that advance and support women's livelihoods, and physical protections needed to ensure women's safety and well-being.
WEE in PNG (LGP)	1, 2, 3	The WEE in PNG activity is embedded in USAID's \$23 million biodiversity program Lukautim Graun Program (LGP), implemented through a consortium of partners led by Cardno. The WEE funding enabled the gender and biodiversity teams to work together, blending activity meetings with the slogan "No women, no meetings." In the past, biodiversity meetings would typically have no women present. The WEE funding also moved the discussion about gender into the biodiversity space at meetings with government officials.
Women in Peruvian Water Society (NIWS)	1, 3	The activity was added to the Natural Infrastructure in Water Security (NIWS) project, which was launched jointly by USAID (\$15 million) and Canada (\$12.5 million). The NIWS is a highly visible project that has forged solid relationships with Peruvian ministries, the national water authority, and utilities. The government-to-government partnership allows for rapid and sustained gender mainstreaming.

**SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR 5:
Promoting interventions that are socially
and culturally sensitive.**

Across WEE Round 1 activities, social acceptance of women's participation in the formal economy and as leaders and independent actors was a critical "door opener" to women's participation in the WEE activities any economic training or venture. Throughout the case studies, female respondents frequently noted that an important benefit to their participation was a change in perception among their husbands, community, and business leaders and their perceptions of self-worth. The respondents stated that they viewed themselves as viable economic actors rather than as occasional laborers. The Round 1 investments in gender-transformative approaches focused on gender roles, equity in domestic relationships, and discrimination in the workplace, which motivated the beneficiaries to continue their participation in the activities. In Africa, Asia, Latin American, and the Middle East, female beneficiaries and IP local staff observed that women could not participate or become entrepreneurs until it is socially acceptable to do so.

These gender transformative approaches may become sufficient safeguards over time to protect the rights of current beneficiaries. Another contributing factor to sustainability may be changing the social and cultural patterns in decision-making over resources and other assets required for sustaining activity results. However, anticipating which social and cultural variables will be the most important sustainability indicators is difficult at this early stage.

EQ5 CONCLUSIONS

The five factors associated with evidence of sustainability suggest that GenDev has invested in effective programs that are bolstered by the diverse array of partners—especially working with partner governments at the national and community levels—which can have a huge impact on communities through legislation and government development initiatives that donors often support. Five Round 1 activities working in natural resource management and biodiversity (SURGE, Protect Wildlife, PNG, CCMO, and NIWS) have strong linkages to partner governments. The E-PESO and JAPRI activities are examples of working with partner governments to overcome economic barriers faced by women.

Leveraging proven gender approaches, engaging local experts, and building upon existing partner programs was efficient and likely to be sustained. By addressing local economic priorities and delivering tangible results, communities shift from passive recipients to active participants invested in continuing gender-focused programs. In other cases, WEE Portfolio funding supported the effective integration of WEE into existing, large-scale USAID programs. Elevating gender issues on par with other technical assistance interventions and addressing gender norms around the acceptability of women's economic participation at the national, community, and household levels are critical to ensuring women can effectively participate in these activities and reap economic benefits. Effective beneficiary participation can increase understanding of the value of the activities by the female beneficiaries, which further boosts the likelihood of sustainability and continued advancement of WEE.

Although there are early indications that many gender interventions initiated in Round I will continue after WEE Portfolio funding ends, more gender-transformative approaches are likely required to create opportunities for men and women to challenge gender norms and address power inequalities actively, some of which are described in detail in the four case studies. Additionally, targeted and sustained legal and cultural interventions from multiple stakeholders are necessary to sustain gains made through the WEE investments. For example, land rights and access to natural resources for female farmers in India entail complex legal and cultural issues that affect the sustainability of the **POWER** and **USAID-PepsiCo Partnership** activities.

EQ5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings and conclusions, the ET offers five recommendations that highlight strategies for improving the sustainability of the WEE Round I activities:

1. Integrate women's organizations and gender specialists in the activity design phase. Early engagement with local partners and women's organizations was a common element in activity results. Specifically, including female and male gender champions and community leaders in the co-design of interventions ensured that local development priorities were addressed in WEE-focused activities. Allocate sufficient resources to align local development and gender goals interventions that complement and support other international, regional, and community partners.

2. Embed self-financing interventions into activity designs and cost-recovery. Different activity approaches such as self-financing, cost-recovery, and buy-ins to existing programs would benefit from tailored sustainability plans. Like the technical guidance provided in developing MEL plans, integrating sustainability planning into the activity design is important.
3. Involve national and local partners in carrying out activity interventions and providing inputs. USAID should work closely with national and local partner governments to overcome barriers faced by women in the economy, reform and enforce legislation and regulations, and have national, regional, and partner country government development plans and interventions to integrate WEE priorities.
4. Early activity findings indicated that buy-in to larger programs reduced risks that activities will not meet their targets because start-ups are quicker, monitoring systems are in place, and female beneficiaries consider networks very important. However, the drawback is that the relatively modest sum of a WEE award could disappear within the larger budget of the mechanism it is bought into, unless the WEE activities and results are carefully tracked within the larger project or program.
5. Promote socially and culturally sensitive interventions that addressed systemic gender barriers such as discriminatory legislation, unequal access to justice, and lack of representation in local or national decision-making structures. Potentially many new opportunities exist for collaboration and cross-cutting approaches for GenDev to explore in the USAID Bureau for Development, Democracy and Innovation, which houses both GenDev and Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance.

ANNEX I: EVALUATION STATEMENT OF WORK

**DDI/Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev)
W-GDP Portfolio Performance Evaluation
Statement of Work, Draft 2
May 13, 2020**

I. EVALUATION PURPOSE, AUDIENCE, AND INTENDED USES

I.1 Purpose

USAID's Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (DDI/GenDev) is carrying out a Portfolio Performance Evaluation (of USAID's Round I activities funded by the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative. GenDev will collaborate with the USAID Missions, offices and partners implementing W-GDP funded activities to design, implement and learn from the PPE.

The portfolio to be evaluated includes all the women's economic empowerment programming activities (Round I) supported by fiscal year 2018 W-GDP funds. This evaluation will help USAID to better understand the attributes of the Round I W-GDP portfolio of activities, as well as the women's economic empowerment (WEE) interventions, results, partnerships, and sustainability effects of these activities. Since the W-GDP PPE is a part of the W-GDP Learning Agenda, the evaluation questions are broadly informed by the W-GDP Learning Agenda questions.

The W-GDP PPE will be conducted in two phases. During Phase 1, (April 2020 to May 2021), the PPE will assess the W-GDP activity designs, formative implementation experiences, and beginning accomplishments. During Phase 2 (May 2022 to January 2023), the PPE will assess maturing WEE interventions and activity completion/near completion results, placing greater emphasis on understanding the sustainability effects of the Round I W-GDP portfolio.

I.2 Audience and Intended Uses

The primary audiences for this evaluation are the USAID/Washington W-GDP team, the W-GDP interagency leads located at the White House and the Department of State, and the U.S. government agencies supporting W-GDP. The recipients of W-GDP funds (awardees), including the USAID AOR/CORs/AMs, implementing partners and other activity stakeholders form other important

audiences. These W-GDP activity stakeholders include USAID Missions and offices, host country government agencies, donor organizations, private sector partners, local and international nonprofits, and community-based organizations, especially women's organizations. The evaluation will enable members of these audiences to get an overview of USAID's Round I W-GDP activities and increase their knowledge of women's economic empowerment activity designs, partners, actual interventions, results, and sustainability effects.

Other audiences likely to use the evaluation findings and recommendations include the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL), the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, the DDI offices directly supported by DDI/GenDev, and other USAID Bureaus engaged in gender equality and women's empowerment programming, such as the Bureau for Global Health and the Bureau for Food Security (BFS). This evaluation opens a window for the larger development community to understand USAID's women's economic empowerment programming and results.

2. BACKGROUND⁴²

In February 2019, President Donald J. Trump signed a National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM-16), which established the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative. W-GDP adopts the first ever whole-of-government approach to advance women's economic empowerment globally. W-GDP operationalizes the National Security Strategy and aligns with the Administration's objective to support developing countries in their journey to self-reliance. W-GDP seeks to reach 50 million women in the developing world by 2025 through U.S. Government activities, public-private partnerships, and a new Fund, housed and managed by USAID.

The White House-led W-GDP Working Group comprises ten U.S. Government agencies working to achieve the Initiative's goals and objectives: the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Treasury, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Labor, Millennium Challenge Corporation, U.S. Peace Corps, U.S. African Development Foundation, Inter-American Foundation, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (soon to be part of the new United States International Development Finance Corporation), as well as White House offices and components, including the U.S. Trade Representative and Office of Management and Budget.

⁴² This description of background contains excerpts from the *W-GDP: Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative Annual Report, 2019-2020* and current Factsheets.

2.1 WEE -GDP Pillars

W-GDP focuses on three pillars:

Pillar 1 – Women Prospering in the Workforce:

Advancing women in the workforce by improving access to quality vocational and skills training, enabling women to secure jobs in their local economies.

Pillar 2 – Women Succeeding as Entrepreneurs:

Increasing women's access to capital, markets, networks, and mentorship to aid women in establishing and growing their businesses.

Pillar 3 – Women Enabled in the Economy:

Removing restrictive legal, regulatory, and cultural barriers to facilitate women's meaningful participation in the economy.

Additionally, under Pillar 3, W-GDP focuses on five foundational areas of legal reform:

1. **Accessing Institutions:** Lifting restrictions on women's authority to sign legal documents, such as contracts and court documents, and addressing unequal access to courts and administrative bodies for women, whether officially or through lack of proper enforcement.
2. **Building Credit:** Ensuring women's equal access to credit and capital to start and grow their businesses and prohibiting discrimination in access to credit based on sex or marital status.
3. **Owning and Managing Property:** Lifting restrictions on women possessing and managing property, including limitations on inheritance and the ability to transfer, purchase, or lease property.
4. **Traveling Freely:** Addressing constraints on women's freedom of movement, including restrictions on obtaining passports based on sex.
5. **Removing Restrictions on Employment:** Eliminating barriers that limit women's working hours, occupations, or tasks based on sex.

2.2 The W-GDP Fund

A central W-GDP Fund was established by President Trump to help operationalize the Initiative when it was launched in February 2019. The W-GDP Fund serves as the Initiative's signature programmatic platform for sourcing and scaling innovative activities to advance women's economic empowerment across the developing world. Highlights from the Fund's first year include MOUs signed with major private sector partners such as UPS, PepsiCo, Mars, and MasterCard, as well as a round of incentive funds awarded to scale successful programs.

The Fund's programs and activities aim at increasing access to workforce training, markets, credit, and financial products, as well as mentorship, leadership skills, household dynamics, decision-making, and control over economic resources. The W-GDP Fund advances the three pillars through mission-led programming, impact-driven grants, and innovative partnerships with the United States Government inter-agency, private sector companies, non-governmental and faith-based organizations, and other donors. The Fund identifies investment opportunities that align with the Initiative, have demonstrated effectiveness and opportunities to scale, and can deliver measurable impact. The emphasis on private sector engagement supports USAID's efforts to help countries by promoting self-sustaining reforms and growth, especially when based on market forces without need for further donor contributions.

2.3 W-GDP Incentive Fund Awards

In July 2019, W-GDP announced the first round of Incentive Fund awardees—15 new activities amounting to \$27 million with more than 200 public and private sector partners across 22 countries.

The 15 activities awarded incentive funds aim at reaching 100,000 women through their activities across 22 countries, including:

Benin – Economic Reintegration for Victims of Gender-Based Violence: Reintegrate at least 170 female victims of gender-based violence into the economy through increased employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru – Women Prospering in Technology: Work with information and communications technology companies to equip 8,700 women with the skills needed for placement and promotion in tech sector jobs.

Côte d'Ivoire – Pro-Jeunes Vocational Training for Women in Energy: Provide vocational training and support to 750 postsecondary young women in solar energy sales, installation, and service as entrepreneurs and employees for solar-powered micro-grids.

Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia: – Property Rights for Women's Economic Empowerment: Ensure women's property rights through revising laws and regulations to improve the ability of millions of women to own, inherit, or use land across Africa.

Georgia – Supporting Entrepreneurial Skills (YES-Georgia): Provide focused technical assistance for 2,500 women entrepreneurs and employees to increase their earnings and facilitate access to finance for women entrepreneurs.

Ghana – USAID Global Development Alliance with Alaffia: Establish new processing operations in Ghana to create employment opportunities for 9,500 women in Ghana and link them with markets in the United States.

India – Producer-Owned Women’s Enterprises: Create 28 women-owned enterprises in the creative manufacturing sector that will connect 6,800 women producers to commercial supply chains in natural and biodegradable products.

Indonesia – Jadi Pendusaha Mandiri (JAPRI): Becoming an Independent Entrepreneur: Create 2,000 registered women-owned enterprises and support growth in income and revenue for 5,000 women in poultry supply chains.

Papua New Guinea – Women’s Economic Empowerment: Support the growth of 40 women-led enterprises while reforming discriminatory laws and business practices that affect 50,000 women in Papua New Guinea.

The Philippines – Self-Reliance through Women’s Economic Empowerment: Work with the private sector to increase earnings for 3,800 women entrepreneurs and 12,000 households, and assist local governments to address barriers that prevent women’s full economic participation.

Rwanda – Women in Rwandan Energy (WIRE): Enable 1,400 women to break into the fast-growing energy sector, while working with the Rwandan Government and the private sector to give even more women the opportunity to enter this traditionally male-dominated field.

Senegal – Women’s Entrepreneurship Promotion and Business Investment Activity: Work with the private sector to create 1,500 new jobs for women in agribusiness and the Peace Corps to equip 20,000 women with the necessary skills to increase their earnings.

South Africa – Women Enabling Women: Create an ecosystem of women’s economic empowerment by establishing 1,000 women-owned childcare centers, which will create jobs for thousands more women while reducing the burden of unpaid childcare for women in the workplace.

West Africa. Women’s Economic Empowerment in the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH): Ensure women-owned and managed Ghanaian agribusinesses will have greater access to markets for trade and investment.

2.4 W-GDP Activities Catalyzed by Partnerships

In November 2019, the W-GDP Fund announced an additional \$10 million in activities and new partnerships that will catalyze an additional \$5 million from the private sector. These activities and partnerships include:

- More than \$1.5 million for a collaboration with the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE), Visa Foundation, and USAID to implement the Advancing Women’s Empowerment Fund, a catalyst fund in South and Southeast Asia that will help close the financing gap for women-led businesses. The W-GDP Fund invested just more than \$600,000 while the Visa Foundation added \$1 million to the initiative. This new catalyst fund will provide support to women entrepreneurs to fund more companies, build their capacity, and connect them with appropriate sources of capital to help them scale their businesses.
- Bancamía partnership to expand the Partnering to Accelerate Entrepreneurship (PACE) Initiative into Colombia. USAID’s Revenue-Based Lending Acceleration initiative (\$800,000), a partnership in Colombia with Palladium and local bank Bancamía, will facilitate a new type of financial product that catalyzes private sector investment into early-stage, women-led businesses. It also bundles the financial product with specialized business development services, including training, group workshops, and individual consulting.
- The Department of Commerce, the Government of the Dominican Republic, and USAID (\$970,000) to revise procurement laws and practices to create greater opportunities for women-led businesses and provide technical assistance to help women-led businesses take advantage of those opportunities, consistent with the obligations of the Dominican Republic under international agreements.
- Three major American apparel company partners will invest \$1.5 million—Kontoor Brands, Levi Strauss & Co., and The Children’s Place—with a \$1 million investment from W-GDP and will partner with USAID and the Solidarity Center, as well as local labor and women’s organizations, and factory owners to increase women’s safety and productivity at four major manufacturing facilities that employ more than 8,000 women located in Lesotho.

- Mars, Inc. to boost women's economic empowerment in the shea supply chain in Ghana through a \$4.5 million partnership with USAID. W-GDP will provide \$2 million in funding, leveraging an additional \$2.5 million from Mars. This partnership aims to transform the sector by establishing a sustainable supply chain for shea nuts by providing resources to these women-led businesses that will increase production efficiency and product quality, introduce crop rotation to provide additional income generating activities and improve access to financial products that help them reinvest and grow their businesses.
- NASA, USAID, and regional, technical institutions around the world through the global SERVIR network to close the gap between higher education and employment and advancement of women in STEM careers (\$970,000). The SERVIR program empowers people with satellite data, science, and technology to improve environmental decision-making among 23 developing nations. New activities will support training, internships, and mentorship for women in higher education to launch their careers.
- W-GDP Women Connect Challenge investing an additional \$2 million to award a second round of W-GDP Women Connect Challenge grants, bringing the overall total to over \$3.5 million. The Women Connect Challenge, launched on International Women's Day in 2018 by Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump and Administrator Mark Green, is a global call for solutions to bridge the gender digital divide so that women can fully participate in the global economy. Each of these winners will deliver digital innovations to support one of the three W-GDP pillars:

Pillar 1 – Women Prospering in the Workforce:

Dimagi Inc., in partnership with Women for Women International (WfWI) and IDEO.org, will create “Coach Carene,” a chatbot that will provide vocational and financial literacy training and resources for women in Rwanda.

Pillar 2 – Women Succeeding as

Entrepreneurs: United Purpose, in collaboration with women community collectives in Senegal, will develop Tekki Jigeeen, a digital program that provides rural women with entrepreneurial training, resources, and banking services to help them overcome barriers they face in agricultural value chains.

Pillar 3 – Women Enabled in the Economy:

Solidaridad will link women dairy farmers in Bangladesh to formal supply chains. In this activity, women across five districts will have the opportunity to enroll in a mobile money program that includes financial literacy trainings, resources to improve joint decision-making in the family, as well as access to modern dairy practices.

The complete list of Round I W-GDP activities to be evaluated is presented in Annex I.

3. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions for USAID's Round I Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Portfolio Performance Evaluation (PPE) take into consideration the distinctive attributes of this portfolio:

- USAID's W-GDP activities are designed to achieve the objectives of the W-GDP Initiative and meet the ADS Chapter 205 requirements for integrating gender into the program cycle;
- The portfolio encompasses activities advancing women's economic empowerment. These activities are diverse. They are in different countries, demonstrate different programmatic models and have different W-GDP Pillar and sector foci;
- The PPE activities could be either new activities or continuing activities, often embedded in bigger, ongoing activities, projects and programs;
- The activities are supported by USAID and other funding sources, notably the private sector; and
- The activities are implemented by a range of implementing partners.

Since the PPE will cover approximately 45 activities addressing different aspects of the W-GDP Pillars located in different countries, the evaluation questions are high level in pitch, and tend to be stated broadly. To operationalize these evaluation questions and address specific W-GDP concerns, the LEAP III team will, in the Evaluation Design Proposal, identify research topics and lines of inquiry relating to each topline question and its set of sub-questions. This would help the ET to develop data collection tools, analyze the data and prepare an evaluation report that meets USAID's information needs.

The Round I W-GDP Portfolio Performance Evaluation (PPE) will answer the following five topline questions. These topline questions should address—but not be limited to—the corresponding sub-questions listed in bullets under each question:

I. How are USAID's Round I Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) activities contributing toward implementing the W-GDP Initiative?

- What W-GDP objectives, technical criteria and USAID policy priorities are being met in funding these activities?
- What are the characteristics of the Round I W-GDP activities, including, but not limited to alignment with the W-GDP Pillars, themes, sectors, countries, and regions, W-GDP funds received, partner funds catalyzed, and new and continuing activities?
- Are the activities designed and implemented toward meeting the W-GDP priorities technical criteria and relevant USAID policy priorities?
- Is USAID's support for these activities meeting the expectations of key stakeholders, such as the activity AOR/CORs/AMs and IPs?
- What are recommendations for strengthening the selection and management of W-GDP funded activities in the future?

2. How effectively are internal and external partners supporting the funding, design and implementation of the Round I W-GDP activities?

- Broadly categorize the types of partnerships established through the activities, including USAID internal partners.
- How are different categories of partners adding value financially, materially and technically to the activities? Discuss with reference to internal USAID partners (including synergies with other activities managed by the awardee OU) as well as external partners, such as, other U.S. government agencies, host country government agencies, local nonprofit organizations and community-based organizations, local women's organizations, private sector entities, other donor organizations and international nonprofit organizations.
- Is the W-GDP Initiative increasing the technical and management capacities of partners to design, implement, measure and communicate the results of women's economic empowerment interventions?
- What are the challenges and constraints faced by activity partnerships?

- What are the recommendations for strengthening W-GDP partnerships: host country government agencies, private sector, international and local nonprofit organizations and USAID internal partners?

3. How effectively are the Round I W-GDP activities addressing economic gender gaps and women's economic empowerment needs?

- What regional and in-country gender gaps and women's economic empowerment needs are being addressed by the activities?
- What are the characteristics of the gender gaps and women's economic empowerment needs, for example, by type of need and economic barrier; whether widespread within region/country, or niche based; rooted in tradition or new/emerging; and levels of associated advocacy and activism?
- What types of W-GDP Pillar aligned interventions are being used to address these gender gaps and needs?
- Are these interventions meeting activity objectives and cost efficient? Discuss strengths and weaknesses:
- Are the interventions providing real solutions given country and community contexts, and the specific gender economic gaps and needs addressed by the activity?
- Are the interventions practically feasible, given the activity budget, timeline, USAID and IP staff capacities, and ground realities?
- Are the interventions culturally sensitive?
- Are the interventions helping to expand women's economic programming within the OU portfolio?
- How effectively are the activities integrating:
1) GBV prevention and response interventions; and
2) actions to mobilize male champions?
- What are the recommendations for improving the relevance, effectiveness and cost efficiency gains of W-GDP activity interventions?

4. Are the Round I W-GDP activities achieving expected results?

- What Pillar aligned outputs and outcomes being achieved? Consider using the overall women reached metric and the W-GDP interagency Pillar metrics to aggregate results.
- Are the W-GDP activities achieving MEL plan output and outcome targets?
- What are the internal and external opportunities and challenges faced in achieving targets? Are these challenges being overcome?
- What can be learned from not reaching MEL plan targets?
- Are there any actual or potentially harmful W-GDP programming effects (such as gender-based violence, gender backlash, etc.)? What steps are being taken to prevent/mitigate these harmful impacts?
- What are the recommendations for improving results?

5. To what extent are the Round I W-GDP activities sustainable?

- Have the activities led to adaptation, replication, scale-up, and/or institutionalization of women's economic empowerment programming within: 1) USAID CDCS/ projects/activities or programs; and 2) host country public, private, nonprofit organizations and CBO institutions?
- How will the development results be sustained after the period of performance of the award ends?
- Are there general sustainability effects with regional or global implications?
- Does sustainability differ by activity types, implementing partners, or institutional and country context?
- What conditions increase the likelihood of sustainability or continuation of the development results beyond the grant-funded period?
- Are there opportunities to scale existing activities with an emphasis on encouraging additional private sector support?
- What are the recommendations for improving the sustainability of the W-GDP activities?

4. W-GDP PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION APPROACH

The W-GDP PPE⁴³ will cover all women's economic empowerment programming activities funded by the FY 2018 W-GDP funds. In this sense, the W-GDP PPE evaluation is similar to a whole-of-project evaluation (WOPE).⁴⁴ A WOPE looks across the multiple activities that comprise a single activity and seeks to identify the degree to which the activities, taken in the aggregate, have contributed towards the activity's purpose. Like a WOPE, the W-GDP PPE will investigate the degree to which the W-GDP portfolio of Round I activities is advancing the goals of the W-GDP Initiative.

4.1 W-GDP Portfolio Performance Evaluation Criteria

Overall, the W-GDP PPE design, data collection, data analysis and reports will meet the following criteria:

- Optimize the use of information available on the W-GDP activities by drawing upon stakeholder perceptions and opinions; activity documents and resources; and the W-GDP database maintained by USAID Data Services. This new database stores W-GDP profiles and monthly performance reports;
- Apply cutting-edge online communication technologies to engage W-GDP stakeholders like USAID AMs and IP POCs;
- Conduct field study for select W-GDP activities (to be determined);
- Apply statistical software to optimize triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data, and in-depth data analysis;
- Optimize cost efficiencies and the use of local knowledge, for example: (1) Collect data from the USA using remote communication technologies, and (2) host-country evaluators;

⁴³ "Performance evaluations comprise a broad range of evaluation methods. They often incorporate before-after comparisons, but generally lack a rigorously defined counterfactual. Performance evaluations may address descriptive, normative and/or cause-and-effect questions: what a particular program or project has achieved, (at any point during or after implementation); how it is being implemented; how it is perceived and valued; whether expected results are occurring; and other questions that are pertinent to design, management and operational decision-making" (USAID Evaluation Policy, January 2011, Updated October 16, 2016, Washington D.C., p. 3).

⁴⁴ USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) states that "whole-of-project performance evaluations examine an entire project, including all its constituent activities and progress toward the achievement of the Project Purpose." (ADS 201. Additional Help, Whole-of-Project Evaluation. September 2016, Washington D.C., p.2).

- Disaggregate data by activity groups, such as, Pillar affiliations, sectors, regions; and types of partnerships, interventions and results;
- Gather information from females and males disaggregating by sex, age and other pertinent demographics;
- Respond to all the evaluation questions and present information through narrative analyses and data visualization effects, including charts, graphs and appendices; and
- Present findings, conclusions and recommendations relating to all the evaluation questions in the evaluation reports, evaluation debriefing sessions, and any subsequent presentations.

4.2 Evaluation Principles

The contractor will apply the following principles when designing and conducting the evaluation:

Inclusion: Information will be gathered from USAID Missions and offices as well as partner organizations receiving FY 2018 W-GDP funds.

Participation: Representatives of stakeholders, such as USAID activity management staff and monitoring and evaluation personnel, IPs, and beneficiaries will actively participate in the evaluation providing information on partnerships, interventions, and results. W-GDP stakeholders will also share and use the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Respect and Safety: Steps will be taken to obtain respondents' consent, ensure confidentiality, and protect respondents.

Utility: The evaluation's findings, conclusions and recommendations will be used to improve the designs, interventions, results and sustainability of current and future activities advancing W-GDP and women's economic empowerment.

4.3 Evaluation Strengths and Limitations

The W-GDP evaluation will be designed and implemented to meet USAID's data quality standards: validity, reliability, integrity, precision, and timelines. LEAP III will produce an Evaluation Design Proposal (described in more detail in the next section), which will present the plan to catalyze the strengths and mitigate the limitations that may be encountered, including the following.

Strengths: This evaluation will examine the performance of a collection of activities supporting W-GDP. The evaluation will employ a participatory approach, by applying methods to engage USAID AMs, implementing partners and beneficiaries located in diverse regions, countries, USAID missions and offices. These widely ranging USAID internal and external stakeholders will get the opportunity to share their perceptions, experiences, opinions and recommendations on various W-GDP activity components, such as, design, partnerships, interventions, results and sustainability effects.

A participatory approach will promote the utilization of W-GDP PPE findings and recommendations across the USAID and other USG agencies implementing the W-GDP Initiative. This evaluation will be helped by the availability of substantial information on the Initiative as well as the W-GDP funded activities. This PPE is being designed to collect data at two points in time to capture the activity start up experience, as well as the cumulative implementation experience and mature results at toward at the activity completion stage.

Limitations: While USAID AMs and IP leads of each W-GDP activity will be engaged during the data collection period(s), owing to budget and scope limitations, a smaller set of W-GDP will be subject to in-depth study. The purposive sampling criteria used to pick the activities qualifying for in-depth study may reflect sampling bias. A portfolio evaluation is necessarily constrained by broad, high-level evaluation questions that seek to meet the information needs of the W-GDP team, rather than the specific questions of each stakeholder. Given the W-GDP Initiative's prominence, the responses of some interviewees may be subject to social desirability bias.

4.4 Gender Considerations

W-GDP invests in women's economic empowerment programs and, by extension, focuses primarily on females. However, the ET will make every effort to look at broader gender equity issues relevant to answering each evaluation question. Data collected will be disaggregated by sex as relevant.

4.5 USAID Participation

The LEAP III ET will collaborate closely with DDI/GenDev during all stages of the evaluation. DDI/GenDev will provide guidance and oversight. Also, DDI/GenDev and recipient Mission/Office staff may participate in the field studies and other information collection operations. USAID Missions and offices will provide critical assistance by liaising with IPs, serving as key informants, and providing activity-related documents.

5. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

The LEAP III team will carry out the W-GDP PPE adhering to the requirements and guidance in the USAID Evaluation Policy (January 2011, Updated October 2016), ADS Chapter 201: Program Cycle Operational Policy (Partial revision date: 03/10/2020) and ADS Chapter 579: USAID Development Data (Partial revision date: 03/26/2020).

5.1 Prepare Evaluation Design Proposal

In consultation with the USAID W-GDP team, LEAP III will prepare an Evaluation Design Proposal, which describes the overall PPE approach, methodology, schedules, and composition of the ET. The methodology should encompass every W-GDP activity in the portfolio of activities funded with FY 2018 W-GDP funds. The complete list of activities to be covered by the PPE should be annexed to the Evaluation Design Proposal.

The final Evaluation Design Proposal will describe how LEAP III will address and integrate the following elements in response to this SOW besides any other elements the ET may add:

Propose Evaluation Approach:

- The overall evaluation approach to answering the W-GDP PPE questions (see section 4.0 of this SOW); and
- Getting-To-Answers Matrix: Propose research topics and lines of inquiry for each of the five topline evaluation questions and set of sub-questions.

Propose Methodology:

- Propose a variety of complementary, cost-efficient and practically feasible data collection methods, such as, content analysis (of activity progress reports, Web pages, evaluation reports, meeting notes, logs and journals, tools, research papers, media notices, guidance, publications, resources, data sheets, database records including the W-GDP database records); surveys, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and field study methods;
- Discuss limitations of the evaluation methodology and solutions;
- Identify different categories of respondents and approximate sample sizes;

- Suggest criteria for selecting activities, as needed, for in-depth field study, the number of activity focused field studies for each of the two data collection phases, and field study methods;
- Discuss data quality risks and propose a protocol to quality assure data for each data collection method; and
- Plan to optimize cost-efficiencies and catalyze local knowledge by for example, using: (1) U.S.-based data collection methods applying communication technologies, and (2) in-country evaluators.

Propose Data Analysis Methods:

- Plan to analyze all data collected thoroughly, including the use of statistical software to analyze quantitative and qualitative data;
- Plan to disaggregate data, for example, by W-GDP Pillar foci, region, sector and types of interventions and partnerships; and
- Specify approach to comparing data gathered during Phase 1 and Phase 2 during Phase 2 data analysis.

Propose Reports:

- Structure of final evaluation reports (for Phase 1 and Phase 2 data collections) including an outline of report contents, including appendices;
- Plan to present Phase 1 and Phase 2 evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations to USAID and stakeholder audiences and to also debrief the evaluation; and
- Structure of a short report (20-25 pages with appendices) for each activity field study.

Propose Evaluation Staffing Plan, Schedule and Evaluation Budget:

- Describe the roles and qualifications of ET members (see SOW section 7.0);
- Detail schedules for Phase 1 and Phase 2 milestone deliverables; and
- Present the line-item Phase 1 budget and the Phase 2 budget.

5.2 Phase 1 and Phase 2 Data Collection and Data Analysis

To implement the data collection and data analysis plans during Phase 1 and Phase 2 as detailed in the Evaluation Design Proposal:

- The LEAP III ET members will be briefed on the W-GDP Initiative and encouraged to refresh and expand their knowledge of women's economic empowerment;
- Data collection tools aligned with the Getting-to-Answers-Matrix will be developed for each data collection method, for example, to carry out content analysis, surveys, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and field studies. USAID will review, provide feedback, and approve the final data collection tools. The ET members should be trained on how to use the W-GDP data collection and the data analysis tools;
- LEAP III will support GenDev in notifying the USAID Missions, offices and funding and/or implementing partners about the W-GDP PPE and liaise closely with key stakeholders when implementing the evaluation;
- LEAP III will obtain informed consent from interviewees and take the steps necessary to secure the data;
- Communication technologies will be applied to interview USAID staff and IP POCs from the U.S.A. and record the interviews;
- Data quality assurance protocols will be prepared, tested and applied to data collected by each research method;
- Statistical software will be applied to thoroughly analyze all data gathered; and
- The field study plan should be finalized in consultation with USAID and implemented.

5.3 Phase 1 and Phase 2 Reports and Evaluation Debriefing

LEAP III will prepare the final Phase 1 and Phase 2 PPE final reports and the field study reports for activities selected for field study. When the first PPE report drafts are submitted to USAID, the LEAP III ET will also formally present the draft findings, conclusions, and recommendations to USAID audiences. USAID will provide feedback during these presentations, and in writing after the draft(s) are circulated internally for review. When the final evaluation reports are approved by USAID, LEAP III will also debrief the PPE Phase 1 and Phase 2 evaluation implementation experience with USAID stakeholders.

The Phase 1 and Phase 2 final evaluation reports will meet the evaluation quality criteria described in the USAID Evaluation Policy (Appendix I, page II).

The evaluation report should include the following elements:

- Executive summary;
- Table of contents;
- Introduction (including evaluation purpose, audience, anticipated uses);
- Program background (overview of W-GDP Initiative and USAID's portfolio of W-GDP funded activities);
- The PPE questions;
- Methodology (summary of data collection and analysis methods, including limitations and challenges encountered and solutions applied)
- A chapter on the findings, conclusions and recommendations for each topline evaluation question;
- Summary of overall findings, conclusions and recommendations; and
- Annexes (references, tables and charts, evaluation SOW, more detailed methodology, list of respondents, and statement of differences if applicable).

CRITERIA TO ENSURE THE QUALITY OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

- The evaluation report should represent a thoughtful, well-researched, and well-organized effort to objectively evaluate the strategy, project, or activity.
- Evaluation reports should be readily understood and should identify key points clearly, distinctly, and succinctly.
- The Executive Summary of an evaluation report should present a concise and accurate statement of the most critical elements of the report.
- Evaluation reports should adequately address all evaluation questions included in the statement of work, or the evaluation questions subsequently revised and documented in consultation and agreement with USAID.
- Evaluation methodology should be explained in detail and all sources of information properly identified.
- Limitations to the evaluation should be adequately disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.).
- Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence, and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay, or simply the compilation of people's opinions.
- Findings and conclusions should be specific, concise, and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.
- If evaluation findings assess person-level outcomes or impact, they should also be separately assessed for both males and females.
- If recommendations are included, they should be supported by a specific set of findings and should be action-oriented, practical and specific.



Gender training taking place in Tharangambadi, India with POWER entrepreneurs.

PHOTO: Industree

6. SCHEDULE OF DELIVERABLES

The PPE's deliverables will be submitted to GenDev's Evaluation AM who will coordinate the process to circulate the draft reports, compile feedback and organize presentations. LEAP III will schedule and hold regular meetings with the AM to provide updates on the evaluation activities.

LEAP III will use the illustrative schedule for Phase I below to propose the timelines and deliverables for Phase I and Phase 2 data collections and reports in the Evaluation Design Proposal. The Phase 2 tasks and deliverables are likely to be similar to the Phase I tasks and deliverables. However, Phase I will also include the collection of documents from W-GDP activities as part of its data collection activities. In addition, the Phase I and Phase 2 timelines and due dates will be different. The Phase 2 data collection and reporting timeline would also depend on the future status of the LEAP III contract.

Deliverables and Tasks	Due Date	Illustrative Timeline ⁴⁵
Submit draft PPE Design Proposal to AM	Four business weeks following receipt of USAID approval of the evaluation Statement of Work	June 30, 2020
Presentation(s) on Evaluation Design Proposal to AM and other USAID reviewers including USAID GenDev and DDI, W-GDP Working Group and Interagency representatives	Within 10 business days following AM's feedback on the draft Evaluation Design Proposal	July 9, 2020
Submit Final Evaluation Design Proposal, incorporating USAID's feedback on the draft	10 business days after receiving final feedback from all USAID stakeholders on the draft Evaluation Design Proposal	July 30, 2020
Implement PPE: complete document review, data collection, field studies, data analysis, and begin drafting report	14 business weeks upon receipt of USAID approval of the final Evaluation Design Proposal	August 1 – November 6, 2020
Submit a finished Draft PPE Report to AM (findings may be used by the W-GDP Annual Report to be issued in February 2021)	Eight business weeks following completion of data collection activities	January 4, 2021
Hold presentation on draft PPE report for USAID audiences	Within 15 business days of submitting the draft PPE report	January 14, 2021
Submit final PPE report to AM following the preparation of additional drafts requested by USAID	Within 2 business weeks of receiving final feedback from USAID audiences	February 12, 2021
Submit final field study reports to AM following the preparation of additional drafts requested by USAID and any conference calls or presentations on the field studies that USAID may request	Within 3 weeks of receiving final feedback on the draft field reports from USAID audiences	March 5, 2021
Provide evaluation debriefing to AM and deliver agreed-upon dissemination events	Within six business weeks following submission of the Final PPE Evaluation Reports and field study reports	April 30, 2021

⁴⁵ The illustrative dates are included to provide an example of a potential timeline for the delivery of products.

The ET will be responsible for all logistics for fieldwork, including coordinating all travel throughout the region, lodging, printing, office space, equipment, and car rentals. All documents and reports will be provided electronically to USAID. All qualitative and quantitative data will be provided in electronic format to USAID in a format consistent with Automated Directives System (ADS) 579 requirements. Presentations and debriefs will include a formal presentation to USAID/Washington audiences with slides delivered electronically with relevant hard copy handouts for all attendees, as relevant.

7. W-GDP PPE TEAM

The work described in this SOW will be conducted by a LEAP III ET including an ET Leader located in the USA, Senior Evaluators located in the USA, and national evaluation specialists situated preferably in the country locations of activities selected for field study. The ET will be supported as needed by mid-level Researchers and IT Associates. Each ET member will sign USAID's conflict of interest statement before conducting any field research.

7.1 Team Leader Qualifications

The Team Leader will oversee and coordinate all activities relating to implementing the Phase 1 and Phase 2 data collections including scheduling, team training and technical assistance, and data quality assurance operations. S/he will lead the preparation of the final PPE reports and field study reports. S/he will serve as principal liaison in communicating with USAID.

Qualifications:

1. A graduate degree in the social sciences;
2. A minimum of 10 years' experience in research, performance monitoring and evaluation;
3. A minimum of 10 years' experience doing international development work;
4. Demonstrated experience, preferably eight years, in gender equality and women's empowerment programming, research, or evaluation;
5. Extensive experience serving as ET leader or in an equivalent position;
6. Experience managing projects/activities funded by USAID;
7. Knowledge and experience applying USAID's program cycle guidance;

8. Proven communication skills with demonstrated experience in producing high quality reports;
9. Specialist expertise in working with databases, electronic communication methods and software to collect and analyze data; and
10. Outstanding team leadership skills and problem-solving experience.

7.2 Senior Evaluator Qualifications

The Senior Evaluators will have specialist knowledge and work experience relating to the three W-GDP Pillars. They will serve as the women's economic empowerment experts for this PPE. They will work closely with the ET Leader to design the data collection and data analysis tools, hold remote interviews and focus group discussions with USAID staff and IP POCs, and carry out field studies assigned in collaboration with the in-country evaluators. The Senior Evaluators will also collaborate with the Team Leader to prepare the draft and final PPE reports and the field study reports.

Qualifications:

1. A graduate degree in the social sciences;
2. A minimum of 8 years' experience in research, performance monitoring and evaluation;
3. A minimum of 8 years' experience doing international development work;
4. In-depth knowledge and extensive work experience relating to women's economic empowerment programming, performance monitoring, research and evaluation;
5. Experience managing projects/activities funded by USAID;
6. Knowledge and experience applying USAID's program cycle guidance;
7. Excellent communication skills with evidence of producing high quality research or evaluation reports;
8. Specialist expertise in working with databases, electronic communication methods and software to collect and analyze data; and
9. Be an outstanding team player.

7.3 In-country Evaluator Qualifications

The in-country evaluators will carry out Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions with the local partners and beneficiaries of W-GDP activities selected for field study. They will work closely with the Senior Evaluators to complete the field studies. LEAP III will supervise the in-country evaluators: provide orientation on the W-GDP Initiative and training on the use of data collection tools; and closely monitoring data collection work including recording and transcription.

Qualifications:

1. A graduate degree in the social sciences;
2. A minimum of eight years' experience doing research, performance monitoring and evaluation in collaboration with donor agencies;
3. A minimum of eight years' experience doing development work in-country;
4. In-depth knowledge and extensive work experience relating to women's economic empowerment programming, performance monitoring, research and evaluation;
5. Fluency in spoken and written English;
6. Fluency in the language(s)/dialect(s) spoken by the W-GDP activity beneficiaries and local partners and the ability to translate and provide notes in English;
7. Knowledge and work experience applying USAID's program cycle guidance;
8. Experience using communication technologies to connect with team members, and high degree of proficiency in recording interviews, and transferring information electronically; and
9. Be an outstanding team player.



Laida Phiri displays her customary land certificate on her parcel of land in eastern Zambia.

PHOTO: Jeremy Green, USAID

ANNEX II: LIST OF ROUND I ACTIVITIES

	Activity Name	Pillar(S)	Implementing Partner Organization	Country/ Region	Start Date	End Date
1	\$100 Million Women's Livelihood Bond II	II	Impact Investment Exchange Pte. Ltd. (IIX)	Asia and the Pacific	9/6/19	9/30/29
2	Economic Reintegration for Victims of Gender-Based Violence	I, II, III	Management Sciences for Health (MSH), Inc.	Benin	10/1/19	10/1/21
3	Accelerating Women's Entrepreneurship Partnership: Cherie Blair Foundation for Women and Qualcomm Wireless Reach	I, II	Nathan Associates, Inc.	Asia	5/6/20	10/31/21
4	Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) Partnership	I, III	The Aspen Institute	Asia	10/1/19	9/30/21
5	Department of Commerce partnership with the Dominican Republic	III	Department of Commerce	Dominican Republic	-	-
6	Digital Financial Literacy Campaign	II, III	Strategic Impact Advisors (SIA)	Sub-Saharan Africa	10/1/19	11/30/21
7	Expansion of Engendering Utilities	I, II, III	Tetra Tech, Inc. (ARD)	Global	7/31/19	7/30/24
8	Financial Resilience for Women-Led Enterprises	II	Palladium International	Latin America and the Caribbean	-	-
9	Global Development Alliance with Alaffia	I, II	Creative Associates International	Ghana	-	-
10	Global Labor Program: Levi-Strauss Lesotho partnership	II, III	Solidarity Center	Lesotho	9/4/19	1/30/21
11	Invest in Women Portfolio/ Catalyze	II	Palladium International	Global	9/30/19	9/29/24
12	Invest in Women Portfolio/ INVEST	II	Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI)	Global	9/28/17	9/27/22
13	JAPRI (Jadi Pengusaha Mandiri) - Becoming an Independent Entrepreneur	II, III	Institute of International Education (IIE)	Indonesia	10/1/19	9/30/21
14	Land Evidence for Economic Rights and Gender Empowerment (LEVERAGE)	II, III	Training Resources Group (TRG), Inc.	Sub-Saharan Africa	8/1/19	5/31/23
15	Mars Partnership - Ghana	I, II, III	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) USA	Ghana	-	-
16	Paraguay Value Chain Activity	II	Federación de Cooperativas de Producción (FECOPROD)	Paraguay	1/10/13	9/30/22
17	Partnering to Accelerate Entrepreneurship (PACE) Colombia WEE Expansion	II, III	Palladium International	Colombia	10/1/19	9/30/21
18	PepsiCo Partnership	I, II, III	Tetra Tech, Inc. (ARD)	India	7/27/18	7/26/21

19	Pro-Jeunes Vocational Training for Women in Energy	I, II	International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Cote d'Ivoire	-	-
20	Producer-Owned Women's Enterprises	I, II,III	Industree Crafts Foundation	India	12/9/19	11/9/22
21	Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in Papua New Guinea	I, II, III	Cardno Emerging Markets USA, Ltd.	Papua New Guinea	3/1/20	9/1/23
22	Promoting Women's Empowerment Through Equal Facilities Access in the Workplace	II, III	Tetra Tech, Inc. (ARD)	Global	9/1/19	9/30/21
23	Self-Empowerment and Equity for Change (SEE Change) Initiative	I, II, III	Tetra Tech, Inc. (ARD)	Global	7/31/19	7/30/24
24	SERVIR in partnership with NASA	I, III	Chemonics International, Inc.	Global	9/30/19	5/31/23
25	Supporting Entrepreneurial Skills (YES-Georgia)	II, III	Crystal Fund	Georgia	9/2/15	2/1/24
26	Supporting the Philippines' through Women's Economic Empowerment – Philippines/E-PESO	II	Chemonics International, Inc.	Philippines	3/18/15	2/17/21
27	Supporting the Philippines' through Women's Economic Empowerment – Philippines/ Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE)	II	International City/ County Management Association (ICMA)	Philippines	7/27/15	12/31/21
28	Supporting the Philippines' through Women's Economic Empowerment – Philippines (RESPOND)	III	University of the Philippines Public Administration Research and Extension Services Foundation, Inc. (UPPAF)	Philippines	4/16/19	4/15/24
29	Supporting the Philippines' through Women's Economic Empowerment – Philippines (Protect Wildlife)	II	Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI)	Philippines	6/17/16	12/12/20
30	Unleashing the Economic Leadership Power of Young Women	I, II, III	Making Cents International	Global	-	-
31	VisionSpring: Clear Vision Workplace Alliance	I, III	VisionSpring	Asia	8/13/19	8/12/22
32	WEConnect International	II	WEConnect International	Global	7/31/19	7/30/22
33	Women Empowered in Recycling and Waste Management	I, II, III	Tetra Tech, Inc. (ARD)	Global	8/29/19	8/27/24
34	Women Enabling Women (South Africa)	II, III		South Africa	-	-
35	Women in Peruvian Water Security	I, III	Forest Trends	Peru	12/5/17	6/5/23
36	Women in Rwandan Energy (WIRE) Initiative	I, II, III	RTI International	Rwanda	1/9/19	1/6/22
37	Women Powering Africa	I, II, III	Tetra Tech, Inc. (ARD)	Sub-Saharan Africa	7/31/19	7/30/24

38	Women Prospering in Technology	I, II, III	Laboratoria	Latin America and the Caribbean	8/14/19	8/13/22
39	Women's Economic Empowerment in the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH)	I, II	Creative Associates International	Ghana	9/4/19	9/3/24
40	Women's Empowerment in Secondary Cities	I, II, III	United Nations Office for Project Services	Tunisia	8/15/20	11/15/21
41	Women's Entrepreneurship Promotion and Business Investment (Senegal)	II, III		Senegal	-	-
42	Women's Land Rights – ILRG	III	Tetra Tech, Inc. (ARD)	Sub-Saharan Africa	7/27/18	7/26/21
43	WomenConnect Challenge – Round 1	I, III		Global	-	-
44	WomenConnect Challenge – Round 2	I, II, III	Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI)	Global	9/1/19	3/1/22
45	World Cocoa Foundation (WFC) Partnership	I, III	World Cocoa Foundation	Cote d'Ivoire	9/30/16	5/31/22

Note: The Partnership to increase safety for women in the workforce in South Africa activity was not awarded at the time of the PPE. The Women Connect Challenge Round 1 was subsequently removed from the list of Round 1 activities after this PPE.

ANNEX III: DETAILED EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

GenDev commissioned the evaluation to help USAID understand the characteristics of the first set of WEE activities funded 2018, which are referred to as the “Round I activities.”⁴⁶ The LEAP III ET conducted the Phase I mid-term PPE from April 2020 to June 2021. For this evaluation, primary and secondary data were collected using a mixed-methods approach. Data sources included the Fund database, original documents such as activity reports, monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plans, and activity-generated resources. The data collection and analysis efforts were framed to assess initial activity formulation and implementation and how they affected activity outputs and results to date (April 2020 to May 2021).

The data collection methods included: 1) document review; 2) key performance indicator (KPI) assessments; 3) electronic survey; 4) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs); and 5) case studies. Data analysis methods included refining the descriptive statistics and content analysis. Whenever possible, existing quantitative data such as the Fund’s performance indicators was utilized.

The ET developed structured interview protocols for KIIs and FGDs with USAID and IP staff and in-country group and individual interviews with local partners and beneficiaries involved in the activities. Additional survey-based instruments were developed to collect quantitative data to fill existing knowledge gaps. Qualitative data was collected primarily through remotely conducted KIIs with USAID and IP staff and mission staff POCs.

The LEAP III ET conducted case studies of four activities (see [Annex IV](#) for links) in close collaboration with USAID staff and implementing partners. The case studies provide deeper insights into the implementation of WEE Round I activities by including the perspectives of beneficiaries and local partners. The case studies incorporate the voices and experiences of local stakeholders and their insights regarding the early stages of implementation. The data gathered from local partners and beneficiaries from the case studies were triangulated with other data sources and drawn into the mid-term PPE.

⁴⁶ The Round I Women’s Economic Empowerment activities were supported by the W-GDP Fund under the former W-GDP Initiative.

CASE STUDY DATA COLLECTION COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

The ET pivoted to remote data collection for the field studies due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions. The ET developed COVID-19 protocols for the field studies based on USAID and other international donor guidance and best practices, aligned with the most recent in-country health and safety guidelines available. Lessons, techniques, and tips on interviewing by phone or social media were drawn from the Poverty Action Lab and the World Bank.

To prepare the in-country ETs for primary data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ET presented several intensive evaluator training sessions for each field ET. These sessions covered effective primary data collection techniques for conducting and recording interviews, managing data protocols, effective notetaking strategies, coordinating logistics, approaching activities, determining relevant background and sampling frame for the field-based research. The interactive sessions incorporated specific intensive sessions on COVID-19 safety protocols for conducting in-person and remote interviews.

Based on conversations with USAID and information gathered from Integra’s International SOS Service, a country-specific overview of COVID-19 research protocols was produced and shared with each in-country ET. Local COVID-19 conditions were closely monitored by Integra staff before and during the field study periods. In all three field-based research cases, in-country evaluators conducted in-person interviews while adhering to COVID-19 safety precautions such as observing social distancing and wearing masks. Once in-country field study activities began, daily check-ins with in-country ETs took place with the team manager assigned to each field study to monitor progress and address any quality or safety issues that arose. In future iterations of field-based research under COVID-19, additional protocols could be implemented to ensure all participants follow these COVID-19 health and safety guidelines before any in-person event, providing oral confirmation. If a participant does not comply, the interviewer should schedule a remote interview, citing these guidelines.

SELECTING SAMPLES OF WEE ROUND I ACTIVITIES

In conjunction with USAID, the ET grouped the 45 activities picked from a total of 48 Round I activities into two sub-groups based on their project cycle stage (i.e., whether they were in the implementation stage or still in the procurement and design stage). The ET worked closely with USAID Data Services to create a database with profiles for each activity to organize this information. The documents were consolidated into a shared Google folder to cross-reference with USAID's internal WEE Portfolio database. As of September 30, 2020, 13 of the 45 Round I activities were in the procurement stage or the process of co-creation with USAID missions. The ET included all 45 activities in its online survey but did not conduct KIIs with stakeholders of activities which had not started implementation. The ET then reviewed in-depth, the 32 activities that had started implementation to identify gaps in coverage of the three Fund pillars, partnership models,⁴⁷ regional locations,⁴⁸ and country income levels.⁴⁹ The ET found that the purposive sampling⁵⁰ of 32 activities included all three pillar objectives, three types of partnership models, all USAID regions, and all country income levels.

DEVELOPING THE DATA COLLECTION PLAN AND TOOLS

The evaluation's data collection plan included a comprehensive "Getting to Answers" matrix that mapped the EQs and sub-questions to data sources and data analysis methods. Data sources included the internal database, original documents such as activity reports, Country Development Cooperation Strategies, USAID activity profiles, monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plans, concept notes, and summary notes for all qualitative interviews. The ET also generated transcripts for selected interviews and FGDs for quality assurance. The data collection methodologies included 1) document review, 2) KPIs, c) electronic surveys, 3) KIIs and FGDs, and 4) case studies.

⁴⁷ Partnership models: private sector partner; partner country government partner; nonprofit partner including civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors.

⁴⁸ Regional locations: Africa, Asia, Europe/Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Global.

⁴⁹ The assigned country income level ranking was drawn from the World Bank's 2020 Global Rankings, which included four categories: low-income, low-middle income, upper-middle income, and high-income. Several of the activities included in the shortlist are being implemented in more than one country, region, or continent. Accordingly, the ET indicated the country income level for each of the countries implementing a common activity if this information is available.

⁵⁰ Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of nonprobability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study.

The data analysis was framed to assess initial activity design and implementation and to understand how these factors affected activity outputs and results to date. Once the evaluation design was approved, the ET created an online document library to guide data collection from the database and documents, and interview guides and protocols for conducting videoconferencing and field-based interviews. Annex III provides the detailed methodology, and Annex V provides the data collection instruments and protocols the ET used for the online surveys and KIIs.

COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA

The ET collected data from the desk review, KPIs, online surveys, KIIs, and case studies. It then analyzed the data using descriptive statistics and content analysis to inform the findings to answer the five EQs. The quantitative data directly aligns the activities' described interventions with at least one of the three pillars and its objectives. The ET used descriptive statistics to produce a quantitative overview of the Fund, including characteristics such as the number of pillars represented by each activity, number of regions, types of partnerships, and USAID sectors covered by the portfolio. The qualitative data, however, was a bit more challenging to assess for three reasons, including 1) the data was unreliable or not collected, 2) the data revealed that many respondents did not know or could not provide answers because the activities are too new to assess activity implementation, and 3) many of the activities are delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ET used standard qualitative analysis to review the data summaries, which involved coding the data to identify common themes and patterns across the activities. The ET assigned a higher priority to the themes and patterns common across higher numbers of activities as more illustrative of the Fund. Secondary priority was given to less common themes and patterns that illustrated key characteristics relevant to the EQs. The ET triangulated data from the document review, performance monitoring data, and primary data to find the 45 activities delivering results. To maximize the quality of the analysis, the ET's four evaluators cross-checked the data before finalizing the themes used to draw findings and conclusions.

The ET identified the most relevant findings to address each EQ using the most common themes and patterns. Key recommendations draw on all findings and conclusions and are discussed separately at the end of this report.

Desk Review

The ET reviewed 288 available documents related to the initial 45 Round I activities. These documents were provided by either Data Services or an activity's IP. The types of documents reviewed included but were not limited to activity reports, one-page activity summaries, MEL plans, baseline reports, activity websites or communication materials, CDCS, concept notes, progress reports (annual, monthly, or quarterly), and presentations. The ET took notes to support key findings, baseline information, and high-level observations from the document review to support streamlined KIIs with key stakeholders. The document review revealed several high-level observations concerning the quality of data reporting, summarized in the findings, conclusions, and recommendations sections of this report.

The desk review provided contextual and background information on each activity, and identified gaps, before the KIIs. Specifically, the available quarterly reports provided the most comprehensive and rich data on the activities. The original available application documents were most helpful in providing the activity's background and context, as these documents focused on the WEE aspects of each activity.

Key Performance Indicators

Data Services provided the ET with raw data from Round I activities on December 3, 2020. This raw data was used to inform the KPI analysis. The IPs reported on F indicators⁵¹ relevant to their programming and provided the figures to Data Services. Indicators were only included in this analysis if the activity had reported either a result or target for FY 2020 or a target for FY 2021 and FY 2022 for the respective indicator. Otherwise, the indicator was not included for that activity.

An in-depth analysis of performance was conducted on one activity with specific characteristics, including complete data reported on multiple F indicators. Results were measured against the listed targets for each activity to determine the activity's success in reaching targets. The ET's analysis of the key indicator reporting by activity can be found in the Findings Section related to EQ4.

⁵¹ The State Department Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (State/F), in concert with stakeholders from State and USAID, updated a series of standard foreign assistance indicators to promote the collection of consistent data across Operating Units. The indicators are mapped to the Foreign Assistance Framework *Standardized Program Structure and Definitions*, a listing of program categories that provides common definitions for the use of foreign assistance funds, around which the majority of U.S. foreign assistance programming is organized. Standard foreign assistance indicators are required as applicable and referred to as "F" indicators.

Online Surveys

The ET developed online surveys designed for three groups of key informants, including Award Officer's Representatives (AORs) or Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs), Activity Managers,⁵² and the Fund's Points of Contacts (POCs), as well as IP staff. Representatives of all 45 Round I activities were invited to participate in the respective online survey. Using the SurveyMonkey platform, the surveys included 20–25 multiple choice and open-ended questions that broadly inquired about the five EQs. Responses were collected until December 10, 2020. Both nonresponse and incomplete survey responses were recorded if the informant received a survey invitation and did not fully complete the survey.

Anonymous responses were removed if they could not be confidently matched to an activity. Finally, the list of contact information provided by USAID was incomplete because several activities had missing contact information for different categories of respondents. Only complete responses were used in this survey analysis. As this is a portfolio review, the survey results were analyzed by activity, not respondent, as several activities received multiple responses from the AM and IP staff.

Key Informant Interviews

The ET conducted KIIs with 115 representatives of all 32 activities in the implementation stage.⁵³ These KIIs were conducted with 41 USAID staff (including activity AOR, COR, POC, Activity Managers, Gender Advisors, and others) and 74 IP staff (including Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party, Gender Advisors, and other relevant technical staff). The purpose of these KIIs was to gather perspectives and additional information about the Fund process and activities. The interviews were conducted remotely using the Google Meet and Zoom platforms. With the respondents' permission, interviews were audio-recorded. Interviewers took comprehensive notes of the respondents' answers to KII questions, which served as the raw qualitative data used for analysis. The ET used a codebook of deductive themes to analyze the KII data in NVivo12 software. The qualitative data was then further synthesized by EQ to elucidate main emergent themes, relevant findings, and key quotes to triangulate with other data sources and inform answers to each EQ.

⁵² Not all activities have Activity Managers; however, technical support is provided by the Fund's POC.

⁵³ The list of 115 respondents may be found here: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vFGvjZK8qsIQGRAKv6pSmzLDLyKLSPj/edit#gid=1257692700>.

Case Studies

Case studies were conducted on four WEE Round I activities to understand better the successes and challenges faced at the field level.

The ET developed a purposive sampling of four case studies included all three pillar objectives, three types of partnership models, all USAID regions, and all country income levels. Based on input and suggestions from USAID, the final selection criteria for shortlisting case study candidates where that activities 1) should reflect core W-GDP programming, 2) should have sufficient local partners and beneficiaries, 3) should reflect USAID's partnership priorities and country investment priorities, 4) should meet a budget activity threshold of \$1.5 million in FY 2018 funding, 5) should represent a mixture of country income levels, and 6) should represent the WEE pillars, partnership models, USAID geographic regions, and country income level rankings.⁵⁴

Based on this criteria, the following WEE Round I activities were selected:

- [USAID-PepsiCo Partnership in West Bengal, India;](#)
- [Producer Owned Women's Enterprises in Tamil Nadu, India;](#)
- [World Cocoa Foundation in Cote d'Ivoire;](#)
- [Expansion of Engendering Utilities implemented globally;](#)

The four selected case studies are critical for the mid-term and final PPEs because they will provide important insights from in-country partners and direct beneficiaries of the WEE Round I activities. The ET worked closely with USAID, IPs, and key stakeholders in-country to identify key informants and FGD participants using randomized and purposive sampling frames. Due to COVID-19 imposed travel restrictions, the U.S.-based ET recruited and hired six national evaluators and three logisticians to carry out the primary data collection under their guidance for three studies in Cote d'Ivoire and India. The national ET in Cote d'Ivoire included Samuel Kouassi, Emmanuel Kouakou, and Guillaume Koua; in Tamil Nadu, the team included Meera Sundararajan, Clement Dayal, and Priscilla James; and in West Bengal, the team included Abirhup Bhunia and Sancheeta Ghosh.

⁵⁴ It is important to note that this sampling methodology does not mean that the cases selected are statistically representative, or generalizable to the total population of Round I W-GDP activities.

These national ETs conducted the interviews and FGDs with direct beneficiaries and local partners in the local languages and dialects. The interviews were audio-recorded and translated. An interviewer and notetaker participated in the interviews and FGDs, and detailed summary notes of the respondents' answers were taken, which served as the basis for the raw, qualitative data. A random sample of KIIs and FGDs from each case study was transcribed as a quality control measure. The ET used one codebook of deductive themes to analyze the qualitative data with NVivo12 software. The case study leads further synthesized findings under each main theme to answer each EQ.

The case study developed for Engendering Utilities (EU) utilized a different methodology to reach direct beneficiaries and end-users. The EU case study pivoted from a case study in Mozambique to a global approach assessing beneficiaries' perspectives of the activity implementation for several reasons. First, the ET field work coincided with a five-week holiday period in Mozambique so there were insufficient numbers of direct beneficiaries located in a specific utility company and secondly, the leadership of the utility company did not allow the ET to interview beneficiaries without a representative of human resources present during the KIIs, which would have introduced bias. Remote interviews were conducted with a stratified, random sample of EU beneficiaries by the ET.⁵⁵

This primary data collection was supplemented by additional documentation and information provided by USAID's GenDev and Data Services offices and other activity-related resources. Individual case study reports provide detailed descriptions for each of the four WEE Round I activities.

⁵⁵ Additional information on this study's methods is provided in the stand-alone report.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS LIMITATIONS

The ET took steps to mitigate data collection and analysis challenges as they arose.

Attribution: To date, no common baseline or theory of change for assessing overall progress in improving women's economic empowerment exists. Additionally, separating the Fund's achievements in integrated activities that includes buy-ins to pre-existing regional or global programs was challenging. The ET worked closely with USAID and IP staff and Data Services to understand the value-added of the Fund to pre-existing programs.

Complex environment: The 45 Round I activities included in the portfolio represent a wide array of socio-economic complexities viewed at a macro level. WEE issues are highly complex and often fluctuate depending on the region, sector, and interlocutor. Gender issues intersect with and sometimes exacerbate other forms of social exclusion based on religious minority status, caste, ethnicity, race, sexual identity, disability, and others. These factors can impact the quality or reliability of the data collected. However, the ET developed four case studies to better understand the on-the-ground contextual realities of four distinct activities.

Limited fieldwork: Working during the COVID-19 pandemic required trade-offs in the number and depth of interviews and perspectives that could be captured, and the depth of analysis performed. The ET recruited and trained three field-based teams of national evaluators to conduct interviews and FDGs in Tamil Nadu, India, West Bengal, India, and Cote d'Ivoire, supervised remotely by the international ET.

Documentary evidence: There was significant variation in the number of documents available to the ET for each activity, and this variance did not necessarily correspond to the activity's implementation status. This inconsistency may be due in part to the recent start-up efforts under these activities. The ET worked closely with USAID staff and Data Services to obtain documentation as it became available throughout the period of performance of this evaluation.

Halo Effect: When managers have an overly positive view of a particular activity or implementing partner, the objectivity of responses can be impacted. Managers' consistently high ratings fail to recognize areas for improvement. The ET found evidence of the halo effect and is addressed in EQ3 on page 73.

Response bias: Guarding against response bias, or the possibility that interview subjects providing answers they think interviewers want to hear, is important to maintaining data reliability. This evaluation design was weighed in favor of the opinions of the USAID managers and IP managers of all 45 activities. At the same time, feedback from direct beneficiaries and local partners was limited to just four case studies. The ET attempted to mitigate response bias by inviting both USAID and IP staff to one-hour discussions related to each case study and circulated the case studies for their feedback.

Limited Standard Indicator Data: In general, a significant limitation to the F indicator data was the lack of reporting on targets and results in FY 2020 that impeded the possibility of a comprehensive performance monitoring analysis and assessment. Only less than 25 percent of Round I activities submitted F indicator data for at least one indicator. More than 75 percent of Round I activities did not submit F indicator targets for FY 2020, FY 2021, or FY 2022. The ET notes where several inconsistencies in how the data were reported (discussed in detail in EQ4) has limited its ability to analyze the data comprehensively.

ANNEX IV: CASE STUDIES – OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS, AND INNOVATIONS

This Annex presents an overview of the main observations and findings of the case studies, as well as select examples of innovations in WEE Round I Activities. The links to the found case studies are available here:

- [USAID-PepsiCo Partnership in West Bengal, India;](#)
- [Producer Owned Women's Enterprises in Tamil Nadu, India;](#)
- [World Cocoa Foundation in Cote d'Ivoire;](#)
- [Expansion of Engendering Utilities implemented globally.](#)

CASE STUDY AGGREGATE OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

FINDING 1: Meeting WEE Portfolio Objectives (EQ1)

All four case studies feature interventions addressing at least one of the pillar objectives. Three case studies focused on women entrepreneurship (Pillar 2), and one case study focused on women in the workforce (Pillar 1). All four cases indicated that they were addressing gender inequalities in the enabling environment (Pillar 3). However, primary data collection through interviews and FGDs indicated that activities focused on Pillar 3 should be strengthened. Three activities worked exclusively with female beneficiaries, while one activity (EU) also trained male beneficiaries as part of their activities.

FINDING 2: Partnerships (EQ2)

Beneficiaries and key stakeholders agreed that the implementing partners and other activity partners succeeded in delivering relevant training and support to female beneficiaries. Even in this small sample of activities, the partnerships differed in several significant ways. Two of the WEE-funded activities were buy-ins to existing USAID programs led by a seasoned private sector IP. The other two activities were led by new USAID partners, which were both nonprofit organizations. All activities included private sector partners—in three cases with multinational corporations and one case with local companies.

FINDING 3: Addressing Gender Gaps (EQ3)

The beneficiaries shared that key gender barriers were effectively addressed through gender sensitization trainings, awareness-raising activities, and targeted interventions. Interview data indicated that across the four activities, initial gender norm shifts instigated by the activities resulting in changing the beneficiaries' attitudes and behaviors often played a catalytic role in the beneficiaries' ability to continue challenging gender inequalities in their homes and communities. In turn, these changes increased the ability of beneficiaries to commit to participating in the activity fully. In some cases, gender sensitization training was offered to husbands, family members, and other key community stakeholders. These trainings often succeeded in increasing male buy-in and support for the female beneficiaries to participate in the activities.

Despite the activity's focus on WEE, many systemic gender barriers were not fully addressed. In several cases, these systematic gender barriers were beyond the scope of the economic focus of the activity, such as instances of GBV outside of the work environment (in the home, traveling to and from work, and in other public spaces), the gender wage gap, women's control over income, and the persistence of entrenched gender bias and discriminatory practices. In some cases, seemingly gender-neutral barriers—such as poor infrastructure, access to markets, and price gauging of cash crops—were exacerbated by gender discriminatory practices and the risk of GBV.

FINDING 4: Achieving Results (EQ4)

For the most part, the activities were achieving their milestones and targets. The COVID-19 pandemic was the most frequently stated cause for lower-than-expected results and activity delays. The COVID-19 pandemic also had the unintended positive effect of increasing husband and male family member buy-in and support for three activities. In all three cases, the female beneficiaries' incomes (from their participation in the activity) became the main or only household income during COVID-19 lockdowns because many husbands and other male family members lost their employment. As a result, female beneficiaries gained a new identity and improved social standing as critical "income generators" for the household. In addition to a newly elevated status within the household, for the most part, female beneficiaries could decide how to spend or save their earned income.

FINDING 5: Sustainability (EQ5)

Although it was still too early to assess if the activities will be sustainable definitively, each activity demonstrated strong model characteristics that if achieved by the end of the activity, are likely to result in long-term benefits for female beneficiaries.

CASE STUDY INNOVATIONS

The case studies used a variety of approaches and innovations in their activity designs, WEE strategies, implementation, and activity goals. Each case study is presented below highlighting some of the unique processes, methods, or strategies used by the IPs and activity partners.

The **World Cocoa Foundation (WCF)** seems likely to achieve some aspects of sustainability based on the proven track record of the VSLA model and early activity results. All 13 IP staff respondents attributed the strength of the activity to pre-existing community support and sustainability interventions⁵⁶ embedded into the VSLA model and Community Action Plans, which included local priorities such as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions. These efforts intentionally aimed to establish trust and garner community support by soliciting meaningful inputs from male community members and husbands.

In the **USAID PepsiCo Partnership**, PepsiCo is the main actor in promoting sustainability and scaling. As one of the world's largest buyers and processors of potatoes, the potential longevity of this public-private partnership and its women's economic empowerment interventions is high. The activity aligned its interventions with the Government of India's West Bengal's State Rural Livelihoods program on women's land rights, which accelerated early successes in adapting the land leasing model from the USAID-PepsiCo Partnership's self-help groups. The self-help groups (SHGs) provided a known, and sustained livelihoods support program to recruit women farmers into the activity's interventions.

All beneficiaries of the **Expansion of Engendering Utilities (EU)** activity indicated a high likelihood of continuing to practice what they learned from their participation in the activity. Several challenges persist and hinder the continued success of this activity, however, including 1) partner utility companies' inability to secure funding to implement gender initiatives, limited staff time, and organizational capacity to continue implementing gender initiatives, 2) restrictive legal frameworks, and 3) persistent discriminatory social biases that challenge progress toward gender equality and inclusion in the workplace. The EU activity will need to continue its adaptive management approach to address these challenges and ensure the long-term sustainability of the activity's success.

The **POWER India** activity, implemented by Industree Crafts Foundation, operating in four banana basketry production units in Tamil Nadu met its first-year targets in creating income generating opportunities for female producers. Based on this limited data collection, it was too early to predict if the Self-Help Group/Mutual Benefit Trust (SHG/MBT) model will be sustainable after the POWER activity funding ends. It is not clear that the POWER activity can leverage this approach to create a new cadre of women entrepreneurs who can count on a consistent income stream based on piece-rate payments. Respondents said that the POWER activity provided relevant technical skills development, life skills, and gender sensitization training but the beneficiaries were less aware of collaboration and support provided by government partners. The women producers were not fully aware of the future role of Greenkraft in supporting the micro enterprises under the MBT model or how global buyers such as IKEA Global functioned. Another challenge is the length of time it takes for MBTs to become self-reliant and profitable. To date, the MBTs are at different stages of development and only one MBT has reached the stage of profitability. The longer gestation period needed for some MBTs to reach profitability and financial sustainability is likely to necessitate continued support from Industree even after the POWER activity funding ends.

⁵⁶ The Community of Practice for this activity reported that member company sustainability programs have an agronomy component. While WCF documents detail partnerships with research institutes, no evidence of agronomic trainings for farmers were not found in activity reports or mentioned by other staff or farmers interviewed.

ANNEX V: EXAMPLE OF DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

SECTION I: Respondent Information	
Interviewer Name	
Notetaker Name	
Interview #	
Date of Interview	
Platform & Mode of Interview	[Skype, WhatsApp, Telephone, etc.] [Video or call format]
Language of Interview	[i.e., conducted in English, French, Spanish, etc.]
Interview audio recorded	Y / N
W-GDP Referent Activity	[PPE MARKER NUMBER, Activity Name]
Respondent Name	[included only for our purposes]
Respondent Category [AOR/COR, USAID Activity Manager or POC, Interagency Liaison, Implementing Partner Staff]	
Respondent Sex	Man Woman
Respondent Organization / Position / Office	[USAID, Activity Manager, E3 Bureau]

Script for Start of the Interview

Hello, _____. My name is _____ and I am working with Integra to conduct an evaluation of USAID's Women's Global Development and Prosperity initiative (W-GDP). Just to reiterate some of the information we shared with you by email, the purpose of this evaluation is to help you and USAID/Washington-GDP gain a better understanding of how the Activity has worked over the last two years, what results have been achieved to date, and how it might be improved going forward.

☐ Consent to the Interview and Recording the Interview

Before starting our interview, I want to inform you of your rights as an interview respondent. First, we acknowledge that your participation is voluntary. You may skip any questions that you prefer not to answer. We can end the interview at any time if you are not comfortable. Only the ET will have access your answers and you will not be identified in our analysis or report.

Before we proceed, I would like to obtain your verbal consent (and that of others on the call) for this interview and to audio record the interview. We are doing this only to ensure we have accurate documentation of our conversation, as we said in an email sent to you before this call. We will not share the recording or transcript with anyone outside the ET.

Do I have permission to begin the interview and record it (and the consent of each of you)? **Y/N**

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? THANK YOU.

INTERVIEW WITH BENEFICIARIES AND END USERS

EQ1: How does the Activity contribute to WEE initiative?

1. How and when were you selected to participate in this activity? [Name of activity as known locally, specific intervention and month/year]

2. What do you believe to be the main goals of this [ACTIVITY NAME]?

MARK ANY MENTIONS BELOW BUT DO NOT PROMPT.

- Pillar 1 Workforce: improving access to quality vocational skills, training, securing jobs
- Pillar 2 Entrepreneurs: Increasing access to capital, markets, networks, etc., to grow their business
- Pillar 3 Enabled in the Economy: Addressing legal, regulatory, and cultural barriers
- Accessing Institutions: Lifting restrictions to legal documents, contracts, courts
- Building Access: financing, in their own names
- Owning and Managing Property: inheritance; transfer, purchase, or lease property.
- Increased Mobility: Local curfews; restricted places; obtaining passports in own name
- Removing Restrictions on Employment: Types of jobs; hours or places women are allowed to work
- Other: [please list and/or describe]

EQ.2: Effectiveness of Internal and External Partners

3. What kind of support is [In-country PARTNER NAME] providing to you and other participants like yourself?

Probe: Does this partner provide funds, technical assistance, material or in-kind support?

4. Have you experienced any challenges or obstacles that made it difficult to participate in this Activity? If so, what are they?

PROBE BUT DO NOT PROMPT.

- a. Takes too much of my time/difficult to complete other work or chores
- b. I'm losing money / not earning while I participate
- c. My husband/ family/ community do not like that I participated
- d. It is dangerous as we are challenging the laws/ government?
- e. Other reason

EQ.3 Effectiveness of Activity to Address WEE and Economic Gender Gaps

5. What do you like most about this activity?

6. What are the most significant economic barriers faced by women like yourself that this activity addresses?

Probe: What is keeping women like you from being as economically successful as men?

7. Are any of these barriers (as mentioned in Question 6) NOT being address by this Activity [name]? If so, which ones?

8. Are there changes that could make this Activity more effective in supporting women like yourself?

EQ.4 Achieving Expected Results

9. What results or benefits have you seen/ received/ achieved to date?

Probe: Examples of increased income, employment, improved working conditions, networking with other women, more knowledgeable, more confidence, networking opportunities, etc.

EQ.5 Sustainability

10. How likely do you think it is that you and other participants will continue practicing what you have learned from this Activity after it finishes?

Probe: To what extent: a) Very likely, b) Somewhat likely, c) Not very likely, d) Unsure/I don't know

ANNEX VI:

LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS AND DATA SOURCES

SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMANTS

Note: 13 out of 45 WEE Round I Activities were not involved in KIs as they were not yet in the implementation stage according to USAID Data Services.

Activity Name	Implementing Partner	USAID					IP Staff		
		AOR / COR	AM / POC	Gender Advisor	Other	COP / Director	Deputy COP	Gender Advisor	Other
Protect Wildlife	DAI Global, LLC								
VisionSpring	VisionSpring, Inc.								
Engendering Utilities	Tetra Tech								
CATALYZE	CATALYZE								
INVEST	DAI Global LLC – USAID Invest								2
Women's Land Rights (ILRG)	Tetra Tech ARD								
Women Connect Challenge Round 2	DAI/Digital Frontiers Project								
Producer Owned Women's Enterprises (POWER)	Industree Crafts Foundation								2
Women's Economic Empowerment in Papua New Guinea	Cardno Emerging Markets USA							2	
Women's Economic Empowerment in the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH)	Creative Associates International								
WEConnect International	WEConnect International								
Clean Cities Blue Oceans (CCBO)	Clean Cities, Blue Ocean				2				
Women Prospering in Technology	Laboratoria								
Women in Rwandan Energy (WIRE)	RTI International								
PepsiCo Partnership	Tetra Tech ARD								2
Self-Empowerment and Equity for Change Initiative	Tetra Tech ARD								
Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE)	International City/ County Management (ICMA)								3

VISA Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)	Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs	I				I			I
World Cocoa Foundation (WFC) Partnership	World Cocoa Foundation	I				I		I	I
Women Powering Africa	Tetra Tech ARD					I		I	
Jadi Pengusaha Mandiri (JAPRI)	Institute of International Education	I				I	I		I
Women in Peruvian Water Security	FOREST TRENDS	I				I	I	I	I
Accelerating Women's Entrepreneurship Partnership: Cherie Blair Foundation for Women and Qualcomm Wireless Reach	Nathan Associates, Inc.	I				I		I	2
Supporting Entrepreneurial Skills (YES-Georgia)	Crystal Fund	I	I			I			I
Partnering to Accelerate Entrepreneurship (PACE) Colombia WEE Expansion	Palladium								I
E-PESO	Chemonics International Inc.					I			I
Supporting the Philippines' through Women's Economic Empowerment – Philippines (RESPOND) – Incentive Fund FY 2018	UPPAF-RESPOND							I	I
Economic Reintegration for Victims of Gender-Based Violence	Management Sciences for Health	I			I			I	
Global Labor Program: Levi-Strauss Lesotho partnership	Solidarity Center					I	I		
Paraguay Value Chain Activity	FEDERACION DE COOPERATIVAS DE PRODUCCION – FECOPROD LTDA.				I	I		I	I
\$100 Million Women's Livelihood Bond II	Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)								I
Pro-jeunes vocational training for women in Energy - Incentive Fund FY 2018	International Rescue Committee (IRC)								
Total Count		16	3	1	5	22	4	19	29

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Below is an illustrative and nonexhaustive list of documents reviewed as part of the Midterm PPE, in addition to 288 Activity-specific documents across the WEE 45 Round I Activities (e.g., concept notes, workplans, MEL plans, Gender Integration Plans, marketing materials, etc.).

Illustrative Resources Supporting Gender and Inclusive Development

Code of Federal Regulations, Nondiscrimination against End-Users of Supplies or Services, Agency for International Development Acquisition Regulation (AIDAR), Section 752.7038. n.d. Vol. Section 752.7038 A Mandatory Reference for ADS 302. Accessed July 15, 2021. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-48/chapter-7/subchapter-H/part-752/subpart-752.70#se48.5.752_17038.

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ANNEX VII: USAID CALL FOR CONCEPT PROPOSALS

Funding Opportunity: Call for Short Concept Notes

Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP) ESF Incentive Fund March 2019

Summary: The Office of Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (GenDev) in the Bureau of Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3) announces the availability of approximately \$20 million of FY 2018 Economic Support Funds for activities aligned with objectives of the White House **Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP)** (Annex A).

Mission and operating unit proposals are requested for activities in the range of \$500,000 - \$3 million. Priority will be given to proposals that leverage complementary resources (in addition to any incentive funds requested). All proposals must address at least one of the three Pillars of the Initiative (set forth below and further described in Annex A). Up to 10 successful proposals will be funded under this call. Please see below for the types of activities GenDev is prioritizing in this request for concept notes.

Short concept notes (see Annex C, Template) must be submitted for consideration by 5pm EST April 11, 2019, and applicants can expect to be informed of funding decisions no later than May 12, 2019. All funding must be obligated by September 30, 2019.

Overall Goal: To promote women's economic empowerment through USAID programming in one or more of the following three W-GDP Pillars (further described in Annex A):

1. Women Prospering in the Workplace
2. Women Succeeding as Entrepreneurs
3. Women Enabled in the Economy

Objectives: Through this call for proposals, GenDev seeks to promote, expand, and scale the ability of women to participate in the economy on an equal basis with men as employees, managers, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and investors. The fund is open to any compelling proposals that address one or more of the three Pillars through activities that meet additional requirements set forth below.

There is a strong interest in supporting activities with the potential for broadly transformative impact, including: 1) the scale-up or adaptation of approaches with a proven record of success; and 2) enabling environment constraints, particularly as they require regulatory and legal reform as part of systemic change. Where applicable, activities should be designed to support or complement the relevant gender-related and sectoral priorities established by host country governments and civil society actors and to engage local actors in program design and implementation, including possible revisions to existing programs.

Concept Note Evaluation Factors:

- I. **Strong Linkages to W-GDP Pillars:** The concepts must address one or more of the three Pillars noted above, with preference for concepts that include some aspect of Pillar 3, either alone or in connection with another Pillar. In addition, the following factors will be considered:
 - a. The degree to which the concept incorporates a credible plan for collaboration with the private sector (including local firms) for financing, sourcing, expertise, and scalability;
 - b. Collaboration with InterAgency partners in design, implementation, funding, or evaluation of the proposed activities; and
 - c. The appropriateness and the ability of the project to collect indicators to be used for monitoring and evaluation of activity success, including use of one or more indicators identified in Annex B: W-GDP Indicators.

NOTE: All recipients of W-GDP incentive funding are expected to: 1) report on activities under the relevant Pillar(s) for Operational Plans and Performance Plan and Reports; 2) adopt appropriate indicators from the USAID W-GDP indicator list (Annex B); and 3) provide GenDev with any quarterly, mid-term, and final reporting for supported activities.
4. **Ability to Leverage Funds:** Priority will be given to proposals that leverage complementary resources, in addition to GenDev funding, to support activities. The aspirational goal is that at least 50 percent of the total resources for proposed activities should come from one or more sources other than this call, including:
 - a. Mission or OU funding for existing or new programming (note: GenDev funds may be used to enhance women's economic empowerment of existing programming with at least two years of implementation pipeline);
 - b. Funding (in cash or in kind) from:
 - i. private sector partners
 - ii. host government counterparts
 - iii. participating civil society organizations
 - iv. other donors or InterAgency partners
 - c. Collaboration with InterAgency partners in design, implementation, funding, or evaluation of the proposed activities.
3. **Sound Technical Approaches:** Proposed activities should demonstrate sound technical approaches that will contribute effectively to the desired outcomes. USAID is especially interested in supporting country-level and regional activities that clearly advance one or more of the pillars, for example:

Pillar 1

- Work with employers, consultants, governments, industry associations and others to develop professional development programs that specifically address women's needs to maintain and advance their careers.
- Increase employment of women in traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as finance, engineering, and infrastructure.

Pillar 2

- Expand women's access to finance by addressing systemic constraints within the finance system, such as introducing movable property lending, expanding credit information, or reforming banking and investing regulations that inhibit growth of financial technology for women.
- Enhance women's leadership and entrepreneurial capacity through locally-delivered, longer-term assistance activities based on proven approaches such as agency-based empowerment training paired with technical assistance and financial resources.

Pillar 3

- Promote legal and regulatory reforms to remove systemic constraints to women's economic empowerment, whether in a sector or in the broader economy. For example, a qualifying activity might: revise the employment law to remove inappropriate constraints; work with private sector male leaders to reduce 'gender blindness' and improve gender balance in hiring, training, and procurement practices of male-owned companies; improve workplace and transportation safety to reduce gender-based violence and sexual harassment during commutes and office hours.
- Support the development of women-focused institutions and organizations (e.g., chambers of commerce, issue or sector-based associations) that identify, analyze, and address barriers to women's economic empowerment.
- Assist government counterparts to institutionalize gender-informed policies and processes so that women participate in the development and implementation of laws, regulations, policies and practices.
- Expand legal protections for women's property rights and protection from gender-based discrimination in customary and statutory land systems. For example, this could include addressing norms and customs for how women acquire land (e.g., purchase, inheritance), the quality of land they receive, and how land is transferred at marriage or a spouse's death.

Mission Eligibility:

Economic Support Funds (ESF): This opportunity is open to all Missions and Operating Units worldwide subject to any applicable limitations on the use of ESF funding.

Timeframe and Process:

Eligible missions or operating units should submit concept proposals (not to exceed two pages in length) to GenDev no later than COB Eastern Standard Time on April 5th, 2019. All concept proposals should be submitted using the [W-GDP Incentive Fund google form](#). Detailed guidance for preparing concept notes can be found in Annex C.

Decisions to fund a proposal will be made by a review committee convened by GenDev and comprised of technical experts from regional and functional bureaus. The committee may reach out to applicants for clarification or additional information during the review process. Upon selection, GenDev will work with successful applicants to finalize concepts, including providing technical assistance as needed, transfer funding, and coordinate any special notification requirements.

All recipients of W-GDP incentive funding are expected to: 1) report on activities under the relevant Pillar(s) for Operational Plans and Performance Plan and Reports; 2) adopt appropriate indicators from the W-GDP indicator list (Annex B); and 3) provide GenDev with any quarterly, mid-term, and final reporting for supported activities.

Questions: See Frequently Asked Questions (Annex D). Additional questions may be directed to WGDPIncentive@usaid.gov.

ANNEX VIII: KPI ANALYSIS BY STANDARD INDICATOR

Standard Indicator	Number of Activities Listed	Number of Activities Reporting Results FY 2020	Number of Activities Reporting Targets FY 2020	Number of Activities Reporting Targets FY 2021	Number of Activities Reporting Targets FY 2022
DR.4.5-I: Number of independent worker organizations supported by USG to promote international labor standards					
DR.4.5-I: Number of independent worker organizations supported by USG to promote international labor standards	1	1	1	1	1
DR.4.5-Ia: Number of workers represented by these organizations	1	1	1	1	1
EG.10.4-I: Number of specific pieces of land tenure and property rights legislation or implementing regulations proposed, adopted, and/or implemented positively affecting property rights of the urban and/or rural poor as a result of USG assistance					
EG.10.4-I: Number of specific pieces of land tenure and property rights legislation or implementing regulations proposed, adopted, and/or implemented positively affecting property rights of the urban and/or rural poor as a result of USG assistance	2	1	1	0	0
EG.10.4-7: Number of adults provided with legally recognized and documented tenure rights to land or marine areas, as a result of USG assistance					
EG.10.4-7: Number of adults provided with legally recognized and documented tenure rights to land or marine areas, as a result of USG assistance	1	1	1	0	0
EG.10.4-7e, m: Land/Marine Document Holder Sex: Male	1	1	0	0	0
EG.10.4-7f, n: Land/Marine Document Holder Sex: Female	1	1	0	0	0
EG.3.2-24: Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [IM-level]					
EG.3.2-24: Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [IM-level]	4	2	2	1	0
EG.3.2-24h: Sex: Female	4	1	1	1	0
EG.4.2-4: Number of days of USG-funded training provided to support micro-enterprise development					
EG.4.2-4: Number of days of USG-funded training provided to support micro-enterprise development	2	2	2	2	2
EG.4.2-4b: Female	2	2	1	2	2

EG.4.2-5: Number of days of USG funded technical assistance provided to support micro-enterprise development

EG.4.2-5: Number of days of USG funded technical assistance provided to support micro-enterprise development	2	2	2	2	2
EG.4.2-5a: Male	2	1	0	0	0
EG.4.2-5b: Female	2	1	0	0	0

EG.5-2: Full-time equivalent employment of firms receiving USG assistance

EG.5-2: Full-time equivalent employment of firms receiving USG assistance	1	1	1	1	1
EG.5-2i, k, m, o, q, s: Male (all ages)	1	1	1	1	1
EG.5-2j, l, n, p, r, t: Female (all ages)	1	1	1	1	1

EG.5-3: Number of micro-enterprises supported by USG assistance

EG.5-3: Number of micro-enterprises supported by USG assistance	7	5	4	6	3
EG.5-3a: Male entrepreneurs	7	1	1	3	2
EG.5-3b: Female entrepreneurs	7	5	4	6	3

EG.6-11: Average percent change in earnings following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs

EG.6-11: Average percent change in earnings following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs	1	1	1	1	1
EG.6-11a: Sum of individual percent changes in earnings (numerator)	1	1	0	0	0
EG.6-11b: Number of individuals in the labor force at end line (denominator)	1	1	0	0	0

EG.6-12: Percent of individuals with new employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs

EG.6-12: Percent of individuals with new employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs	5	4	4	5	5
EG.6-12a: Number of individuals newly employed (numerator)	5	4	4	5	5
EG.6-12b: Number of individuals who participate (denominator)	5	4	4	5	5
EG.6-12c: Number of males newly employed (numerator)	5	0	1	0	0

EG.6-13: Percent of individuals with improved soft skills following participation in USG assisted workforce development programs

EG.6-13: Percent of individuals with improved soft skills following participation in USG assisted workforce development programs	3	3	3	3	3
EG.6-13a: Number of individuals with improved soft skills (numerator)	3	3	3	3	3
EG.6-13b: Number of individuals who participate in the activity (denominator)	3	3	3	3	3
EG.6-13c: Number of males with improved soft skills (numerator)	3	0	1	0	0

EG.6-14: Percent of individuals who complete USG-assisted workforce development programs

EG.6-14: Percent of individuals who complete USG-assisted workforce development programs	3	2	2	3	3
EG.6-14a: Total number of individuals who complete (numerator)	3	2	2	3	3
EG.6-14b: Total number of individuals who participate (denominator)	3	2	2	3	3
EG.6-14c: Number of males who complete (numerator)	3	0	1	0	0

EG.6-15: Percent of individuals with better employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs

EG.6-15: Percent of individuals with better employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs	4	4	4	4	4
EG.6-15a: Total number of participants reporting better employment (numerator)	4	4	4	4	4
EG.6-15b: Total number of individuals participating in workforce development programs (denominator)	4	4	4	4	4
EG.6-15c: Total number of female participants reporting better employment	4	0	2	0	0

ES.4-2: Number of service providers trained who serve vulnerable persons

ES.4-2: Number of service providers trained who serve vulnerable persons	1	1	1	1	1
ES.4-2a: Number of men	1	1	0	1	1
ES.4-2b: Number of women	1	1	0	1	1

GNDR-1: Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed or adopted with USG assistance designed to promote gender equality or nondiscrimination against women or girls at the national or sub-national level

GNDR-1: Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed or adopted with USG assistance designed to promote gender equality or non-discrimination against women or girls at the national or sub-national level	2	1	1	1	1
GNDR-1a: Drafted	2	0	0	1	1

GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)

GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)	9	5	6	6	4
GNDR-2c: Numerator	9	5	5	6	4
GNDR-2d: Denominator	9	6	5	6	4

GNDR-4: Percentage of participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities

GNDR-4: Percentage of participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities	1	1	1	1	0
GNDR-4c: Numerator	1	1	1	1	0
GNDR-4d: Denominator	1	1	1	1	0

GNDR-6: Number of people reached by a USG funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotlines, other)

GNDR-6: Number of people reached by a USG funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotlines, other)	1	1	1	1	1
GNDR-6a: Number of Men	1	1	0	0	0
GNDR-6b: Number of Women	1	1	0	0	0

GNDR-8: Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations

GNDR-8: Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations	5	0	1	2	1
GNDR-8a: Number of Men	5	0	0	2	1
GNDR-8b: Number of Women	5	0	0	2	1

Source: Data retrieved from USAID GenDev, December 3, 2020.



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