

**U.S. Agency for International Development
Report to Congress on the Implementation of the
Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Fund**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with input from the U.S. Department of State (State), submits this report pursuant to Section 7019(e) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020 (Division G of Public Law [P.L.] 116-94), which incorporates the provisions of House Report 116-78:

The Committee directs the USAID Administrator, not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act, to submit to the Committees on Appropriations a detailed implementation plan of the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, including focus countries and planned metrics.

This report outlines USAID’s innovative and effective approaches to women’s economic empowerment over the course of the first year of contributing to the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative via the W-GDP Fund, as well as State’s signature W-GDP programs. The report addresses potential focus countries and metrics for W-GDP.

Women’s economic empowerment has long been a focus of USAID and State’s work around the world. The White House’s launch of the W-GDP Initiative in February 2019 sharpened these efforts by providing the first-ever comprehensive, whole-of-Government approach to women’s economic empowerment focused on three pillars: Pillar 1: women prospering in the workforce; Pillar 2: women succeeding as entrepreneurs; and, Pillar 3: women enabled in the economy.

At USAID, W-GDP prioritizes new resources and analytic metrics to focus on the barriers that prevent women from fully participating in the economy. During W-GDP’s first year, USAID created the \$100 million W-GDP Fund, which financed innovative programs to advance women’s economic empowerment in 44 countries through collaboration with nearly 250 partners across the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and local governments.

State prioritizes W-GDP through programs outlined in this report, as well as through broader diplomatic engagement in bilateral and multilateral fora and public diplomacy. Going forward, State will serve as the lead coordinating Department for W-GDP, in partnership with USAID on the W-GDP Fund and under the policy leadership of the White House. State will support this work through the establishment of a new W-GDP Unit within the Secretary’s Office of Global Women’s Issues.

USAID PROGRAMMING

Through the W-GDP Fund, USAID and interagency partners tackled the economic-empowerment challenges women face through the following activities:

USAID Incentive Fund: In March 2019, USAID launched a competition among its Missions and other Operating Units to receive W-GDP funds to pilot new approaches and scale proven approaches to increase results within the three W-GDP Pillars. W-GDP offered an opportunity

to build on USAID’s work and increase its effects through new funds. Interest in this funding was high across the Agency globally. After a thorough review of the more than 120 concept notes submitted, a selection panel that brought together nine interagency partners and 47 USAID technical specialists awarded \$27 million across 14 activities in 22 countries.

Recipients of awards from the Incentive Fund are breaking barriers across the continents of Africa, Asia, and the Americas:

- In the Republic of Indonesia, the “Becoming an Independent Entrepreneur” activity will help create 2,000 registered, women-owned enterprises and support growth in income and revenue for 5,000 women in poultry supply-chains;
- In the Republic of Rwanda, the “Women in Rwandan Energy” activity will enable 1,400 women to break into the fast-growing energy sector, while working with the Government of Rwanda and the private sector to bring even more women into this traditionally male-dominated field; and
- In the Federative Republic of Brazil; the Republics of Chile, Colombia, and Perú; and the United Mexican States, the “Women Prospering in Technology” activity will help scale successful programs that work with companies in the field of information and communications technology, and aims to equip 8,700 women with the skills needed for placement and promotion in tech-sector jobs.

The W-GDP Fund also launched a Community of Practice (CoP) for W-GDP awardees. This CoP will help awardees build mutually beneficial relationships and provide ongoing technical support and learning among the community. It provides a way to share successes, challenges, technical knowledge, and evidence-based approaches to advance women’s economic empowerment. The CoP will feature monthly calls on which participants discuss two or three selected topics related to the implementation of activities, moderated email discussions by key themes or learning questions, webinars, peer exchanges, a virtual resource library, and the development of demand-driven and evidence-based learning products.

New Partnerships and Programs: Over the course of the first year of W-GDP, USAID catalyzed private-sector investment, expanded existing partnerships, and built new partnerships with international and local businesses and nonprofit organizations. These activities and partnerships included the following:

- Mars, Inc.: The W-GDP Fund provided \$2 million in funding—which leveraged an additional \$2.5 million from Mars—to help establish a sustainable supply-chain for shea nuts in Northern Ghana. This partnership works to transform the shea sector by providing critical technical assistance and resources to women-led businesses.
- PepsiCo: An initial investment of \$750,000 from the W-GDP Fund catalyzed \$1 million in contributions from PepsiCo to launch a partnership in West Bengal State in the Republic of India. The activity includes training in agronomic and business skills, access to land, and agency-based empowerment and leadership interventions for women farmers who supply the potatoes for PepsiCo’s Lay’s potato chips. This project also works with men and PepsiCo staff to strengthen the enabling environment for scaling women’s economic empowerment in the community, and throughout the company.

- Visa Foundation and the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE): The investments of \$600,000 from the W-GDP Fund and \$1 million from the Visa Foundation established the Advancing Women’s Empowerment Fund. This new catalyst fund will identify the best strategies to get investment capital into the hands of women entrepreneurs in emerging markets in South and Southeast Asia efficiently and effectively.

Interagency Collaboration: The W-GDP Fund is dedicated to supporting collaborative interagency partnerships that leverage the unique capabilities of each Federal Department or Agency to inspire institutional change in support of the three pillars of the W-GDP Initiative. Recent interagency partnerships include the following:

- U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC): During a W-GDP delegation visit to the Republic of Paraguay, USAID committed \$1 million from the W-GDP Fund for technical assistance to support and build the capacity of women-owned business and women entrepreneurs in the Americas, as well as financial institutions that will receive on-lending from W-GDP 2X, managed by the DFC. USAID’s technical assistance will ensure women have the support they need for their businesses to thrive and financial institutions are better positioned to support women borrowers in the region.
- U.S. Department of Commerce: The W-GDP Fund is financing the Department of Commerce’s work in the Dominican Republic through the Commercial Law Development Program, which works with the national government to revise procurement legislation to create greater opportunities for women-owned businesses, while also working with women-owned businesses to take advantage of these opportunities.
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA): To close the gap between higher education and the employment and advancement of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics careers, USAID is working with NASA and regional and technical institutions around the world through the global SERVIR network. The SERVIR program provides satellite data, science, and technology to improve environmental decision-making among 23 developing nations. With \$970,000 in W-GDP Fund funding, new activities will support training, internships, and mentorship for women in SERVIR partner institutions of higher education to support their careers.

The WomenConnect Challenge (WCC): Launched in 2018 by Advisor Ivanka Trump and former USAID Administrator Mark Green, the WomenConnect Challenge (WCC) is a global call for solutions to improve women’s participation in everyday life by meaningfully changing the ways women and girls access and use technology. After two Challenge rounds, USAID has awarded more than \$2.9 million to 12 organizations that are working to bridge the gender digital divide so that women can fully participate in the global economy

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE PROGRAMMING

The Department of State supports W-GDP through diplomatic engagement and programming from both foreign-assistance and public-diplomacy funds. To date, State has launched five programs under the W-GDP banner, or in direct support of it, through the Bureaus of Economic

and Business Affairs and Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues.

Women Empowered – Realizing Inclusive and Sustainable Economies (WE RISE): WE RISE is a global program in women's economic empowerment managed by the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI), announced at the launch of W-GDP in February 2019. It is an initiative under S/GWI's Women and Girls Empowered consortium of implementing partners. To account for the deeply interconnected nature of women's experiences, WE RISE programs employ approaches that are highly collaborative, integrated, multidisciplinary, and inclusive, addressing women's economic empowerment in the context of legal and practical barriers such as conflict and insecurity. To date, WE RISE has helped more than 6,000 women entrepreneurs receive microloans to start and grow their own businesses, and has unlocked nearly \$3 million in microloans through matching funding by Kiva, the online lending platform that leverages investments by private individuals, community groups, and employee groups.

Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi): We-Fi harnesses the public and private sector to promote systematic change and open new doors for women entrepreneurs across the developing world. S/GWI leads We-Fi engagement for State, in close cooperation with the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Launched in 2017, We-Fi was one of the Administration's first efforts in what would eventually become the W-GDP Initiative. With funding of \$354 million from 14 governments—including \$50 million from State—We-Fi supports women entrepreneurs by scaling up access to finance, markets, networks and mentors, and information, as well as improving the enabling environment for women. Recipients of We-Fi funds will implement programs in 50 countries that are expected to mobilize \$2.6 billion in funding and directly reach 114,000 women-owned/led small to medium-sized enterprises.

Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE): In support of W-GDP, State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (State/ECA) established AWE in 2019, which provides women entrepreneurs with the skills, resources, and networks needed to start and scale successful businesses. Through AWE, women business-owners participate in a facilitated entrepreneurship program supplemented with localized content, as well as networking and mentorship opportunities. Using the online platform DreamBuilder, in partnership with Arizona State University's Thunderbird School of Global Management and Freeport-McMoRan, the core curriculum provides women with fundamental business skills including how to create business plans and raise capital. During its inaugural year, more than 2,000 women across 26 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, as well as the Kingdom of Spain and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, graduated from the AWE program. As a result of its first-year success, AWE is expanding to more than 50 countries worldwide in 2020 to reach more women and maximize its impact.

W-GDP International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP): To support Pillar 3 of W-GDP, State/ECA created a new International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) titled, "W-GDP: Overcoming Barriers to Women's Economic Participation," which debuted in September 2019. The project focused on best practices for reducing restrictive legal, regulatory, and cultural barriers to women's full and free participation in the economy. Over the course of two weeks in

the United States, 18 participants from around the world from the public and private sectors traveled across five U.S. cities to meet with Federal, State, and local governments, private companies, multilateral and non-governmental organizations, business incubators, and financial institutions. The 18 international leaders established action plans to address and remove restrictive barriers to women's economic participation in their home countries and regions. U.S. Embassies collect quarterly updates from participants, and plans are underway to launch the second iteration of the W-GDP IVLP in Fall 2020.

Providing Opportunities for Women's Economic Rise (POWER): The Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (State/EB) created the Providing Opportunities for Women's Economic Rise initiative, or POWER, to convene the U.S. private sector with U.S. Embassies and USAID Missions to help women business leaders in the United States and abroad develop partnerships and expand professional networks that help them explore new opportunities and implement competitive strategies in key sectors. Launched in 2019, the initiative leverages U.S. diplomatic resources to promote women in business and convenes private-sector resources and expertise to provide women with the platforms needed to participate fully in the economy. To date, State/EB has implemented or planned 14 POWER projects overseas, in every region around the world.

Focus Countries

To date, the W-GDP Initiative has not identified focus countries; however, the Initiative has worked to focus efforts on nations that present windows of opportunity for advancing women's full and free participation in the economy, especially in the developing world and emerging markets.

USAID opened the first Incentive Fund round to all of its Missions to crowdsource the best proposals for achieving the highest impact. The second Incentive Fund round will specify focus *themes* (areas of emphasis within the W-GDP Pillars). For future Incentive Fund rounds, USAID is considering developing a methodology, in alignment with the Journey to Self-Reliance, to identify focus countries based on evidence of national commitment and capacity for reform, the capacity of USAID Missions to implement, and the presence and interest of other partners to participate in and support reform.

Planned Metrics

Through National Security Presidential Memorandum-16 (NSPM-16), President Trump directed the White House-led W-GDP Working Group to develop rigorous metrics to track W-GDP's impact across Federal Departments and Agencies. NSPM-16 directed the group to release an annual report to document that progress, particularly against W-GDP's target of reaching 50 million women by 2025.

In W-GDP's first year, State, USAID, and the U.S. Government interagency developed shared metrics for W-GDP's three Pillars, and reported against them in W-GDP's first *Annual Report* (released in February 2020). This work enabled the W-GDP Initiative to show it reached 12 million women in the initiative's first year, of which USAID's investments reached close to nine million.

Learning Agenda

W-GDP as a whole continues to evaluate how best to measure and document progress. For the W-GDP Fund specifically, USAID is developing a learning agenda to ensure the programs and activities in which the Fund invests are based on evidence. This evidence will ultimately help institutionalize women's economic empowerment across USAID's programming, and simultaneously increase development results and the profits of private-sector partners.