

**Women’s Leadership in STEM 2024
Application & Program FAQ**

- **How do I apply?**

Please review all components of the application [here](#) and apply by **20 December 2023**. In addition to basic personal information, you will be asked to submit your Leadership Project idea.

- **How many applicants will be selected?**

We will be selecting 20 women leaders for this program.

- **When will I find out if I’ve been accepted?**

After a careful review from our Selection Committee, we will be reaching out to the selected applicants of their status by February 2024.

- **What are the key program timelines?**

Call Opens	27 th October 2023
Closure of Submission	20 th December 2023, 4:00pm IST
Selection committee review and final selection	January-February, 2024
Cohort Announcement	Last week of February, 2024
Cohort onboarding (virtual meeting)	March, 2024
First in-person Residency	May, 2024
Second in-person Residency	August, 2024
Third in-person Residency	November, 2024

- **Is there a cost if I’m selected?**

All the leadership resources provided during the year as well as travel, lodging and food expenses for the in-person engagements are covered. However, the initiative does not pay for your time. We also do not provide funding for your Leadership Project.

- **Should I apply if I have slightly less than 10 years of work experience in STEM?**

The content of our program has been tailored for individuals with 10-25 years of experience. If your total public health experience falls just outside of that range, there may be a possibility that your application passes the screening and onto the review stage. However, given our candidate pool over the past few years, we have seen these candidates face steep competition during the scoring stage. You may choose to wait until you have accrued more experience for a stronger application, to increase your chances of being selected.

- **What is the medium of instruction of the program?**
English is the medium of instruction, all sessions will be conducted in the English language.
- **I have accessibility needs or a learning disability. Will special accommodations be provided during the journey?**

Yes, our team will work with you to understand your needs and how we can best create a supportive learning environment. If you have specific questions or concerns, please email us at user-23@birac.nic.in.

Program Questions:

- **What are the program expectations and what does the time commitment look like?**
If accepted, you will be required to attend three 5-day in-person learning residencies, complete a few psychometric assessments and any intersession activities and the deliverables associated with the Leadership Project. You will also be asked to complete a “360-evaluation” and leadership style assessments, which will help inform your understanding of your leadership strengths and areas for growth. The 360-evaluation will involve soliciting feedback from your supervisor, peers, direct reports, and others. As our approach involves human-centered design, we will also ask you to evaluate the experience and contribute ideas for how to enhance this program further, through evaluation surveys.
- **What does a Leadership Project entail?**
The Leadership Project is an opportunity for each member to design and lead an effort that taps into their expertise, network, passion, and creativity.

There are only four rules for the Leadership Project:

- It should focus on improving outcomes at the intersection of STEM and gender equality, or take a gendered lens on a STEM-related issue.
 - It should leverage your leadership skills.
 - It should be within your scope of control or influence, but also stretch you beyond your day-to-day work requirements.
 - You should be passionate about it
- **What kinds of ideas would be appropriate for a Leadership Project?**
A leadership project can be something that the applicant is passionate about and can focus on improving outcomes of research in STEM and gender equality, or take a gendered lens on any topic of their interest.

The most successful leadership projects:

- Are targeted, specific, relevant, achievable, and measurable ones.
- Are fuelled by passion and deep interests of the participants.
- Can realistically start being implemented within the duration of the program.
- Can continue beyond the program and do not have to be fully wrapped up by the end of the year.

The leadership projects may be designed under the following themes such as,

- Centering women and girls in STEM,
- Catalysing institutional change,
- Optimising pathways to leadership,
- Building integrated and resilient health systems,

- STEM innovation and policy.

- **Will there be funding for Leadership Projects?**

Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to fund the implementation of the Leadership Projects. However, we provide support by connecting you with highly experienced mentors, coaches, and experts within the WomenLift and BIRAC-GCI network. Your fellow cohort members can also be an excellent resource for enhancing your project.

We encourage you to align your Leadership Project with your current work and gain additional buy-in from institutional leaders. We have found that successful projects stretch beyond your day-to-day responsibilities.

- **How can I balance this leadership opportunity with my already busy professional and personal life?**

This program has been designed for professional women leaders. We recognize the importance of work life harmony and know that this is often a challenge holding many women back from leadership roles. We do not want to add further burden to your personal and professional life but require our cohort members to be fully present and engaged. We will work with you and take an integrative approach towards incorporating your personal needs into this program.

- **What is the primary difference between the India Leadership Journey and the Women Leadership in STEM program?**

The key distinction between the India Journey and the Women Leadership in STEM program lies in their respective target audiences. While both programs recognize the importance of building networks among women leaders, the Women Leadership in STEM program specifically aims to bring together women leaders from STEM research, policy, or practice across a wide range of organizations. This includes government organizations (both Central and State), UGC-recognized universities, public sector entities, private organizations, autonomous institutions, and research institutions. In contrast, the India Leadership Journey is a more broad and culturally oriented experience open to women leaders working in public health and does not have a specific focus on STEM-related fields.

*Covid Caveats: Please note that due to uncertainties caused by Covid-19, the programming and calendar, including the in-person events, may need to be converted to an all-virtual format.