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Investing in rural people

Framework for Implementing Transformational Approaches to Mainstreaming Themes: Environment and Climate, Gender, Nutrition and Youth (Draft)

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Glossary

Framework for Implementing Transformational Approaches to Mainstreaming Themes: Environment and Climate, Gender, Nutrition and Youth (Draft)

I. Background

1. This framework for rural household transformation responds to the commitment made for the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11) to mainstream the four thematic areas of environment and climate, gender, nutrition and youth into operations.¹ Support for an integrated and transformational approach to these four areas contributes to sustainable food systems transformation and inclusive solutions to rural poverty and food insecurity. Capturing the interactions between the four mainstreaming themes requires a flexible and dynamic approach throughout the programme cycle.
2. This document builds on the mainstreaming action plans prepared and approved over the past year. Each plan describes a strategy to effectively mainstream its theme in country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) and project operations² to strengthen the impact of IFAD investments on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While each plan acknowledges some degree of integration and linkages with other mainstreaming themes, this framework builds on these independent action plans, linking them to intentionally create synergies to meet the challenges of household-level rural transformation.
3. Integrated design simplifies and minimizes trade-offs among competing priorities. Interviews with staff and a review of IFAD documents reveal general agreement on the value of and need for incorporating environment and climate, gender, nutrition and youth into programmes in a comprehensive and integrated way. Mainstreaming can be implemented to achieve the desired result of transformation in rural households at each stage of the project cycle, from initial analysis to project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and knowledge management of the lessons learned, as discussed in section V. This framework is intended for IFAD staff and will help to communicate the principles of the integrated approach to IFAD partners, project teams and national governments.

II. Understanding rural transformation

4. Increasingly, development investors frame rural transformation in terms of not only impact on rural economies, but also the changes experienced by rural inhabitants. Rural transformation typically refers to changes in rural societies that result from wider economic and social drivers.
5. The need for rural transformation has never been greater. Interventions in food systems need to be recalibrated, otherwise there is a danger that many of the SDGs will not be achieved. Food systems encompass "the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded."³ It is within this overarching context that interactions between the mainstreaming themes of environment and climate change, gender, nutrition and youth, and indigenous peoples occur. The ultimate aim is to achieve sustainable food systems

¹ Mainstreaming of Climate, Gender, Nutrition and Youth (IFAD11/3/R.4, p. 1).

² Climate Mainstreaming in IFAD-funded Programmes (EB 2016/118/R.16); Mainstreaming Gender-transformative Approaches at IFAD – Action Plan 2019-2025 (EB 2019/126/INF.6); Mainstreaming Nutrition in IFAD Action Plan 2019-2025 (EB 2019/126/INF.5); Rural Youth Action Plan 2019-2021 (EB 2018/125/R.11).

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2018. [Sustainable Food Systems – Concept and Framework](#).

that deliver food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised.

6. In their present form, food systems are failing to ensure access to safe and nutritious food for everyone in an inclusive and sustainable way. Data suggest that over 821 million people suffer from food insecurity.⁴ Food systems account for 23 per cent of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.⁵ Despite the fact that on average 43 per cent of the agricultural workforce in developing countries is composed of women, vast gender disparities exist in terms of access to resources and essential services.⁶ A large majority of the world's 736 million extremely poor people live in rural areas. Almost three quarters (72 per cent) of rural youth live in countries with low rural transformation. They frequently face constraints, including a lack of skills, little access to land, credit and inputs, and scant connections to markets.⁷
7. Inclusive rural transformation encompasses sustainable resource and energy efficiency while also strengthening commercialization and marketable surpluses, enhancing food safety while reducing food waste, and diversifying production patterns and livelihoods. It creates opportunities for decent off-farm employment and entrepreneurship, better coverage and access to services and infrastructure, and greater access and capacity to influence policy processes, leading to broad-based rural growth and more sustainable rural landscapes.
8. This transformation makes it possible for everyone, without exception, to exercise their economic, social and political rights; develop their abilities; and take advantage of opportunities available in a healthy environment. This leads to a marked improvement in the economic position and well-being of IFAD's target groups, who include small-scale farmers, land-poor and landless workers, women and youth, marginalized ethnic and racial groups, indigenous peoples,⁸ persons with disabilities, and victims of disaster and conflict.⁹
9. The 2017 Leveraging Food Systems for Inclusive Rural Transformation¹⁰ report cites growing urban demand as the driving force for increased food production, improved agro-industrial capacity and infrastructure to ensure that food can reach markets efficiently, and appropriate policies to support the components of rural transformation.
10. Since 2013, the World Bank has supported "transformational engagements" to achieve fundamental shifts in developing economies. Common elements of these transformational efforts include: identifying and acting on binding constraints to development; adopting systemic, often cross-sectoral approaches to address multiple, interrelated constraints; scaling up innovative and promising financial instruments; and supporting behaviour change by intentionally employing incentives, market forces and critical information.¹¹
11. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹² centres on achieving structural transformation by addressing the root causes generating and reproducing economic, social, political and environmental problems and inequities rather than focusing only on symptoms. Many underlying causes of inequality are the same around the world: poverty, lack of education, food insecurity, natural resource degradation, political unrest and conflict. According to the 2019 Climate Change

⁴ FAO, 2019. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#).

⁵ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2019. [Climate Change and Land](#).

⁶ Mainstreaming Gender-transformative Approaches at IFAD – Action Plan 2019-2025 (EB 2019/126/INF.6).

⁷ IFAD, 2019. [Rural Development Report](#).

⁸ IFAD, 2009. [Engagement with Indigenous Peoples](#).

⁹ IFAD, 2019. [Revised Operational Guidelines on Targeting](#).

¹⁰ FAO, 2017. [Leveraging Food Systems for Inclusive Rural Transformation](#).

¹¹ World Bank, 2016. [Supporting Transformational Change for Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity](#).

¹² See [here](#).

and Land report by IPCC,¹³ recent studies indicate that climate change has already had a negative impact on crop yields at a global scale, and that adaptation to date has not been sufficient to offset this impact. The increased efforts at adaptation also come at a time when climate change action is inextricably linked to sustainable development efforts, as development without explicit consideration of adaptation is not likely to be effective and could even be counter-productive, according to the Global Commission on Adaptation.¹⁴ Additionally, climate shocks such as floods, droughts and tropical storms are key drivers of food crises. The occurrence of these extremes has more than doubled since the 1990s.¹⁵ In 2018, 29 million people were acutely food insecure in 26 countries affected by climate-related shocks, with 23 million of them concentrated in 20 African countries.¹⁶ These causes are intersecting and mutually exacerbating.¹⁷

III. Defining rural household transformation

12. There is broad agreement among development actors on characterizing inclusive rural transformation at a macro or national level. Less attention is given to clarifying what household transformation looks like, although its broad changes are expressed in the behaviours and capacities of rural households. IFAD's 2016 Rural Development Report notes that:

“With successful structural transformation, important changes in rural asset holdings also take place at the household level, as diversified, low-productivity, subsistence-oriented agriculture gives way to agrifood systems in which production is marked by greater specialization on-farm, but greater market-oriented diversification in aggregate.”¹⁸

13. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has defined rural transformation from the perspective of rural inhabitants, describing it as the outcome of a process that:

“[Seeks] to improve the living condition of the farmer, the artisan, the tenant farmer and the landless in the countryside. It is about enabling specific groups of people – rural women and youth and disadvantaged segments of the population – to gain for themselves and their children more of what they wanted and needed. It subsumes the core ideas of rural development concerned with improving the well-being of rural people by enhancing their productive capacities, expanding their choices in life and reversing public policies that discriminate against the rural poor.”¹⁹

14. A definition of rural household transformation encompasses the results of the activities associated with each mainstreaming theme that reflect changes in household behaviour and norms, as shown below:
- Adopting resilient agricultural practices and sustainable natural resource management in adapting to climate change and ensuring environmental sustainability;
 - Achieving greater women's empowerment in household decision-making;
 - Expanding the life choices for all members of the household, men and women, young and aging;
 - Adding nutritious food in a healthy diet for all household members; or

¹³ IPCC, 2019. [Climate Change and Land. Chapter 5 – Food Security](#), pp. 5-24, 5-28.

¹⁴ Global Commission on Adaptation, 2018. [Economics Brief](#).

¹⁵ IPCC, 2019. [Climate Change and Land](#).

¹⁶ FAO, 2019. [Global Report on Food Crises](#).

¹⁷ IFAD, 2016. [Rural Development Report](#).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23

¹⁹ UNESCO. 2012. [Education and Training for Rural Transformation](#).

- Creating opportunities in employment and self-employment both on- and off-farm for young women and men.
15. It is important to build synergies between thematic areas to achieve better outcomes. For example, 30 years of research convincingly shows that improving women's incomes has positive impacts on children's health and nutrition,²⁰ and that "empowering women can bring synergies and co-benefits to household food security and sustainable land management."²¹ Analyses confirm that although current patterns of agriculture and food production contribute to total global emissions of greenhouse gases, reductions can be achieved from innovations in emission-reduction technologies in agriculture, and structural changes in livestock production,²² in addition to changing diets and reducing food waste.²³
 16. Recent studies find links between nutrition and equity impacts based on income source and farming environment.²⁴ Research on gender and resilience indicates that when women have secure land tenure and decision-making power over crop choice, they make greater use of agricultural practices that enhance both household and community resilience²⁵ and climate adaptation practices such as adopting stress-tolerant varieties of staple crops, integrated pest management techniques or tree planting and other erosion control measures. These contribute to household resilience by ensuring food security and lead to increased incomes, healthier ecosystems and better nutrition.
 17. A vision of transformation in rural households is one where sustainable food systems are working appropriately and all members are food-secure, whether through production on their own farms or through purchases at an affordable price. Many remain in agriculture, while others choose off-farm employment. Recognizing that household members have different preferences and capabilities and do not act as a single unit, in this vision of transformed households men and women are able to own key productive resources individually, even if they choose to share access, control or ownership of them. The resources include land or farm equipment, agricultural and communication technologies, earned income, and other tangible and intangible assets. Women have decision-making rights equal to those of men, able to make strategic decisions and act on them,²⁶ including choosing whether or not to work outside the home. Some household members may engage in agriculture, forestry, and/or ranching while others participate in off-farm businesses. These transformed households sustainably use their natural resource endowments and adapt to gradual or sudden changes in the local climatic conditions. They sell their products profitably, with enough income to manage regular costs for their businesses, as well as cover nutrition, health care, education and other social expenses. Young people, both men and women, can freely choose their civil status without coercion. All complete their primary education; many continue to secondary school and vocational training. Their education provides them with skills to obtain employment or avail themselves of other income-generating options and they can contribute to the well-being of their households (figure 1).

²⁰ Quisumbing, AR., ed. 2003. Household decisions, gender, and development: A synthesis of recent research. Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute.

²¹ IPCC, 2019. [Climate Change and Land](#).

²² See the [Katowice climate package](#).

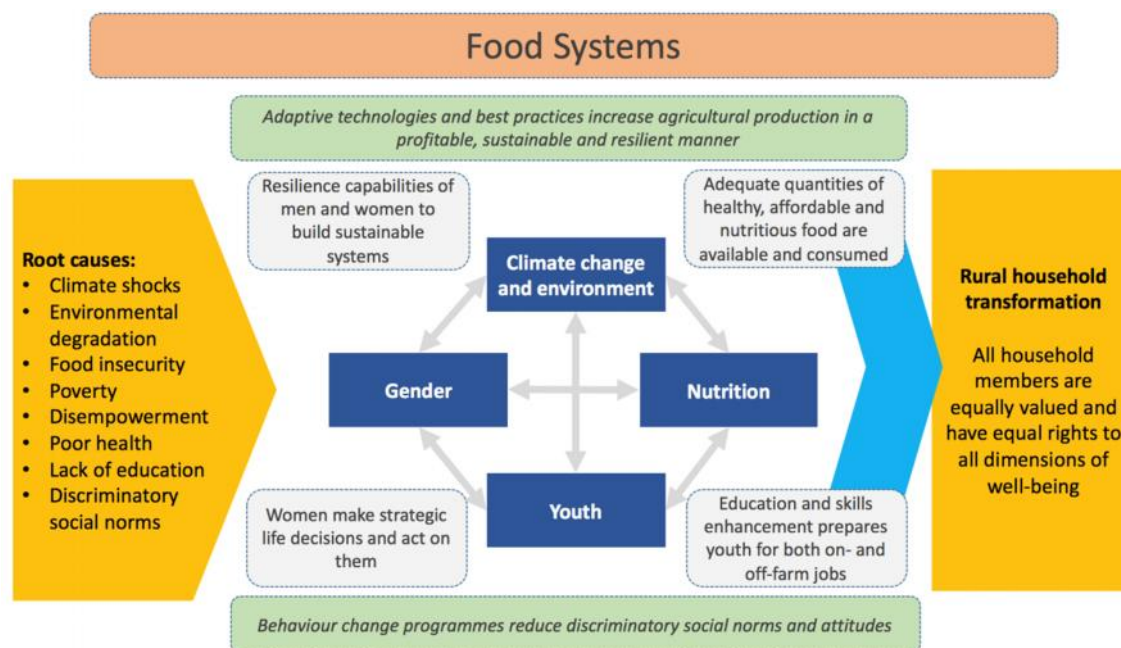
²³ Bajželj et al. (2014). Importance of food-demand management for climate mitigation. *Nature Climate Change*, 4(10), pp. 924-929.

²⁴ A. Kirk, T. Kilic, and C. Carletto. 2017. [Composition of Household Income and Child Nutrition Outcomes: Evidence from Uganda](#). *World Development*, 109, pp. 452-469.

²⁵ FAO, 2017. [Women farmers and resilience in the face of climate change](#).

²⁶ Kabeer, N. 1999. Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30(3), pp. 435-464.

Figure 1
Interaction between mainstreaming themes



18. A dynamic state of increasing well-being of household members is the defining feature of household transformation. The application of the mutually conditioning influences of environmental sustainability and adaptation to climate change, gender equality, good nutritional status and advancement for youth in agricultural and rural development investments, combined with effective targeting, translates into strengthened and enhanced positive outcomes for all household members.

IV. Achieving transformation in households

19. How is transformation in rural households achieved, given often multiple trade-offs among actions and the intricacies of food systems? Household members may lack the resources to implement environmentally sustainable practices if the start-up costs are high or the labour needed limits other income-earning opportunities. Jobs may pay poorly or limit the time available to prepare nutritious foods. Reality may contrast sharply with the vision described above since rural transformation does not occur uniformly. For example, the opportunity to earn a decent wage in a newly built factory may encourage young adults to forego vocational or technical education if there are no policies to motivate them to continue, such as conditional cash transfers, or penalties to dissuade them from leaving school early (or both). Similarly, expansion of large agribusinesses can sometimes crowd out smallholder farmers. Discussion of potential trade-offs among the mainstreaming themes will be addressed during project design in the review of the Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) assessments, and raised in consultation with governments as described in section V.
20. There is a critical need for development approaches that both explain and address the interactions between the mainstreaming themes. Transformative approaches work to shift the power dynamics and structures that create and reinforce them. There is no perfect approach, but concepts and approaches of resilience²⁷ and empowerment, and complexity-aware²⁸ M&E methods all help to systematically understand and take account of multiple interacting variables, non-linear causal chains, unpredictability and the importance of context. The intersecting character

²⁷ IPCC, 2019. [Climate Change and Land glossary](#), p. 62.

²⁸ Measure Evaluation, 2017. [Complexity Aware Methods](#).

of root causes requires an integrated and comprehensive approach that takes into account the priorities and endowments of specific country contexts in the development of local or sectoral responses. The government's role in creating an enabling environment, investments by the private sector and partnerships with other development agencies are also vital.

21. These approaches should effectively engage communities throughout the project cycle to facilitate a shared vision and mapping of pathways towards household transformation. For example, household methodologies, supported by IFAD, encourage the creation of shared visions among household members, equitable decision-making and workloads, and joint access to and management of resources. Although household methodologies such as the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) were initially developed to address gender inequality, they are being adapted and used to strengthen nutritional education and introduce technologies relevant to climate adaptation,²⁹ and to address the needs and preferences of youth in the household.³⁰
22. Interactions exist among all mainstreaming themes. Food systems are critical determinants of the sustainability of natural resources and production landscapes as well as the nutritional status of the rural poor. Higher temperatures or shorter rainy seasons resulting from climate change can affect the suitability of crops to specific geographies and landscapes as well as their nutritional quality. Value chains can be developed with clear attention to their nutrition, gender and environmental impact: for example, maintaining a diversity of crop varieties that can strengthen household resilience to weather shocks, empower women and maintain food security.
23. Environmental degradation and climate change effects can negatively affect women in rural households by reducing available surface water, fuelwood, fodder and other natural resources, and by lowering crop yields. If men migrate in response to droughts or floods or other shocks, women-headed households remaining behind may become further impoverished as their access to men's labour and income is reduced. Project solutions that strengthen resilience must be attentive to women's existing labour burdens at home and in the field and seek affordable, labour-reducing technologies. Activities that support women in diversifying their income-generating opportunities can also strengthen their resilience, such as planting dual or triple purpose trees with food, fodder and market benefits.
24. It is now understood how social factors shape the uptake of nutritious foods and feeding behaviours. Men's and women's differentiated access to the assets needed to grow and/or purchase nutritious foods or their beliefs about food and eating can either promote or restrict consumption of nutritious, high-quality and safe foods. Women's empowerment influences their own and their children's nutritional status. An integrated approach includes addressing the nutritional dimensions of broader health and social issues such as pregnancies among adolescent girls (that can lead to an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition) as well as other environmental health concerns related to water, hygiene, pollution and sanitation.
25. Engaging youth may be a successful pathway to promote greater interest in agriculture, especially if these efforts are linked to new agricultural technologies such as precision agriculture or renewable energy; increasing private sector opportunities through expanded sales of inputs and advisory services, or equipment hire services such as "Hello Tractor" in Nigeria. This makes it possible for young people to generate income and increases employment opportunities. Approaches that use digital platforms and mobile technologies to link women and

²⁹ In Rwanda, IFAD has used the GALS methodology to strengthen adaptation of climate change. "The change begins at home: addressing gender imbalances and climate issues with home-based methodologies" (Jan 10, 2019). See [here](#).

³⁰ For example, Helen Keller International developed its "Nurturing Connections" method to address gender inequalities within the household to strengthen nutrition for all household members through homestead food production. See [here](#).

youth producers with processors and other buyers can circumvent mobility and insecurity constraints. Projects can help to provide land for youth through associations, offer targeted training and provide venture capital for new agribusinesses that take advantage of shifting climatic zones. IFAD's Rural Enterprise Programme – Phase II in Ghana provided credit to women and youth, and while climate services were not a specific focus of the programme, the same type of credit mechanism could be used to support environment-related activities.³¹ More details of interlinkages between mainstreaming themes are provided in annex I.

V. Current institutional and technical approach to mainstreaming

26. Commitments made during the IFAD11 Consultation³² include specific targets for each mainstreaming theme, as reflected in the respective action plans. IFAD will continue to have technical experts working on each theme, measuring the results through the core indicators in the individual action plan results frameworks. To ensure a common understanding of the mainstreaming themes as IFAD, each commitment has been clearly defined and is being systematically tracked. Table 1 outlines the mainstreaming criteria for each theme in the social inclusion cluster (gender, youth and nutrition). In the case of environmental sustainability and climate change there was no need to provide specific definitions as they have been covered by SECAP since 2015 and the Strategic Framework 2016-2025 includes clear indicators to monitor this area.

³¹ IFAD. Ghana. Rural Enterprises Programme. Midterm review mission report.

³² Report of the Consultation on the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (GC 41/L.3/Rev.1).

Table 1

Social inclusion themes criteria matrix

	<i>Gender mainstreamed</i>	<i>Gender transformative</i>	<i>Nutrition-sensitive</i>	<i>Youth sensitive</i>
Theme-specific situation analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe national policies, strategies and actors addressing gender. Identify the different roles, interests and priorities of women and men, and the underlying structures and norms of exclusion and discrimination. Identify the most important livelihood problems and opportunities faced by the community, as seen by women and men. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Meet criteria for gender mainstreamed</i> In the M&E section of the design documents, include an explicit commitment to undertake the project level index for the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (Pro-WEAI) assessment when undertaking the project baseline study as well as completion, as a proxy outcome indicator on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe national policies, strategies and actors addressing nutrition. Identify the main nutrition problems and underlying causes of malnutrition by affected group (e.g. by age, gender, ethnicity) in the project area. Identify nutritionally vulnerable beneficiaries by group (e.g. by age, gender, ethnicity). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe national policies, strategies and actors on youth. Describe main youth groupings (e.g. by age, gender, ethnicity). Analyse the context-based challenges and opportunities for each youth grouping.
Integration in theory of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address all three gender policy objectives in theory of change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Economic empowerment (ii) Equal voice (iii) Balanced workloads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Meet criteria for gender mainstreamed</i> Showcase gender transformative pathways. Plan for policy engagement on GEWE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify nutrition pathways (e.g. nutritious food production; income-generating activities; nutrition education; water, sanitation and hygiene; engagement in multisectoral platforms). Present the causal linkage between problems identified, desired outcomes and expected nutrition impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcase pathways to youth socio-economic empowerment. Include youth employment among the project objectives and activities (e.g. access to assets, skills and services for employment opportunities).
Mandatory logical framework indicators (outreach and outcome)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregate Outreach indicator (core indicator [CI] 1.1) by gender. At least 40% of project beneficiaries are women (specify number as part of CI. 1. on Outreach). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Meet criteria for gender mainstreamed</i> Include Pro-WEAI as an additional impact indicator to measure change in women's empowerment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregate Outreach indicator (CI.1) by gender, youth, indigenous peoples. Specify number of persons provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition (CI 1.1.1.8 on Outreach). Include either or both of these logframe indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Number of women reporting improved quality of their diets (CI 1.2.8); and/or (ii) Number of persons reporting improved knowledge, attitudes and practices on nutrition (new core indicator). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregate Outreach indicator (CI. 1) by gender and age.
Dedicated human and financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include staff with gender-specific terms of reference (TORs). Allocate funds to deliver gender-related activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Meet criteria for gender mainstreamed</i> Allocate funds in the M&E budget to undertake the Pro-WEAI survey at baseline and completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include staff with nutrition-specific TORs or a suitable implementation partner is on board. Allocate funds to deliver nutrition-related activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include staff with youth-specific TORs. Allocate funds to deliver youth-related activities.

27. Capacity development on this framework is under way through a new e-learning programme and curricula in IFAD's Operations Academy. Other forums will also be used, such as regional workshops and retreats, publications and technical notes.
28. Implementing this framework will involve establishing:
- A common understanding of the interactions among mainstreaming themes (see annex I);
 - A coordinated and integrated planning process;
 - A household-focused approach that fully mobilizes and engages community members;
 - Capacity-building plans for all staff on approaches to integrated assessments, design and implementation, including how to work in multidisciplinary teams;
 - Identification of appropriate tools and methods;
 - Improved targeting; and
 - A clear M&E plan that addresses all four thematic areas.
29. Integrated approaches will be detailed in the project implementation manual, with the capacities of project management units to be developed to ensure projects deliver on household transformation. The support required is detailed in table 2 below.

Table 2
Summary of support necessary for mainstreaming themes across the project cycle

<i>Thematic area</i>				
	<i>Environment and climate change</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Nutrition</i>	<i>Youth</i>
Targeting guidelines provide cross-cutting guidance to define targeted groups and strategy for all mainstreaming themes				
Capacity development	IFAD is building staff capacity through the IFAD Operations Academy to: (i) create stronger links among the mainstreaming themes; (ii) build collaboration and deepen knowledge; and (iii) increase outreach and sensitization efforts.			
Preparation of the country strategy	The COSOP is prepared based on a country's poverty profile and other characteristics and identifies the target group(s) to be reached.			
Assessments	Environmental assessment, analysis of climate-related vulnerabilities, risks and opportunities	Assessment of gender-based constraints and opportunities; and the implications of an action for both women and men	Assessment of nutrition situation and underlying causes; investigation of pathways to reach the nutrition outcomes	Assessment of opportunities for self- and wage employment; participation in policy processes; support for sociocultural activities
Design	The design process builds on the above assessments to make sure that the choice of strategy, activity, crop or technology optimizes synergies and does not reverse achievements in any thematic area.			
	Mainstreaming themes are embedded in COSOPs and projects to systematically promote the availability, accessibility, affordability and consumption of diverse, nutritious food types throughout the year, engage women and youth, and not exacerbate environmental problems.			
Tools and methods	Climate vulnerability tools; adaptation framework; resilience scorecard; risk management tools and others	Household methodologies; GALS; gender and value chain analyses	Nutrition-sensitive value chains guide	Youth engagement toolkit (planned)
Implementation	Ensure adequate staffing and funding in projects for each thematic area to have technical experts manage the cross-cutting activities and prevent "fade away" over the life of the projects.			
Knowledge management	All thematic areas should have a clear plan for disseminating learning from projects that can feed back into new assessments and project design efforts and support policy engagement and scaling up processes.			

VI. Measuring transformation

30. The four action plans are aligned with IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025 and will be implemented during the IFAD11 and IFAD12 periods. Collectively, the mainstreaming priority areas contribute to all three of IFAD's strategic objectives (SOs). Some priority areas are aligned with specific objectives, e.g. the nutrition action plan is relevant to SO2 and the environment and climate strategy relates to SO3. While IFAD's focus is on the first two SDGs – SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 2 (zero hunger) – it also contributes to the achievement of a number of other SDGs.
31. The success and implementation of the integrated mainstreaming agenda will be tracked through effective monitoring of progress and evaluation of results, learning and adaptive management. IFAD applies core indicators³³ at the project level that measure outputs and outcomes for its investment areas and mainstreaming priority areas (table 3). Most indicators are disaggregated by the age status ("young" or "not young" following the national definition of youth) and sex of beneficiary; the sex of household heads, enterprise owners or group leaders (as relevant); and whether beneficiaries are members of an indigenous peoples' group.

Table 3

Core indicators from IFAD's SOs and thematic action plans

<i>Environment and climate</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Nutrition</i>	<i>Youth</i>
Number of groups supported to sustainably manage natural resources and climate-related risks (SDG 13.1).	WEAI to measure decision-making (annex III).	Percentage of people reporting improved knowledge attitudes and practices on nutrition (number).	Disaggregation by age cohort of people-level core indicators
Number of persons accessing technologies that sequester carbon or reduce greenhouse gas emissions (SDG 13.2).	Disaggregation by sex of people-level core indicators	Percentage of women reporting improved quality of their diets (minimum dietary diversity for women)	
Number of persons/households reporting adoption of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient technologies and practices.			
Number of hectares of land brought under climate-resilient management (SDG 13.1).			
Number of tons of greenhouse gas emissions (CO2) avoided and/or sequestered.			
Number of persons whose ownership or user rights over natural resources have been registered in national cadastres and/or geographic information management systems (SDG 1.4).			

32. Indicators that measure outcomes attained through integration of all priority areas have not yet been developed. Part of the work needed to implement the mainstreaming framework consists of identifying and piloting suitable methods that are broadly applicable at the programme/project level and track the integration of the mainstreaming priority areas within IFAD.
33. Knowledge, attitude and practices surveys and qualitative methods can elicit responses from household members on their views about the transformative processes, answering questions such as "what are the most important changes you have experienced as a result of the project activities?" Participatory methods such as PhotoVoice and Most Significant Change, as well as household methodologies, throw light on household members' own views about project success (annex IV). Impact assessments also contribute to capturing evidence of integrated approaches.

³³ Taking IFAD's Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) to the Next Level (EB 2017/120/R.7/Rev.1).

VII. Conclusion

34. The 2030 Agenda, and the wealth of scientific evidence that has been released recently, add fresh impetus to the drive to achieve rural transformation and more sustainable and equitable food systems. Inclusive sustainable food systems that are people-centred have the potential to underpin the achievement of multiple SDGs and should be enshrined at the heart of all strategies to achieve inclusive rural household transformation. However, if these objectives are to be met, then interactions between environment and climate change, gender, nutrition and youth and their impacts on the world's 475 million small farms must be better understood and mainstreamed into development efforts. Working with this perspective will allow IFAD to integrate all mainstreaming themes to achieve maximum impact.
35. Operations and projects that aim to increase the sustainability of food systems must be holistic, taking into account the interlinked aspects of environmental sustainability, climate change, gender equality, youth empowerment and nutrition, all of which contribute to the overall longevity and success of interventions.

Understanding interactions among mainstreaming themes

1. This annex contains a brief discussion of each mainstreaming theme in relation to the other three, specifically in terms of how a project's efforts on one theme may have consequences or trade-offs for the goals associated with the other themes.
- A. Environment and climate change
2. The 2019 publication of the IPCC³⁴ makes strikingly clear the relationship between climate change and agriculture. Temperatures are rising, yields are shrinking, dryland areas are increasing, and soils are degrading much more quickly, possibly up to 100 times as fast as they are regenerating. The report states that of all the land on earth that is not covered with ice, about one quarter is experiencing human-induced degradation, and much of that is related to agriculture. The report emphasizes that policies that "enable and incentivize sustainable land management for climate change adaptation and mitigation include improved access to markets for inputs, outputs and financial services, empowering women and indigenous peoples, enhancing local and community collective action, reforming subsidies and promoting an enabling trade system." This position resonates with IFAD's transformational approach and principles of horizontal integration to maximize synergies across the thematic areas.
 3. Intersection with nutrition. Food systems are critical determinants of the sustainability of natural resources and production landscapes as well as the nutritional status of the rural poor. For example, higher temperatures resulting from climate change can affect the nutritional quality of crops and their suitability to specific geographies, thereby affecting the food security of the population. Projects to address climate change and environmental sustainability through tree planting, for example, can include trees that provide both nutritional benefits if consumed and income opportunities if sold, such as fruit and nuts, in addition to their environmental value. Similarly, increasing the efficiency and sustainability of some animal production practices, including for poultry and fish, could have positive benefits for both nutrition and the environment.
 4. Intersection with gender. Gender shapes people's ability to adopt agricultural practices that can help them adapt to and mitigate climate-related impacts. Impacts that can negatively affect women in rural households include declining availability of surface water, fuelwood, livestock fodder and other natural resources, and reduced crop yields. If men migrate in response to droughts or floods or due to reduced agricultural production, women-headed households remaining behind may become further impoverished as their access to men's labour and income is reduced. Projects working with women can provide information on adaptive measures and support their rights to access or adopt adaptation and mitigation strategies.
 5. Intersection with youth. Engaging youth in climate and resilience efforts may be a successful pathway to promote greater interest in agriculture. This is especially true if these efforts are linked to new agricultural technologies such as precision agriculture or renewable energy; increasing private sector opportunities through expanded sales of inputs and advisory services; or equipment hire services (such as "Hello Tractor" in Nigeria). This makes it possible for young people to adopt new agricultural and other technologies to both generate income and cope with climate variability. Particularly effective are approaches that make use of digital platforms and mobile technologies to link women and youth producers with processors and other buyers to circumvent mobility and insecurity constraints.

³⁴ IPCC, 2019. [Climate Change and Land](#).

B. Gender

6. Attention to gender equality supports SDG 5 (gender equality). At the minimum, measurements of gender equality should include: (i) improved access to resources – land, finance, services, technology and opportunities; (ii) a more balanced workload and sharing of benefits; (iii) increased decision-making power and representation at various levels; (iv) changes in norms and sociocultural values that set up barriers to gender equality; and (v) formal systemic changes in laws and policies, and in government and other institutional capacities and practices.³⁵
7. There is a growing body of evidence about the economic value of diversity, especially around women's participation as both wage workers and entrepreneurs in the economy. Gender equality in the economy improves competitiveness and boosts economic growth.³⁶ However, even as participation levels continue to increase, there is greater need to ensure that activities allow everyone to benefit and to strengthen women's empowerment.³⁷
8. Intersection with environment and climate change. In addressing climate variability, project solutions that strengthen resilience need to be attentive to women's existing labour burdens at home and in the field, and seek affordable, labour-reducing technologies. Activities that specifically support women to diversify income-generating opportunities can also strengthen their resilience, especially when they promote adaptation to climate variability, e.g. planting dual or triple purpose trees with food, fodder and market benefits.
9. Intersection with nutrition. Often programmes build on existing gender roles to reduce malnutrition by disseminating improved management practices for household-based ponds and homestead gardens easily accessible to women. In Bangladesh, for example, IFAD is financing two ongoing projects³⁸ that promote innovative fish production technologies in ponds and wetlands, such as introducing nutrient-rich small fish species into small homestead ponds managed individually by households. This has led to increased incomes and consumption of nutrient-rich fish, both in terms of quantity and frequency, especially among pregnant and lactating women and among children, with complementary feeding of the latter starting at six months of age.
10. Intersection with youth. Age is a critical variable in understanding gender issues within the household. Adolescent girls and young married women who have left school and have young children are a group in need of targeted support, as they may be the ones most affected by adverse social norms in the household involving parents, spouses and in-laws.

C. Nutrition

11. Today, many developing countries are experiencing the triple burden of malnutrition: undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and over-nutrition. Understanding nutrition throughout the life cycle is therefore critical. Poor nutrition, particularly stunting, is an intergenerational problem in many countries. With a global average of 20 per cent of adolescent girls (under the age of 18) giving birth,³⁹ the health of these young mothers is perhaps the most significant factor in low birth weight, which can create problems for children throughout their lifetimes and contribute to an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.

³⁵ Mainstreaming of Climate, Gender, Nutrition and Youth (IFAD11/3/R.4).

³⁶ Elborgh-Woytek, K., M. Newiak, K. Kochhar, S. Fabrizio, K. Kpodar, P. Wingender, B. Clements, and G. Schwartz. 2013. *Women, Work, and the Economy: Macroeconomic Gains from Gender Equity*. IMF Staff Discussion Note. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund.

³⁷ Johnson, N., M. Balagamwala, C. Pinkstaff, S. Theis, R. Meinzen-Dick, and A. Quisumbing. 2018. [How do agricultural development projects empower women? What hasn't worked and what might.](#) *Journal of Agriculture, Gender, and Food Security*, 3(2), pp. 1-19.

³⁸ The Sunamganj Community-Based Resource Management Project (EB 2001/73/R.19); and the National Agricultural Technology Programme – Phase II (EB 2015/LOT/P.15).

³⁹ Loaiza and Laing, 2013. [Adolescent Pregnancy: A Review of the Evidence](#). New York, NY: UNFPA.

12. The growth and development effects of obesity are important, especially as they relate to the burden of non-communicable diseases. As the food system develops in countries, changes in availability of foods, packaging and advertising can be advantageous, but may also lead to poorer consumption choices.
13. Intersection with gender and youth. It is now well understood that social factors shape the uptake of nutritious foods and feeding behaviours, e.g. how men's and women's differential access to the assets needed to grow and/or purchase nutritious foods or their beliefs about food and eating can either promote or restrict consumption of nutritious, high-quality and safe foods. Women's empowerment influences their own nutrition and impacts child nutritional status through several pathways: relationship between food and non-food expenditures, caring capacity and practices, and women's energy expenditure. Poor health among women leads to lower productivity, low birth weight and higher maternal mortality. If women are healthier, they can be more productive.⁴⁰
14. Taking an integrated approach also includes addressing environmental health concerns such as water, hygiene and sanitation. Many nutrition-related activities can be incorporated into projects, such as the promotion of technologies designed to reduce women's time spent on work and address labour constraints in food processing, thereby minimizing food waste and improving food safety.
15. Intersection with environment and climate change. Food systems capable of achieving good nutritional outcomes are intricately linked to environment and climate change. Value chains can contribute to improved nutrition and dietary diversity when the crops chosen for production or the techniques used for processing enhance nutritional value.⁴¹ In developing value chains for nutrition, attention can also be paid to their environmental impact. For example, having a diversity of crop varieties can strengthen household resilience to weather shocks and support food security. When implementing projects that introduce crops with high nutritional value, their need for water or energy must be assessed to minimize environmental degradation or increase food waste.

D. Youth

16. The situation of youth requires targeted attention. According to the IFAD Rural Youth Action Plan 2019-2021, 88 per cent of the world's 1.2 billion young people live in rural areas. In Africa, the youth population continues to increase; by 2050, it will have nearly twice the young population of most of Asia. These facts make it dramatically clear that it is crucial to address young men's and women's roles in agriculture and to make farming attractive either as a career, as a source of well-paid employment or as a successful path for self-employment. Doing so will require overcoming the many challenges faced by young people who are often landless, relatively unskilled or uneducated, and lack funds. In the context of projects, some of these constraints can be reduced by working in partnership with the private sector and academia.
17. Intersection with gender and nutrition. Approaches to transforming rural productive processes need to acknowledge the intersection of gender and age constraints that shape youth endowments, and creatively reduce barriers to accessing land, finance and skills. Although youth are often treated as a homogeneous category, young men and young women may need very different types of support depending on the country and the subsector, level of education, civil status and mobility. Specific constraints can be addressed by working with agricultural researchers to ensure that their research on participatory crop and livestock breeding includes the needs of young men and women. This could take the form of identifying communal plots for collective production, providing training

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Hawkes, C. and M. Ruel. 2011. [Value chains for nutrition. "Leveraging Agriculture for Improving Nutrition and Health,"](#) Conference Brief #4. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.

to strengthen agribusiness skills and ensuring that the dissemination of new technologies intentionally targets all household members. Working with young people on nutrition education can achieve success in changing attitudes and behaviours not only about food choice and preparation, but also about the division of labour related to responsibilities around these behaviours.

18. Intersection with environment and climate change. An emerging area for investment to support youth is providing financing for sustainable agriculture and climate-related services or enterprises. For example, projects can help make land available to youth through associations and offer targeted training to spread knowledge on climate-resilient agricultural techniques for marketable crops; and provide venture capital for new agribusinesses that take advantage of shifting climatic zones to sell inputs for crops to be grown in new locations, or as discussed above, to provide equipment or advisory services. IFAD's Rural Enterprise Programme – Phase II in Ghana provided credit to women and youth, and while climate services were not a specific focus of that programme, the same type of credit mechanism could be used to support environment-related activities.⁴²

⁴² IFAD. Ghana. Rural Enterprises Programme – Phase II. Midterm review mission report.

Responsibilities for managing the integration of mainstreaming themes

1. In the environment and climate area, IFAD committed to ensure that at least 25 per cent of the IFAD11 programme of loans and grants are invested in climate-focused activities. This will be measured using the Multilateral Development Banks Methodologies for Tracking Adaptation and Mitigation Finance. As in other areas, the SECAP plays a key role in mainstreaming climate change considerations into investments as well as the environment and climate strategy and action plan. Results are tracked against the core environment and climate indicators shown in table 3.
2. The regional teams (portfolio advisers, regional economists, regional specialists and analysts), together with technical teams from the Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division (PMI) and the Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division (ECG), ensure that the division's programme of loans, grants and non-lending activities consider the mainstreaming themes and jointly ensure the achievement of these key IFAD11 commitments.
3. IFAD's project delivery teams (PDTs)⁴³ are responsible and accountable for designing operations achieving these intersecting objectives to the greatest extent possible. This is a process of horizontal integration, i.e. "a transformational approach using the synergies generated by interaction among the four themes [in IFAD's investment areas]. Transformation will require a strategic compact that builds on a coordinated, multisectoral set of interventions linking gender, nutrition, environment and climate and youth."⁴⁴ Teams will work together in conducting assessments and utilizing the results in project design to identify "win-win" programming options.
4. One such approach would invest in value chain projects that intentionally increase women and youth participation in the chain, choosing nutritious and diverse crops for home and market, and using climate-resilient technologies. If a proposed crop engages more men than women in production, the design team would suggest additional crops or value chain options to increase women's participation.
5. ECG brings together technical staff tasked with mainstreaming issues of environment and climate change, gender, nutrition and youth, and indigenous peoples to enhance opportunities for linkages and synergies in approaches.⁴⁵ Each PDT has at least one ECG technical officer to ensure that transformational approaches are incorporated in design and implementation. This member also ensures that knowledge generated during implementation is captured and informs future programmes to scale up successful approaches.
6. ECG is responsible for:
 - Ensuring incorporation of mainstreaming priority areas;
 - Sequencing activities in the workflows to ensure complementarity between mainstreaming priority areas;
 - Jointly prioritizing knowledge products;
 - Jointly developing integrated mainstreaming tools and training modules and events;
 - Ensuring quality of the SECAP process; and
 - Supporting policy engagement at the global, regional and country level.

⁴³ The PDT is usually composed of the country programme manager, a project technical lead, one technical expert from the Strategy and Knowledge Department, and a staff member from the Office of the General Counsel and the Financial Management Services Division.

⁴⁴ Mainstreaming of Climate, Gender, Nutrition and Youth (IFAD11/3/R.4, p. 17).

⁴⁵ IFAD. 2018. [Climate Action Report 2018](#).

7. At both headquarters and in regions, ECG and the PMI technical teams work with hub delivery teams who are responsible for planning and coordinating delivery of technical services. The regional technical staff engage in-country stakeholders from an early stage in the design process and throughout the entire project cycle. These stakeholders need to be sensitized to the importance of addressing the mainstreaming themes, to build ownership of the mainstreaming priority areas with the government and other actors who are important for project delivery. The ECG team supports country delivery at the hub/regional level and ensures harmonization across the mainstreaming areas. Their responsibilities include:
- Generating conceptual and operational understanding on integration of mainstreaming priority areas at the regional level and on sequencing of workflows;
 - Participating in annual hub planning processes and aggregation of technical needs from the regions, allocating regional-level tasks and guiding the headquarters team in assigning field-level technical tasks to enable adequate and timely responses;
 - Acting as first responders to regional and country technical needs on mainstreaming priority areas;
 - Delivering an integrated ECG divisional workplan, harmonizing such activities as the development of joint knowledge products, policy engagement, partnership-building, strengthening of implementation and supervision support;
 - Sharing knowledge and experience on mainstreaming priority areas within ECG and across IFAD, governments and partner institutions; and
 - Ensuring non-duplication of activities within and across mainstreaming priority areas.

Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

1. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)⁴⁶ was launched in 2012.⁴⁷ Findings based on the WEAI have encouraged national governments and donors to invest in interventions that empower women. However, the WEAI is a standardized indicator designed for use in population-based surveys and is not tailored to the needs of individual project interventions. The project level index – Pro-WEAI – is tailored to diagnose disempowerment through indicators relevant to specific, shorter-term projects to design appropriate strategies to address deficiencies and monitor project outcomes related to women's empowerment. Since Pro-WEAI is oriented towards measuring decision-making, it may need to be supplemented by other M&E tools and processes to identify changes in women's income or assets, including knowledge, as a result of the project.

Table 1
Domains of Pro-WEAI

<i>Domains</i>	<i>Domain weight</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Indicator weight</i>
Intrinsic agency (power from within)	1/4	Autonomy in income	1/12
		Self-efficacy	1/12
		Attitudes about domestic violence	1/12
Instrumental agency (power to)	1/2	Input in productive decisions	1/12
		Ownership of land and other assets	1/12
		Access to and decisions on credit	1/12
		Control over use of income	1/12
		Work balance	1/12
Collective agency (power with)	1/4	Visiting important locations	1/12
		Group membership	1/12
		Membership in influential groups	1/12
		Respect among household members	1/12

2. The core empowerment module of Pro-WEAI measures three domains of power: intrinsic agency (power from within), instrumental agency (power to), and collective agency (power with). Although these three types of power have always been part of the WEAI, in Pro-WEAI they are made more explicit, which strengthens the links between the different indicators collected and the conceptual theory behind them. Pro-WEAI does not measure outcomes, e.g. increases in land or animals owned or credit obtained; instead it measures women's ability to make decisions about those resources.

⁴⁶ International Food Policy Research Institute, [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index \(WEAI\)](#).

⁴⁷ The WEAI was developed by a partnership between the United States Government's Feed the Future initiative, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Food Policy Research Institute, and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative of Oxford University. WEAI is being used by more than 50 organizations in 40 countries to help researchers and policymakers identify and evaluate the types of strategies or projects that empower women.

Additional tools to measure rural household transformation

1. IFAD is already using various tools that help to measure the interplay of mainstreaming themes in rural households. Some additional potential tools are briefly described below.
2. The Sustainable Intensification Assessment Framework is a participatory approach developed by the USAID-funded Sustainable Intensification Innovation Lab (SIIL) led by Kansas State University. It engages stakeholders in a six-step process during the project design phase. It first engages stakeholders in developing objectives and hypotheses on the effects of an innovation. Indicators are then selected across the five domains of sustainability: productivity, economic, environmental, human (which includes food and nutrition security), and social (which includes gender relations in the household and the community as well as collective action). The next step is to identify trade-offs and synergies among these domains, revising the indicators as needed. Then, metrics are chosen for each indicator “based on the overall human and financial resources available and the expected importance of each indicator in each context” and in the final steps, the data is collected and analysed and presented visually in a radar chart.⁴⁸
3. The Rural Household Multi-Indicator Survey was developed by several of the centres belonging to the CGIAR centres and their partners to improve data collection from rural households and to “minimize the burden [of data collection] on the rural household, to maximize the reliability of responses, and to improve consistency between different studies.”⁴⁹ By capturing data on topics such as farm productivity, agricultural practices, nutrition, food security, gender equity, climate and poverty, the tool can help to measure results of change at the household level. The context-tailored surveys include indicators from other surveys including the Food Insecurity Experience Scale, the Household Dietary Diversity Score, the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale, food availability scale, and the Progress out of Poverty Index. It has been used in 27 countries thus far to measure the intersection of mainstreaming themes, e.g. comparing the different impacts of two common resilience strategies – commercialization and diversification – on the control over income of different women in the household across three different countries and different farm types.⁵⁰
4. The technique of PhotoVoice is a participatory research and evaluation method with three goals:
 - (i) To enable people to record and reflect their community’s strengths and concerns;
 - (ii) To promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs; and
 - (iii) To reach policymakers.
5. PhotoVoice allows stakeholders with different literacy levels to participate in needs assessments, monitoring and evaluations. The data collection uses photography and oral narratives about the photos, rather than interviews or surveys. Stakeholders use cameras to capture images in response to a question, documenting their own lives, allowing participants to maintain control over the data collection and interpretation of what their photos mean to them. Reviewing its implementation since the late 1990s, the technique has become known for its

⁴⁸ SIIL, 2019. [How to Use the Assessment Framework](#).

⁴⁹ See [here](#).

⁵⁰ K. Tavenner et al. 2019. “[Intensifying Inequality? Gendered Trends in Commercializing and Diversifying Smallholder Farming Systems in East Africa](#),” *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* (27 Feb).

ability to unobtrusively illuminate what is most important to the local population. Participants gain a way to make their voices public by displaying their photos in a community exhibition and explaining the significance of their photo to a broad audience that can involve community members as well as project staff and/or government officials. There have been many adaptations of this methodology in emergency, refugee and development conditions.⁵¹

6. The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique collects stories that reflect the impacts (both positive and negative) related to either specific interventions or more broad-based processes of social change such as those associated with emergencies. The MSC tool can be adapted to different contexts, types of projects and groups of stakeholders. MSC is a participatory, qualitative approach designed to identify key drivers for success and to clarify how such successes can be accelerated and sustained. Participants, whether in the community or among project staff or other stakeholders, share their stories and come to consensus on a single story that best illustrates the most significant change they have experienced. Facilitators can guide participants to focus on changes related to gender roles, responsibilities and relationships in the questions that they ask to orient the storytelling. MSC offers:
 - An understanding of significant changes in women's and men's lives over the course of a project or programme;
 - An understanding of social, political, and economic impacts on individuals, institutions and communities; and
 - An identification of key domains of change from the participants' perspectives as proxies for impact, when an impact evaluation is not possible or desired.
7. The approach uses field assistants to conduct a group discussion, typically among project beneficiaries but potentially among different types of stakeholders. Subgroups of four to six people are called together and asked to describe changes that have occurred to them (or people they know) as individuals; changes that have occurred in businesses or associations (such as marketing associations) that they have been part of or have supported; and changes that have occurred in communities. After sharing experiences, each subgroup makes a drawing of the story that illustrates the most significant change that occurred. Then, within the group, each pair has one person tell the story and another person writes it down, after which they are supposed to switch roles. The group discusses the stories and identifies the key topics of change illustrated by the stories. Typically, this qualitative approach can be combined with other qualitative or quantitative methods to create a unique and innovative evaluation design that bring rigor and cost-effectiveness to the work. MSC illuminates both what people think is important (attitudes) and what they are doing (practices and outcomes).⁵²

⁵¹ See, for example Green and Kloos (2009) on refugees in Northern Uganda; Walker and Early (2010) on NGO workers supporting orphans in Sierra Leone; Kercood and Morita-Mullaney (2015) on Burmese refugees' adaptation to the United States; and Mann et al. (2018) on the resilience of internally displaced people following the "Triple Disaster" of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear plant breakdown in Japan.

⁵² A facilitators' guide is available [here](#).

Glossary

Food security was defined at the World Food Summit in 1996 as existing when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The definition has since been expanded to include two additional dimensions of “use” and “stability” to acknowledge that even adequate food intake at one point in time may be subject to fluctuations, e.g. as a result of weather or economic shocks, leading to deteriorating nutritional status.

Environmental sustainability is central to IFAD’s third strategic objective (SO 3). It refers to the management, adaptation and integration of precautionary environmental principles and considerations into the decision-making processes of development interventions. The development outcome is the adoption of technologies, practices and policies that lead to the reduction of populations’ exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters (adapted from the Sustainable Development Goals target 1.5).⁵³

Empowerment refers to the process of increasing the opportunity of people to take control of their own lives. It is about people living according to their own values and being able to express preferences, make choices and influence – both individually and collectively – the decisions that affect their lives. Empowerment of women or men includes developing self-reliance, gaining skills or having their own skills and knowledge recognized, and increasing their power to make decisions and have their voices heard, and to negotiate and challenge societal norms and customs.

A gender transformative project actively seeks to transform gendered power dynamics by addressing social norms, practices, attitudes, beliefs and value systems that represent structural barriers to women’s and girls’ inclusion and empowerment. Such a project uses a gender-transformative approach, creating opportunities for individuals to actively challenge gender norms, promoting women’s social and political influence in communities, and addressing power inequities between people with different gender identities.

Household methodologies enable family members to work together to improve relationships and decision-making and achieve more equitable workloads. Their purpose is to strengthen the overall well-being of households and all their members.

Malnutrition is caused by inadequate, excessive or imbalanced intakes of carbohydrates, protein or fats (macronutrients) and vitamins and minerals (micronutrients). Malnutrition is currently characterized as a triple burden, with three forms that often coexist within the same country, household or individual. These three forms of malnutrition are: (i) undernutrition, inadequate levels of food intake and repeated infectious diseases; (ii) micronutrient deficiencies, especially those of public health importance such as iron, iodine, zinc and vitamin A; and (iii) overweight and obesity, resulting from an excess of certain food components such as fats and sugars relative to levels of activity.

Nutrition-sensitive interventions address the underlying and systemic causes of malnutrition, foetal and child nutrition and development – food security; adequate caregiving resources at the maternal, household and community levels; and access to health services and a safe and hygienic environment – and incorporate specific nutrition goals and actions.⁵⁴

⁵³ IFAD Strategy and Action Plan on Environment and Climate Change 2019-2025 (EB 2018/125/R.12).

⁵⁴ Scaling up Nutrition, 2015. [Nutrition in the Lancet](#).

Nutrition-specific interventions address the immediate determinants of fetal and child nutrition and development – through adequate food and nutrient intake, feeding, caregiving and parenting practices, and low burden of infectious diseases.⁵⁵

Resilience is the ability of people, households, communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

Sustainable agriculture is “the management and conservation of the natural resource base, and the orientation of technological and institutional change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. Such development... conserves land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, is environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable and socially acceptable.”⁵⁶

A youth-sensitive project generates long-term youth employment opportunities and/or entrepreneurship by addressing context-specific challenges and potentials of rural youth. This can be reached by various means, especially by providing a balanced mix of activities that support youth access to assets, skills and services.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ FAO, [Sustainable agriculture and rural development](#).