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## **IFAD Gender Action Plan 2026–2031**

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**Useful references:** Report of the Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD13) (monitorable action #9) ([GC 47/L.5](#))

**Action:** The Executive Board is invited to take note of the updated Gender Action Plan 2026–2031, which has been revised pursuant to the IFAD13 commitment.

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## Executive summary

1. The update of IFAD's Gender Action Plan (GAP) responds to a commitment in the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD13) (monitorable action #9), which calls for the development of new action plans on gender, youth and nutrition to strengthen IFAD's work in these areas.
2. The new GAP 2026–2031 comes at a pivotal time for global development. Rising geopolitical tensions, conflicts and climate shocks are slowing progress on global indicators for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). To address these challenges, it is essential to strengthen investments that integrate GEWE and deliver sustainable, high-quality results.
3. Advancing GEWE is key to reducing rural poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. Recognizing its importance in achieving sustainable rural development, IFAD has committed to strengthening efforts to integrate GEWE across its operations, including in IFAD13 priority areas: (i) engagement in fragile contexts; (ii) climate change and biodiversity; and (iii) engagement with the private sector.
4. Leveraging its unique mandate, the Fund is globally recognized as a champion of GEWE in rural and agricultural development. Since adopting its Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in 2012, IFAD has steadily strengthened its capacities and mechanisms to mainstream gender across all its areas of work. In 2019, it adopted an innovative approach for gender-transformative programming to address the root causes of inequalities and promote sustainable and long-lasting results at the project and country levels.
5. Building on the results and lessons from implementation of the GAP 2019–2025, the present GAP articulates a pragmatic and strategic response to address bottlenecks and ensure effective mainstreaming of GEWE in IFAD-supported operations. Differently from the previous GAP, it has a specific focus on:
  - **Systematically addressing GEWE** in all investments, with special attention to the priority areas of fragility, climate and non-sovereign operations;
  - **Strengthening local capacity** to implement effective and scalable GEWE approaches through improved guidance and support to implementing partners; and
  - **Enhancing the integration of GEWE with other mainstreaming themes** to create more coherent and efficient strategies for impact.
6. The GAP 2026–2031 is articulated around four action areas:
  - **Action area 1: Country programme delivery;**
  - **Action area 2: Capacity development and learning for results;**
  - **Action area 3: Corporate, human and financial resources and coordination mechanisms; and**
  - **Action area 4: Policy, partnerships and resource mobilization.**
7. The implementation of these action areas is expected to improve institutional and operational performance on gender mainstreaming. This will accelerate the achievement of the goal and objectives of IFAD's gender policy, deepening the impact of IFAD's work on GEWE and ultimately contributing to the realization of its mandate.

# IFAD Gender Action Plan 2026–2031

## I. Introduction and context

### A. Introduction

1. IFAD's work on Gender Equality Women's Empowerment (GEWE) is rooted in the Fund's unique mandate to tackle rural poverty, address food insecurity and malnutrition, and foster more sustainable and resilient livelihoods. The updated IFAD Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2026–2031 serves as a roadmap to strengthen IFAD's work in this area. It sets out the activities and outcomes that will improve gender mainstreaming across IFAD's operations and processes to deliver lasting results.
2. The GAP contributes to the objectives of the IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2012) and aligns with corporate strategies and action plans on targeting, nutrition, climate, Indigenous Peoples, disability inclusion, private sector engagement and fragility. It also contributes to countries' efforts to fulfil ambitions reflected in key global frameworks, including the 2030 targets for sustainable development.
3. The preparation of this GAP was informed by extensive internal consultations, the recommendations of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) 2024 thematic gender evaluation and a comprehensive assessment of achievements, challenges and lessons from implementing the GAP 2019–2025. An assessment of gender strategies and action plans implemented by partners and international financial institutions (IFIs) was also carried out to align IFAD's GAP with international standards and best practices.

### B. Global context: Challenges and opportunities

4. **Gender disparities remain a key driver of poverty and inequality, with major impacts on food security, nutrition and climate resilience.** Globally, women are overrepresented among poor and food-insecure people. Despite some progress, their labour force participation stands at 47 per cent compared to 73 per cent for men.<sup>1</sup> Gender inequalities also underpin specific forms of malnutrition, such as anaemia and obesity, which affect more women than men.<sup>2</sup>
5. **In rural areas, women make up about half of the agricultural labour force and play essential roles across food systems** as farmers, workers, processors, traders and consumers. Yet their contributions are often undervalued and underpaid. Gaps in policies and legal frameworks, together with restrictive norms, limit women's access to land, financing, services, education and technologies as well as their participation in institutions and decision-making. Women also carry a disproportionate share of unpaid care work – three times more than men.<sup>3</sup> In rural areas, limited services and labour-saving technologies make this burden even greater, constraining productivity and women's well-being.

<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum. 2022. [Global Gender Gap Report 2022](#).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). 2024. [Financing for Sustainable Development Report](#).

<sup>3</sup> World Economic Forum. 2023. [Global Gender Gap Report 2023](#).

6. **Systemic barriers continue to limit rural women's economic empowerment, limiting opportunities for them to improve their livelihoods and grow their businesses.** Poor rural women and girls – particularly those facing multiple forms of inequality, such as women with disabilities and Indigenous women – face the greatest challenges in producing and accessing healthy food.<sup>4,5</sup> Women-led enterprises tend to be smaller in scale, less productive and concentrated in lower-value sectors. Addressing these barriers can open opportunities for partnerships with the private sector to promote inclusive business models and supply chains that benefit rural women – strengthening the resilience of families and communities.
7. **Multiple crises – including conflicts, climate change and geopolitical tensions – are deepening these challenges.** Evidence shows that climate-induced shocks widen gender gaps in income and assets<sup>6</sup> while resource degradation, biodiversity loss and water scarcity increase women's workloads. Rural women and girls are also disproportionately affected by fragility and conflict, facing greater risk of violence and displacement. The World Bank estimates that by 2030, fragile and conflict-affected situations will be home to up to two thirds of the world's extreme poor and chronically food-insecure people – the majority of whom are women and girls.<sup>7</sup>
8. **According to UN Women, an estimated 30 per cent of women 15 years and older globally have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.<sup>8,9</sup> Violence against women often intensifies during crises, in the aftermath of climate disasters and in fragile contexts.** Harmful practices, including early marriage and adolescent pregnancy, limit opportunities for rural girls to access education and live healthy lives, while reinforcing cycles of poverty and malnutrition.<sup>10</sup>
9. **Tackling these complex challenges requires enhanced capacities, resources and strengthened cross-sector collaboration,** supported by tailored approaches and operational models that advance GEWE, ultimately contributing to broader development outcomes. These include the following:
  - **Strengthening food security and nutrition.** Evidence shows that women's access to resources and their economic empowerment are directly linked to improved household food security and better nutritional outcomes for women and children.<sup>11</sup> Women's empowerment can also break the inter-generational cycle of malnutrition.<sup>12</sup> When women have greater decision-making power and autonomous incomes, they are more likely to prioritize investments in household food security and nutrition. Food systems where women are empowered at all levels tend to be more sustainable and impactful. This is recognized in the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment,<sup>13</sup> which underscore these important links.

<sup>4</sup> Evidence indicates that women are less likely than men to be able to afford a nutritious diet since women often occupy lower-paying jobs than men, earn and control smaller incomes than men, have less autonomy over household financial decisions, or have no income at all (in: Njuki et al. 2021. *A Review of Evidence of GEWE and Food Systems*. International Food Policy Research Institute).

<sup>5</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2025. [Commit to Grow Equality: Investing in the future of women in agrifood systems – Progress report 2025](#). Rome.

<sup>6</sup> FAO. 2024. [The unjust climate – Measuring the impacts of climate change on rural poor, women and youth](#). Rome.

<sup>7</sup> International Development Association. 2024. *Fragility, Conflict, and Violence*.

<sup>8</sup> UN Women. 2024. [Facts and figures: Ending violence against women](#).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2024. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024 – Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms](#). Rome.

<sup>11</sup> UN Women. 2023. [The Climate-Care Nexus: Addressing the Linkages between Climate Change and Women's and Girls' Unpaid Care, Domestic, and Communal Work](#).

<sup>12</sup> Kassie, M., Fisher, M., Muricho, G., Diro, G. 2020. "Women's Empowerment Boosts the Gains in Dietary Diversity From Agricultural Technology Adoption in Rural Kenya," *Food Policy* (95).

<sup>13</sup> Committee on World Food Security. 2023. Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition.

- **Reducing poverty and driving rural economic growth.** Rural women's economic empowerment – through improved access to services and markets – increases household incomes and ensures more diversified livelihoods. When women have the skills, assets and decision-making power to engage in decent work and entrepreneurship, the benefits extend beyond their households. Their work stimulates local economies, creates jobs (often for other women) and fosters more inclusive and efficient value chains.<sup>14</sup> Evidence from IFAD-supported projects shows that closing gender gaps in productivity and wages can significantly raise agricultural output and rural GDP, reducing poverty and contributing to more resilient rural economies.
- **Fostering climate-resilient agriculture.** Research shows that when women have better access to resources, services and decision-making, they can learn, innovate and adapt in farming.<sup>15</sup> Their interest in climate-resilient technologies is often driven by their central role in agriculture and family food security and nutrition.<sup>16</sup> Lessons from IFAD's portfolio indicate that GEWE and agroecology are mutually reinforcing, with agroecology projects often more innovative and higher performing on GEWE than other interventions.<sup>17</sup>
- **Enhancing biodiversity and natural resource conservation.** Women's participation in local committees and user groups can improve ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation. As custodians of traditional knowledge on local resource management, women often use and value biodiversity differently from men.<sup>18</sup> Their leadership and agency are therefore essential for resource governance. Labour- and energy-saving solutions can also support women in balancing multiple roles while conserving natural resources and reducing carbon emissions.
- **Sustaining peace and building resilient communities.** IFAD targets women as a key entry point for engagement in fragile situations by promoting women's economic empowerment, their right to access and use of resources and services, and their decision-making power in natural resource management and community development.<sup>19</sup> Such interventions lead to long-term positive gains towards building peaceful and inclusive societies.

## II. Mainstreaming GEWE in IFAD – strategic orientation, key achievements and lessons

### A. Strategic orientation

- Investing in rural women and promoting gender equality is critical to accelerating IFAD's mission to reduce poverty and promote sustainable, resilient and efficient agrifood systems.
- IFAD's work on GEWE is guided by its gender policy, which has three interdependent strategic objectives (SOs):
  - **SO1: Promote economic empowerment to enable rural women and men to have equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from,**

<sup>14</sup> FAO. 2023. [The status of women in agrifood systems](#). Rome.

<sup>15</sup> Committee on World Food Security. 2023. Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition.

<sup>16</sup> Several articles argue that women adopt sustainable agricultural intensification (SAI) practices more frequently and sometimes more intensively than men (Guo et al. 2020; Musafiri et al. 2022; Fischer et al. 2021a; Mucheru-Muna et al. 2021). It also emerges that gendered adoption patterns of SAI practices overall are very context specific. (Meintzen, et al. 2023: Gender, Sustainable Intensification in the Context of Climate Change. International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre ([CIMMYT])).

<sup>17</sup> IFAD, 2021. *Stocktake Report on Agroecology in IFAD Operations: An Integrated Approach to Sustainable Food Systems*.

<sup>18</sup> Picot, L., Sisto, I. & Furst, M. 2023. [Engaging women and men equally in managing biodiversity. Guidelines to address gender equality in policies and projects related to biodiversity](#). Rome, FAO.

<sup>19</sup> IFAD. 2021. *Agroecological Logbooks and Women from the Semi-arid: Holding Hands and Strengthening Agroecology*.

**profitable economic activities** by leveraging inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems to promote women's improved access to resources, extension and financial services, digital and climate-smart technologies and ultimately, entrepreneurship and decent employment (including green jobs). Information and communications technologies for development (ICT4D) will be increasingly leveraged to improve women's access to technical support, services and markets. IFAD will also continue to focus on measures and activities to promote women and girls' land and resource rights.

- **SO2: Enable women and men to have equal voice and influence in rural institutions and organizations** by supporting women's participation and decision-making in a variety of rural organizations as well as in their communities and households, so that they can become change agents and leaders of rural development.
  - **SO3: Achieve a more equitable balance in workloads and in the sharing of economic and social benefits between women and men** by improving women's access to labour- and time-saving technologies, equipment and infrastructure; reducing and redistributing workload in household and care activities; and enhancing equitable access to income, benefits and healthy and nutritious diets.
12. In order to contribute to the three SOs more effectively, the GAP 2026–2031 will prioritize the following **strategic measures and programming principles**:
- **Targeting women and girls most at risk:** Establishing clear mechanisms to reach those living in poverty and facing multiple intersecting vulnerabilities (e.g. food insecurity, unemployment, disability, violence, displacement, fragile context) in line with the IFAD Poverty Targeting Policy.
  - **Addressing discriminatory norms.** Scaling up proven methodologies (e.g. Gender Action Learning System, community dialogues, "closing gender gaps" in farmers' organizations) to: address negative attitudes and practices; create safe and inclusive spaces where women and men, girls and boys can negotiate joint, locally driven and actionable visions for change; and strengthen women-led groups to claim rights, influence policies and engage the private sector.
  - **Strengthening partnerships.** Engaging governments, IFIs, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations (especially women's and Indigenous Peoples' organizations), farmers' organizations, and the private sector at the national and community levels to deliver context-sensitive and sustainable interventions.
  - **Ensuring women's health and safety.** Integrating measures to prevent gender-based violence, exploitation, hazardous work and climate risks, particularly in fragile contexts, including through environmental and social safeguards. Investing in the care economy and promoting equitable sharing of care work to improve health outcomes for women, families and communities.
  - **Designing context-specific solutions.** Tailoring interventions to diverse country contexts (upper- and lower-middle- and lower-income countries, private sector operations) and promoting South-South and Triangular Cooperation for peer learning and dissemination of effective, locally grounded approaches.

## **B. Key results and performance**

13. Since 2012, investments in GEWE have significantly increased through IFAD's programme of loans and grants (PoLG) as well as supplementary funds. IFAD has also implemented initiatives to build capacity and knowledge among national

counterparts and implementing partners to enable the achievement of national GEWE objectives.

14. Under the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD12), GEWE was mainstreamed in 100 per cent of the Fund's country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) and sovereign operations. IFAD also met the expected target, ensuring the design of 35 per cent of new projects validated as gender-transformative. However, after a decade of consistent improvement, performance on GEWE at completion fell slightly below target. This was largely a result of external factors including COVID-19 constraints and increased fragility in several countries. But operational challenges also contributed: these included limited implementing capacity of local partners and monitoring gaps, as identified in the 2024 thematic evaluation on GEWE undertaken by IOE.
15. The IOE thematic evaluation confirmed that the policy and its SOs remain relevant, aligned with global frameworks and coherent with IFAD's broader priorities. It found that between 2012 and 2024, IFAD established good practices and achieved tangible results in promoting the economic empowerment of women and men. Evidence shows that through a combination of grants and loan-funded interventions, the adoption of gender-transformative practices has driven impactful change, including in fragile contexts. IFAD has also contributed to building national capacities to scale up household methodologies in several African countries, and achieved notable results in promoting women's leadership and participation in farmers' organizations, and advancing their land and resource rights.
16. The evaluation found that while gender mainstreaming has improved, there is room to make it more systematic and effective to fully support the gender policy and its SOs. Strategies for women's economic empowerment (SO1) – including financial inclusion, income generation, grants and skills development – have raised women's incomes and improved household food security. However, progress is limited in addressing structural inequalities such as access to land and assets, and barriers to women's participation in value chains and decent employment. Contributions to SO2 and SO3 remain difficult to assess due to inadequate project-level monitoring tools and mechanisms.

## C. Key lessons

17. While the GAP 2019–2025 successfully introduced requirements for gender-transformative programming alongside existing gender mainstreaming measures, its implementation highlighted challenges related to capacity, resources, monitoring and accountability.
18. Key lessons on GAP implementation as well as findings from the IOE thematic evaluation indicated that:
  - **Strong local capacities and government commitment along with well-designed gender strategies, action plans and budgets, yield better GEWE results.** Achieving sustainable GEWE outcomes requires integrated strategies that address multiple dimensions of women's and girls' empowerment. These should be advanced through interventions across the three gender policy SOs, with clear measures to reduce women's workloads and promote the redistribution of care work. Evidence also shows that integrating GEWE strategies with other mainstreaming themes such as youth, nutrition, and climate, and delivering them jointly, leads to more efficient and effective implementation.
  - **Robust monitoring frameworks are essential for promoting learning and ensuring accountability for GEWE results.** Most project results frameworks focus on gender-disaggregated outreach data instead of measuring progress against the three gender policy SOs. This limits reporting and learning on IFAD's GEWE outcomes and impact. The empowerment



indicator, introduced as a requirement for gender-transformative projects, showed promise but has been applied inconsistently due to capacity gaps in monitoring and evaluation among IFAD and project management teams.

- **Effective mainstreaming requires collective efforts at all levels.** Clarifying and updating the roles across the gender focal point network is helpful to reflect evolving priorities and support the delivery of this action plan.<sup>20</sup>

19. Building on these lessons and responding to recommendations from the IOE thematic evaluation, the following strategic directions have informed the development of the updated GAP:

- **Strengthen local capacity and foster greater understanding and ownership in achieving GEWE outcomes** by updating guidance materials, expanding capacity-development opportunities, and providing systematic, high-quality support to project management units (PMUs) and implementing partners.
- **Develop an effective monitoring and reporting system** that captures GEWE results against the three SOs of the gender policy and advances learning on GEWE.
- **Define clear roles and responsibilities for GEWE across divisions and departments**, and build awareness, skills and knowledge as needed.

### III. IFAD Gender Action Plan 2026–2031

#### A. Strategic alignment

20. The GAP 2026–2031 aligns with and contributes to the goal and objectives of the IFAD gender policy. It also aligns with the:

- Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2022)
- IFAD Poverty Targeting Policy (2023)
- Updated Approach to IFAD Engagement in Fragile Situations (2023)
- IFAD's Disability Inclusion Strategy (2022–2027)
- IFAD Nutrition Action Plan (2026–2031)
- IFAD Rural Youth Action Plan (2026–2031)
- Private Sector Operational Strategy (2025–2030)

21. The revised GAP articulates a pathway to improve mainstreaming of GEWE in IFAD's PoLG. It also ensures a consistent focus on:

- **Systematically addressing GEWE** in all investments, with special attention to fragility, climate and non-sovereign operations (NSOs);
- **Strengthening local capacity** to implement effective and scalable GEWE approaches through improved guidance and support to implementing partners; and
- **Enhancing the integration of GEWE with other mainstreaming themes** to create more coherent and efficient strategies for sustainable impact.

#### B. Theory of change

22. The present GAP provides a pragmatic and strategic response to the challenges hindering gender mainstreaming, with the goal of ensuring more effective and

<sup>20</sup> The UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) recommends that United Nations agencies develop clear accountability frameworks for GEWE.

efficient delivery of GEWE results in an increasingly complex development landscape.

23. Its theory of change (annex II) sets out the pathways to strengthen organizational processes and capacities, enabling IFAD to deliver on its GEWE commitments and contribute more effectively to the SOs of the gender policy. The GAP is structured around four interrelated **action areas** designed to revise, improve or update existing institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming.
24. **Activities** under the four action areas (described in the following sections) will generate concrete **outputs** focused on: (i) improved processes and coordination; (ii) consistent and practical guidelines and tools; (iii) tailored capacity-building and learning initiatives; (iv) a shared accountability framework; (v) innovative partnerships; and (vi) an enhanced monitoring framework to measure GEWE results. The implementation of the action areas (AAs) will be aligned with the strategic measures and **programming principles** mentioned in the previous section.
25. These outputs are expected to deliver four **outcomes**:
  - **AA1:** Improved integration, quality, performance and sustainability of GEWE interventions in IFAD operations.
  - **AA2:** Improved capacity to design and implement evidence-based GEWE interventions, and monitor outcomes and results.
  - **AA3:** IFAD's corporate, human and financial resources and coordination mechanisms support the achievement of the GEWE objectives.
  - **AA4:** IFAD and its partners catalyse investments in GEWE to scale up results.
26. Achieving these outcomes will improve the delivery of context-specific, impactful, sustainable and scalable GEWE interventions that address the root causes of gender inequalities and accelerate progress on the three gender policy SOs. This is expected to drive GEWE impact, reduce rural poverty, improve food security and strengthen resilience.
27. **The main risks** to the effective implementation of this theory of change include internal challenges such as limited capacity or resources, and external challenges like climate disasters, fragility, conflicts and socioeconomic shocks. To mitigate these risks, IFAD will strengthen early risk diagnostics and adaptive management during design, supervision, and midterm reviews, and build partnerships with actors willing to invest and innovate in GEWE, ensuring more sustainable and scalable operations.

## C. Action areas

28. The GAP is structured around four action areas, with specific and measurable outcomes, outputs, and activities. The matrix in annex I provides a detailed description, indicating clear roles, responsibilities and the expected timeframe for implementation.
 

**AA1: Country programme delivery**
29. This action area highlights actions to strengthen the processes, approaches and monitoring mechanisms that support the integration of GEWE considerations into operational design, implementation and monitoring. The focus is on promoting a more coherent and coordinated mainstreaming approach.
30. **AA1 outcome:** Improved integration, quality and performance of GEWE interventions in IFAD operations.

31. **Key activities:**

- **Revise the GEWE rating system (from design to completion) and the related requirements and core outcome indicators** to ensure they are more consistent, clear and actionable (activity 1.1/1.2). A simplified indicator and methodology for tracking GEWE results will also be developed to replace the current empowerment indicator (1.3).
- **Improve processes for mainstreaming GEWE** through GEWE expertise, including through an updated and validated social inclusion/GEWE consultant roster (1.4); and delivering dedicated GEWE training and technical assistance to PMUs, especially during early implementation (1.5). Mainstreaming coordination meetings will ensure the integration of nutrition, social inclusion (gender, youth, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities), environment and climate change considerations from the beginning of COSOP development (1.6). This will facilitate the integration of gender and other mainstreaming themes into the technical components of projects.
- **Assess the continued relevance and update IFAD's gender policy** as needed in line with recommendations from the IOE evaluation on gender and ensure that IFAD's guiding framework responds to current development challenges (1.7).

**AA2: Capacity development and learning for results**

32. This action area aims to build capacity among staff, consultants and implementing partners to design, deliver and monitor comprehensive and adapted GEWE interventions.

33. **AA2 outcome:** Improved capacity to design and implement evidence-based GEWE interventions and monitor outcomes and results.

34. **Key activities:**

- **Updating and consolidating operational manuals, guidelines and tools for GEWE programming**, including guidance on GEWE and gender-transformative approaches (such as household methodologies and the Gender Action Learning System). Guidance on monitoring and reporting on GEWE results and on GEWE policy engagement will include culturally appropriate approaches for engaging with Indigenous women, (2.1) tailored to specific country contexts and thematic priorities. New guidance and frameworks will include demand-driven technical support to PMUs and implementing partners for addressing GEWE in NSOs, private sector engagement and climate-related interventions, along with approaches for targeting vulnerable women and girls in fragile contexts, and strengthening their role in resilience-building (2.2). IFAD will also improve its 2019 mainstreaming framework to enhance the integration of gender, youth and nutrition-focused interventions (2.3).
- **Implementing regular capacity development and learning initiatives** at the regional level and targeting all relevant stakeholders involved in the design, delivery and monitoring of GEWE interventions, especially PMUs, implementing partners and private sector actors (2.4, 2.5, 2.6). These capacity development initiatives will be tailored to needs and delivered in a cost-effective manner. Exchange of lessons and evidence-based GEWE and gender-transformative approaches will be promoted by: launching a user-friendly digital knowledge hub and e-learning collection for social inclusion; and compiling resources, tools and evidence on gender, nutrition and youth (2.7). Thematic knowledge products and peer knowledge-sharing initiatives will be developed through South-South cooperation and in line with country priorities and needs (2.8).

### **AA3: Corporate, human and financial resources and coordination mechanisms**

35. This action area contributes to ensuring that IFAD is fit for purpose to deliver on its GEWE commitment.
36. **AA3 outcome:** IFAD's corporate, human and financial resources and coordination mechanisms support the achievement of GEWE objectives.
37. **Key activities:**
  - **Revamping the inter-divisional gender focal point network to reflect evolving roles and priorities** (3.1), and building awareness, capacity and knowledge as needed. This reflects a key recommendation from the IOE thematic evaluation to strengthen the accountability framework for GEWE.
  - **Designing and delivering demand-driven corporate gender training** informed by capacity needs assessments and gender awareness surveys (3.2 and 3.5), and developing a learning module on gender-responsive leadership for senior managers (3.3).

### **AA4: Policy, partnerships and resource mobilization**

38. This action area focuses on leveraging opportunities for policy engagement, partnership development and resource mobilization to support GEWE integration in IFAD's PoLG to complement lending operations and scale up results.
39. **AA4 outcome:** IFAD and its partners catalyse investments on GEWE and scale up results.
40. **Key activities:**
  - **Engage in policy processes linked to GEWE and IFAD's mandate** at all levels (4.1) by ensuring that lessons and results on GEWE are systematically captured (4.2) and that the social and economic return on investments in GEWE is assessed and documented for evidence-based policy engagement (4.3). Experience shows that IFAD can play a significant role in influencing global discourse and building strategic alliances that can create enabling conditions for scaled up local, regional and national efforts on GEWE.
  - **Foster partnerships and joint initiatives** with Rome-based agencies (RBAs) (4.4) and new actors including IFIs, peacebuilding organizations, private sector actors, philanthropic organizations, farmers' organizations and women's civil society organizations (4.5) to catalyse and diversify investment sources, and enhance the scale and reach of GEWE interventions.

## **D. Implementation of the GAP 2026–2031**

41. Implementation of the GAP 2026–2031 requires commitment and collaboration among many teams across IFAD. The Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division (ECG) will coordinate its delivery, monitoring and reporting.
42. Implementation will follow an adaptive approach, guided by regular progress assessments and responding to emerging opportunities, challenges and learning opportunities, with updates to the GAP made as necessary. Implementation progress will be monitored through internal management systems. Management will report on progress highlights against relevant replenishment commitments and targets through the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE).
43. The GAP 2026–2031 is not expected to involve notable additional costs as a result of more streamlined delivery modalities, and will largely be funded by IFAD administrative budgets approved from year to year. As outlined in action area 4, efforts to mobilize additional resources will be pursued as needed (for example through IFAD's grants programme) and when partnership or supplementary funding opportunities arise.

## IFAD Gender Action Plan 2026–2031

<b>IFAD GOAL:</b> Rural women and men overcome poverty and achieve food security through resilient and remunerative livelihoods.			
<b>GENDER POLICY GOAL:</b> To empower rural women and achieve greater equality in rural households and communities.			
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (GENDER POLICY):</b>			
<b>SO1:</b> Promote economic empowerment to enable rural women and men to have equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, profitable economic activities.			
<b>SO2:</b> Enable women and men to have equal voice and influence in rural institutions and organizations.			
<b>SO3:</b> Achieve a more equitable balance in workloads and in the sharing of economic and social benefits between women and men.			
<b>ACTION AREA 1: COUNTRY PROGRAMME DELIVERY</b>			
<b>OUTCOME:</b> Improved integration, quality, performance and sustainability of GEWE interventions in IFAD operations.			
ACTIVITY	OUTPUTS	ROLES	TENTATIVE TIMEFRAME
<b>Activity 1.1.</b> Revising the GEWE requirements and rating system (performance descriptors for supervision, project completion reports, and evaluations) to ensure clearer, consistent and actionable ratings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requirements and rating system are revised and made more actionable and consistent.</li> </ul>	ECG, ODE, DCO, IOE	By 2026
<b>Activity 1.2.</b> Standardizing procedures and approaches for assigning and reviewing GEWE ratings across regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rating assignment and review processes by regions are made more consistent.</li> </ul>	ECG, DCO	By 2026
<b>Activity 1.3.</b> Improving the COI framework for GEWE and developing a simplified indicator and methodology for measuring GEWE outcomes and results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The COI framework is revised and a simplified indicator and methodology for measuring GEWE outcomes and results is developed and rolled out.</li> </ul>	ODE, ECG	Newly approved gender-transformative projects will include the new indicator
<b>Activity 1.4.</b> Ensuring more systematic (and integrated) quality GEWE support at project formulation, design, start-up, supervision and completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operations include active GEWE/social inclusion expertise across all stages of the programme cycle.</li> <li>Increased use of ECG-validated GEWE/social inclusion consultant roster among IFAD country offices and projects.</li> </ul>	ECG, PMI, ODE, DCO	Regular activity
<b>Activity 1.5.</b> Delivering technical training on GEWE (and integrated mainstreaming themes) to PMUs (within the first two years of implementation as part of regular missions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PMUs are trained on GEWE during the first two years of implementation as part of regular missions.</li> </ul>	ECG	Regular activity
<b>Activity 1.6.</b> Establish integrated mainstreaming coordination meetings to ensure coherent integration of nutrition, social inclusion (gender, youth, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities), and environment and climate change considerations from the outset of COSOP development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination meetings (ECG) are streamlined in the system.</li> <li>Mainstreaming themes are better integrated into projects' theories of change.</li> </ul>	ECG, PMI	2026
<b>Activity 1.7.</b> Assessing the continued relevance and updating (as needed) the IFAD Policy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IFAD's gender policy is reviewed and updated.</li> </ul>	ECG, DCO	By 2029
<b>ACTION AREA 2: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING FOR RESULTS</b>			
<b>OUTCOME:</b> Improved capacity to design and implement evidence-based GEWE interventions and monitor outcomes and results.			
ACTIVITY	OUTPUTS	ROLES	TENTATIVE TIMEFRAME
<b>Activity 2.1.</b> Updating guidelines, tools and operational manuals for GEWE programming (including tools for PMUs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GEWE guidelines and operational manuals updated.</li> </ul>	ECG, ODE, DCO	By 2027

<b>Activity 2.2.</b> Developing specific tools and guidelines for tailored GEWE approaches in fragile situations, climate interventions, private-sector engagement and NSOs and provide demand-driven technical assistance to PMUs and implementing partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User-friendly tools and guidelines for tailored GEWE approaches in fragile contexts, climate interventions, private sector engagement and NSOs are developed and rolled out.</li> </ul>	ECG, DCO	By 2027
<b>Activity 2.3.</b> Developing a framework to design and deliver joint and integrated mainstreaming interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A tool for integrating mainstreaming pathways and approaches is developed and rolled out.</li> </ul>	ECG	By 2027
<b>Activity 2.4.</b> Develop and deliver a regional training programme on integrated social inclusion, covering targeting, nutrition, gender and youth-sensitive approaches for IFAD staff and consultants, PMUs, private sector and implementing partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least one training per region is delivered every year.</li> </ul>	ECG, DCO	On an annual basis
<b>Activity 2.5.</b> Developing and delivering training on monitoring and measuring GEWE outcomes and results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A training module on GEWE and M&amp;E is developed and delivered to the Department for Country Operations (DCO) and the M&amp;E and gender teams.</li> </ul>	ODE, ECG	On an annual basis
<b>Activity 2.6.</b> Training for GEWE/social inclusion consultants included in a unified ECG roster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training for GEWE/social inclusion consultants included in the roster is delivered at least every two years.</li> </ul>	ECG, DCO	Every 2 years
<b>Activity 2.7.</b> Developing and maintaining an integrated digital knowledge hub and e-learning collection for social inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A digital GEWE/youth/nutrition knowledge hub is developed, promoted and regularly updated.</li> <li>The digital hub is regularly used by projects.</li> </ul>	ECG	By 2026
<b>Activity 2.8.</b> Developing learning products and initiatives (e.g. peer exchange, Operations Academy training, online workshops, learning route) to disseminate evidence-based GEWE approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two to three learning products and events each year are organized jointly by ECG and other divisions.</li> </ul>	ECG, PMI, DCO	Regular activity
<b>ACTION AREA 3: CORPORATE HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS</b>			
<b>OUTCOME:</b> IFAD's corporate, human and financial resources and coordination mechanisms support the achievement of GEWE objectives.			
ACTIVITY	TARGET	ROLES	TENTATIVE TIMEFRAME
<b>Activity 3.1.</b> Revamping the inter-divisional gender focal point network to reflect evolving roles and priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms of reference for gender focal points are updated as needed.</li> <li>New gender focal points are appointed to vacant positions and trained.</li> </ul>	ECG, DCO	By 2027
<b>Activity 3.2.</b> Undertaking a capacity needs assessment and gender awareness survey among IFAD staff (in alignment with requirements of UN-SWAP 3.0).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The two exercises are conducted.</li> <li>Results are used to inform any needed action.</li> </ul>	PCD, ECG	2028
<b>Activity 3.3.</b> Developing and delivering training for senior managers on gender-responsive leadership (in alignment with requirements of UN-SWAP 3.0).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior managers trained.</li> <li>Post-training assessment shows improved awareness of the key features of GEWE responsive leadership.</li> </ul>	PCD, ECG	By 2030
<b>Activity 3.4.</b> Reviewing and strengthening corporate training on GEWE for IFAD staff (e.g. sexual harassment; unconscious bias) based on the outcome of the survey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory training on GEWE is revised and delivered.</li> <li>Post-training assessment demonstrates improved understanding of GEWE principles.</li> </ul>	PCD, ECG, ETH	By 2028
<b>Activity 3.5.</b> Organizing and presenting the Gender Award.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gender Award is presented. A network of GEWE champions at the headquarters and regional levels is strengthened.</li> </ul>	ECG	At least 2 events are organized by 2031

ACTION AREA 4: POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION			
<b>OUTCOME:</b> IFAD and its partners catalyse investments on GEWE and scale up results.			
ACTIVITY	OUTPUT	ROLES	TENTATIVE TIMEFRAME
<b>Activity 4.1.</b> Actively engaging in key policy forums and events to share knowledge and build partnerships on GEWE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IFAD engages in at least three policy forums each year.</li> </ul>	ECG, COM	On an annual basis
<b>Activity 4.2.</b> Ensuring lessons and results on GEWE (integrating mainstreaming themes) are used for corporate reporting, strategies and evidence-based policy engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key corporate and strategic documents include gender-disaggregated results and lessons from IFAD's operations.</li> </ul>	ECG, DCO, ODE	Regular activity
<b>Activity 4.3.</b> Developing an approach to assess social and economic returns on investments in GEWE, to be used for advocacy, policy engagement and project design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The approach is developed and applied.</li> <li>The assessment is used for advocacy and policy engagement at different levels and at project design.</li> </ul>	ECG, PMI	2028
<b>Activity 4.4.</b> Strengthening the focus of joint RBA GEWE initiatives (e.g. gender-based violence, private sector, fragility).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint RBA initiatives cover new areas of GEWE work.</li> </ul>	ECG, GPR	By 2030
<b>Activity 4.5.</b> Establishing partnerships with new actors (e.g. IFIs, private sector actors, philanthropic organizations, peacebuilding organizations and women's civil society organizations, including Indigenous women's organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 2 new joint programmes/initiatives are established to scale up results.</li> </ul>	GPR, ECG	By 2030

## Theory of change

