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تقييم عمل الصندوق في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية: المنظوران العالمي والإقليمي

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للاستعراض

الإجراء: لجنة التقييم مدعوة إلى استعراض تقييم عمل الصندوق في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية: المنظوران العالمي والإقليمي

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جدول المحتويات

شكر وتقدير

قاد هذا التقييم المؤسسي Kouessi Maximin KODJO، موظف التقييم الرئيسي في مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق، بدعم من Massiel Jiménez، محلل التقييم في مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق. وقد ساهم الاستشاريون الدوليون في مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق التالية أسماؤهم كأعضاء أساسيين في فريق التقييم: Christophe Adjin وJames Gasana وMadison Rose وMatteo Borzoni، بينما ساهمت Dorothy Lucks في تنقيح وصياغة مسودات التقارير.

وساهم الاستشاريون التالية أسماؤهم كمحللين للتقييم: Alice Formica وElsa Abebe Sima و Ephraim Musharavati Munyanyi وMickeyllange M. Migan Hagla وLaura Castillo وRati Shubladze. واستفادت دراسات الحالة القطرية من دعم الاستشاريين الوطنيين: أحمد أنور (ملديف)، وAilton Mandinga (سان تومي وبرينسيبي)، وAnna Abraham (غرينادا)، وGomer Enríquez وDeima Sánchez (بليز)، و Reteta Rimon Nikuata (كيريباس). وقدمت Cristina Spagnolo الدعم الإداري طوال عملية التقييم.

وقد استفادت مسودة التقرير من تعليقات استعراض الأقران التي قدمها الزملاء في مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق وهم: Genny Bonomi وOanh Nguyen وRaymond Mubayiwa وSteven Jonckheere، ومن استعراض خارجي قامت به Monica Wabuke. وقد قدم Indran A. Naidoo، مدير مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق، التوجيه الاستراتيجي طوال العملية، بدعم من Fabrizio Felloni، النائب السابق لمدير مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق (حتى أغسطس/آب 2024)، ومنى فتوح، نائبة مدير مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق (منذ مارس/آذار 2025).

ويود مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق أن يعرب عن عميق امتنانه لإدارة الصندوق، ولا سيما للشُعب الإقليمية والتقنية المعنية، لما قدمته من مساهمات. ونتقدم أيضا بالشكر الجزيل لأفرقة الصندوق القطرية، وأصحاب المصلحة الوطنيين الذين أُجريت مقابلات معهم، بمن فيهم موظفو المشروعات والشركاء في البلدان المشمولة بدراسة الحالة (بليز، وجزر القمر، وغرينادا، وكيريباس، وملديف، وسان تومي وبرينسيبي)، الذين لم يضنّوا بوقتهم وقدموا رؤى قيمة. وأخيرا، يعرب مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق عن امتنانه للمدخلات القيمة التي قدمها أصحاب المصلحة المحليون والمشاركون والمستفيدون من العمليات التي يدعمها الصندوق في البلدان الجزرية الصغيرة النامية التي شملها التقييم.

موجز تنفيذي

أولا- الخلفية

1- **مقدمة**. في عام 2024، أجرى مكتب التقييم المستقل في الصندوق تقييما لعمل الصندوق في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، شمل الفترة من 2015 إلى 2024. وأُجري التقييم وفقا لسياسة التقييم في الصندوق (2021) ودليل التقييم في الصندوق (2022).

2- **الأساس المنطقي**. حظيت التحديات التي تواجهها الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية باعتراف واسع النطاق في الأطر العالمية مثل إجراءات العمل المعجَّل للدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية (مسار ساموا) (2014) وخطة أنتيغوا وبربودا للبلدان الجزرية الصغيرة النامية (2024). وقد استحدث الصندوق نهجا مخصصا للدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية في عام 2014 ووضع استراتيجية للدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية للفترة 2022-2027 لتوجيه عمله فيها. وتعترف الاستراتيجية العالمية للصندوق بأن الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية تتطلب نُهُجا مصممة خصيصا ومحددة الأهداف، نظرا لما تواجهه من أوجه ضعف متعدّدة الأبعاد – اقتصادية وبيئية واجتماعية. ولذلك، يظل بناء القدرة على الصمود في جميع هذه الأبعاد أمرا بالغ الأهمية. ويُعدّ هذا التقييم ضروريا للمساءلة والتعلّم، لأنه يقيّم الكيفية التي ساهم من خلالها دعم الصندوق في التخفيف من أوجه الضعف، وتعزيز الأطر المؤسسية، وبناء القدرة على الصمود في المجتمعات المحلية الريفية في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية.

3- **سمات الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية**. تُعد الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية من بين أكثر البلدان ضعفا على مستوى العالم. فهي مجموعة متنوعة تتسم بصغر حجمها الجغرافي، وهشاشتها الإيكولوجية، وبعدها– وهي عوامل تؤدي مجتمعة إلى تفاقم ضعفها. وعلى الرغم من اختلافات الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، فإنها تشترك في خصائص هيكلية مثل محدودية الموارد الطبيعية، والاعتماد الاقتصادي على القطاعات الحساسة للمناخ مثل السياحة ومصايد الأسماك، ومحدودية النشاط الصناعي. وتواجه اقتصاداتها قيودا إضافية بسبب العزلة الجغرافية، ومحدودية وفورات الحجم، وزيادة الاعتماد على الواردات. ونتيجة لذلك، تواجه الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية أوجه ضعف معقدة ومتعددة الأبعاد. وتُضيف الهشاشة طبقة أخرى من التحديات، حيث تُصنَّف العديد من الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية على أنها هشة من الناحية المؤسسية. ويعد بناء القدرة على الصمود أمرا بالغ الاهمية لكي تتمكن الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية من مواجهة التحديات المعقدة والمتداخلة التي تواجهها والتغلب عليها.

4- **لمحة عامة عن الأوضاع الاجتماعية والاقتصادية**. في حين أن الدخل الوطني الإجمالي ابلفرد في بعض الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية مرتفع نسبيا، غالبا بفضل السياحة والتحويلات المالية، فإن اقتصاداتها لا تزال ضعيفة من الناحية الهيكلية وتعتمد اعتمادا كبيرا على التمويل الخارجي. وتتباين الظروف الاجتماعية والاقتصادية تباينا كبيرا بين الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية وداخلها، مع وجود تفاوتات ملحوظة في نصيب الفرد من الناتج المحلي الإجمالي ومعدلات الفقر ومؤشرات التنمية البشرية. ويؤدي استمرار المسائل المتعلقة ببطالة الشباب وعدم المساواة بين الجنسين وانعدام الأمن الغذائي والتدهور البيئي إلى تفاقم الضعف والهشاشة.

5- **هدف التقييم**. تمثل الهدف الرئيسي من هذا التقييم في استخلاص رؤى من استراتيجيات الصندوق وعملياته السابقة والجارية في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، وتقديم توصيات قابلة للتنفيذ لتحسين عمل الصندوق في هذه السياقات في المستقبل. وعلى وجه التحديد، تناول التقييم السؤال الشامل التالي: كيف وإلى أي مدى ساهم دعم الصندوق للدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية المتلقية خلال الفترة بين عامي 2015 و2024 في (1) التخفيف من تحديات

الضعف، ولا سيما في المناطق الريفية، (2) التمكين من زيادة القدرة على الصمود في النظم الاجتماعية والاقتصادية (بما في ذلك المؤسسية) والإيكولوجية؟

6- **النطاق**. شمل نطاق التقييم 30 عملية قروض ممولة من الصندوق (سواء كانت منجزة أو جارية) في 18 دولة جزرية صغيرة نامية متلقية في أقاليم آسيا والمحيط الهادي، وأفريقيا الشرقية والجنوبية، وأمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي، وأفريقيا الغربية والوسطى. وبلغت التكلفة الإجمالية لهذه العمليات 797.6 مليون دولار أمريكي، موَّل الصندوق منها 300.9 مليون دولار أمريكي (37.6 في المائة). وإضافة إلى ذلك، جرى أيضا تقييم الأنشطة الممولة بالمنح والأنشطة غير الإقراضية مثل إدارة المعرفة، وإقامة الشراكات، والمشاركة في السياسات.

7- **تصميم التقييم القائم على النظرية**. استند تصميم التقييم إلى النظرية. فقد أعاد فريق التقييم بناء نظرية للتغيير مستندة إلى الأهداف والنتائج الواردة في الوثائق المؤسسية للصندوق المتعلقة بعمله في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. وجرى إدماج مفهوم الضعف في الأبعاد الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبيئية في نظرية التغيير من أجل وضع إطار تحليلي شامل. وتفترض نظرية التغيير الأساسية أن الدعم الاستراتيجي والتشغيلي الذي يقدمه الصندوق للدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية المتلقية يساهم في تحقيق تحول ريفي طويل الأجل من خلال ما يلي: (1) نظم غذائية مستدامة ومراعية للتغذية وشاملة؛ (2) زيادة الدخل والفرص الاقتصادية الشاملة والمستدامة للأسر المعيشية الريفية؛ (3) تعزيز قدرة نظم الأسر المعيشية الريفية ونظم الإنتاج على الصمود واستدامتها. وهذه التغييرات الطويلة الأجل تحركها تدخلات في عدة مجالات مواضيعية تساهم في التخفيف من أوجه الضعف الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبيئية، مع تعزيز القدرة على الصمود في هذه الأبعاد. وبناء على ذلك، شكّل كل من الضعف الهيكلي المتعدد الأبعاد والقدرة المتعددة الأبعاد على الصمود منظورا تحليليا رئيسيا طوال عملية التقييم.

8- **المنهجية**. استُخدم نهج متعدد الأساليب، يجمع بين البيانات النوعية والكمية على حد سواء. وجُمعت الأدلة من خلال استعراض مكتبي شامل تناول 30 مشروعا، ومقابلات افتراضية مع موظفي الصندوق وأصحاب المصلحة في المشروعات، وست دراسات حالة أجريت داخل البلدان (بليز، وجزر القمر، وغرينادا، وكيريباس، ومليديف، وسان تومي وبرينسيبي). واستُكملت أيضا عملية جمع البيانات باستقصاء إلكتروني شمل أصحاب المصلحة. وأُستخدمت أدوات مدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي أثناء عمليات الاستعراض المكتبية لاستخراج البيانات ذات الصلة، ثم جرى تحليلها والتثبت منها من جانب محللي التقييم. واستندت الاستنتاجات إلى تثليث الأدلة المستمدة من وثائق المشروعات والمقابلات مع أصحاب المصلحة والإجابات على الاستقصاء ونتائج العمل الميداني.

ثانيا- النتائج الرئيسية

الملاءمة: تشير النتائج إلى أداء عام غير مرضٍ إلى حد ما.

9- **يتواءم نهج الصندوق لعام 2014 بشأن الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، واستراتيجيته اللاحقة بشأن الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية للفترة 2022-2027 استراتيجيا** مع أولويات الصندوق المؤسسية والأطر الدولية ذات الصلة (مثل مسار ساموا لعام 2014، وخطة أنتيغوا وبربودا للدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية لعام 2024) بما يعكس التزاما ببناء القدرة على الصمود في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. غير أن نهج عام 2014 افتقر إلى منظور شامل، إذ ركّز في المقام الأول على أوجه الضعف البيئية والاقتصادية. أما الاستراتيجية للفترة 2022-2027 فهي تولي أيضا اهتماما محدودا للنظم الإيكولوجية والموارد البحرية - وهو مجال بالغ الأهمية وحافل بالفرص في سياقات الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. وفي حين برزت القدرة على الصمود كهدف متكرر في برامج الفرص الاستراتيجية القطرية ومذكرات الاستراتيجيات القطرية، فإن الأبعاد الثلاثة للضعف – الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبيئية – لم تُدمج إلا بدرجة متوسطة وغالبا ما كان ذلك على نحو غير متسق.

10- **وكانت تصاميم المشروعات في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية ملائمة عموما لاحتياجات أصحاب الحيازات الصغيرة الريفيين والمجتمعات المحلية الريفية**، إذ عالجت مسائل سبل كسب العيش وقدّمت دعما في مجالات مثل التنمية الزراعية وبناء القدرة على الصمود في وجه الظواهر المناخية. ومع ذلك، وفي الوقت ذاته، فإن هذه التصاميم لم تعبر تماما عن الطابع المتعدد الأبعاد لأوجه الضعف في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. ونتيجة لذلك، كان شمول التدخلات الرامية إلى تعزيز القدرة على الصمود في الأجل الطويل في الجوانب الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والبيئية محدودا.

11- **وكانت نُهج الاستهداف في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية ملائمة ومتوائمة عموما مع سياسة الاستهداف في الصندوق**. فقد استخدمت الاستراتيجيات القطرية ووثائق المشروعات مزيجا من الأساليب الجغرافية، وأساليب الاستهداف الذاتي، والاستهداف المباشر، مما أتاح الوصول بفعالية إلى السكان الفقراء والضعفاء. وأظهر الصندوق أيضا مرونة جديرة بالاستحسان في الاستجابة للتحديات الناشئة، مثل جائحة كوفيد-19، من خلال توفير الدعم الحاسم للتخفيف من تفاقم أوجه الضعف في سياقات الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية.

12- **عولج ضعف القدرات المؤسسية، وهو أحد التحديات الأساسية في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، باعتباره أحد المخاطر التي يجب إدارتها** وليس باعتباره محورا مواضيعيا. ونادرا ما جرى إدماج بناء القدرات المؤسسية، وهو أمر ضروري لتعزيز القدرة على الصمود على المدى الطويل، كهدف استراتيجي أو تشغيلي مركزي. علاوة على ذلك، غالبا ما كانت ترتيبات تنفيذ المشروعات غير ملائمة للتحديات اللوجستية والجغرافية والمؤسسية الفريدة التي تميز الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية.

الاتساق: تشير النتائج إلى أداء مرضٍ إلى حد ما في مجال الاتساق وأداء غير مرضٍ إلى حد ما في الأنشطة غير الإقراضية.

13- **وقد ترسخ دور الصندوق المتميز في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، حيث يملأ فجوات جغرافية ومواضيعية حاسمة غالبا ما تغفل عنها الجهات الفاعلة الإنمائية الأخرى**. ويعمل الصندوق في مناطق نائية جغرافيا وصعبة لوجستيا، حيث غالبا ما يتردد الشركاء الآخرون في التدخل. ومن خلال التركيز على الأمن الغذائي المستدام، والقدرة على الصمود في وجه الظواهر المناخية، وتحسين سبل العيش الاقتصادية الشاملة لأصحاب الحيازات الصغيرة، تناولت استراتيجيات الصندوق وبرامجه في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية الأولويات الإقليمية واستكملت المبادرات الإقليمية الأوسع نطاقا في هذه الدول.

14- **وأظهرت العمليات الممولة من الصندوق في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية انخفاضا في مستوى الاتساق الداخلي في نُهجها تجاه الأبعاد المتعددة للقدرة على الصمود**. وفي حين أظهرت استراتيجيات القدرة على الصمود في وجه الظواهر المناخية اتساقا بين المناطق، مع أهداف ومنهجيات متشابهة، ركّزت جهود تعزيز القدرة الاقتصادية على تنمية سلاسل القيمة، وريادة الأعمال، وتنويع الدخل. ومع ذلك، اتسمت الجهود المبذولة لإقامة الشراكات مع الجهات الفاعلة في القطاع الخاص بالتفاوت، مما حدّ من وصول أصحاب الحيازات الصغيرة إلى أسواق أوسع. ولم تُعمَّم جوانب الاقتصاد الأزرق والنظم الإيكولوجية البحرية على نحو كاف في استراتيجيات القدرة على الصمود الأوسع نطاقا.

15- **وأظهر بناء القدرات المؤسسية إدماجا محدودا للدروس المستفادة من التدخلات السابقة في تصاميم المشروعات الجديدة**، على النقيض من مجالات مثل إدماج المنظور الجنساني، والممارسات الذكية مناخيا، وتنمية سلاسل القيمة، حيث جرى إدماج التعلّم بفعالية أكبر. وكانت مبادرات الصندوق المدعومة بالمنح في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية ذات صلة في دعم القدرة على الصمود البيئي والاقتصادي، ولكنها لم تُعالج بشكل كافٍ أوجه الضعف الاجتماعية أو بناء القدرات المؤسسية.

16- ولم يكن هناك سوى **القليل من الأدلة على استخدام نظم إدارة المعرفة لتوجيه صياغة السياسات أو وضع الاستراتيجيات المتعلقة بالقدرة الريفية على الصمود في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية**. ويعزى ذلك في جانب منه إلى قصور نظم الرصد والتقييم في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية في الأقاليم الأربع، فضلا عن وجود فجوات في نشر النتائج الناجحة وذات الصلة ببناء القدرة على الصمود خارج نطاق المشروعات الفردية. وكان التعلم المتبادل والتبادل بين الأقران في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية نادرا جدا.

17- **وفي حين أن الشراكات الاستراتيجية للصندوق مهمة للاستفادة من جهود بناء القدرة على الصمود في المناطق الريفية**، فإن معظم المبادرات مع الشركاء الدوليين، بما في ذلك وكالات الأمم المتحدة والهيئات الإقليمية، لم تبدأ إلا في العامين الماضيين. ولا تزال الشراكات مع الجهات الفاعلة في القطاع الخاص محدودة. **ووجدت أمثلة قليلة لحصائل متعلقة بالسياسات في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية المدعومة**، وكان معظمها نابعا من الجهود على مستوى المشروعات، ولا سيما في إقليم آسيا والمحيط الهادي.

الفعالية: بالنظر إلى أوجه الضعف الاقتصادي والبيئي وتلك المتعلقة بتغير المناخ، تشير النتائج إلى أداء مُرضٍ إلى حد ما بصورة عامة. (أما جوانب الضعف الاجتماعي فيجري تناولها في إطار الأثر والشمول.)

18- **تشير النتائج إلى إحراز تقدم متواضع في التخفيف من أوجه الضعف الاقتصادي في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، مما ساهم بدرجة متوسطة في تعزيز قدرة المستفيدين على الصمود الاقتصادي**. وساعدت الاستثمارات التي تهدف إلى زيادة الإنتاج الزراعي، والتي ركزت أساسا على المحاصيل بدلا من الثروة الحيوانية، في دفع عجلة الإنتاجية ودعمت إلى حد ما القدرة على الصمود الاقتصادي. وشملت الأنشطة استصلاح الأراضي، ونظم الري الصغيرة النطاق، وتدريب المزارعين، وتعزيز المدخلات والتقنيات الزراعية المحسّنة. ودعمت البنية التحتية للتخزين والتجهيز تنمية سلسلة القيمة، على الرغم من أن النتائج كانت متباينة بين الأقاليم. وبالمثل، تباينت الحصائل في مجال التنويع الاقتصادي. وفي حالات قليلة، ساعدت الاستثمارات في مجال النقل، مثل إعادة تأهيل الطرق الريفية وتوفير الشاحنات والقوارب، على الحد من البُعد وتحسين الوصول إلى الأسواق.

19- وتباينت النتائج من إقليم إلى آخر. ففي أفريقيا الغربية والوسطى، حسّنت الاستثمارات الرئيسية الوصول إلى الأسواق إلى حد كبير من خلال تحسين البنية التحتية وتنمية سلسلة القيمة. أما في أفريقيا الشرقية والجنوبية، فقد تحققت مكاسب من خلال الاستثمارات في النقل والتخزين وبناء القدرات وجمع مياه الأمطار؛ غير أن التدخلات في مجال مصايد الأسماك كانت أقل فعالية. وفي أمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي، قوضت الشراكات الضعيفة وقيود البنية التحتية التحسينات المتواضعة في الإنتاجية الزراعية وتنمية سلسلة القيمة. ورغم ما لوحظ من مشاركة من الجهات الفاعلة الصغيرة في القطاع الخاص، ظلت الشراكات مع الجهات الفاعلة الأكبر في القطاع الخاص محدودة. وفي آسيا والمحيط الهادي، ظل الوصول إلى الأسواق دون المستوى المستهدف بسبب بُعد الموقع. وتحسنت الإنتاجية من خلال استصلاح الأراضي ودعم المدخلات، ولكن جهود تنويع الدخل لم تكن موفقة إلى حد كبير.

20- **وفيما يتعلق بأوجه الضعف البيئي، تشير النتائج إلى إحراز تقدم جيد في تعزيز نهج الإنتاج المستدام، مما ساهم إلى حد ما في تحسين القدرة على الصمود البيئي**. وشملت الممارسات المستدامة نظم الري الصغيرة النطاق، والحراجة الزراعية، والمحاصيل القادرة على الصمود في وجه الجفاف، وتقنيات حفظ التربة والمياه، والزراعة العضوية، واستصلاح الأراضي الزراعية، وممارسات مصايد الأسماك المستدامة. ومع ذلك، لم يحدث إدماج كاف للنتائج المستخلصة من التحليلات البيئية في التنفيذ في العديد من تصاميم المشروعات، وكان نطاق الإجراءات محدودا.

21- وتكشف الرؤى الإقليمية عن تباينات. ففي آسيا والمحيط الهادي، أدت تقنيات الزراعة الذكية مناخيا، بما في ذلك المحاصيل القادرة على الصمود في وجه الجفاف ونظم الري المحسنة، إلى تعزيز القدرة على التكيف، رغم أن تطبيقها على المستوى الأوسع كان محدودا. وفي أمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي، حقّقت جهود تعزيز الزراعة العضوية، والحراجة الزراعية، والري الموفّر للمياه نتائج إيجابية، لا سيما في هايتي وكوبا وبليز وغيانا، في حين جرى تعزيز ممارسات الصيد المستدامة في غرينادا. وفي أفريقيا الغربية والوسطى، شهدت غينيا - بيساو نجاحا ملحوظا في مجال الري، واستصلاح الأراضي المنخفضة، وحماية ضفاف الأنهار، واستعادة أشجار المنغروف. وفي أفريقيا الشرقية والجنوبية، ساهمت المشروعات في جزر القمر وسيشيل في الإدارة المستدامة للموارد الطبيعية من خلال إعادة التحريج (لا سيما نظام السياج النباتي (البوكاج) المحسّن في جزر القمر)، وحفظ التربة والزراعة العضوية.

22- **وتشير النتائج أيضا إلى إحراز تقدم جيد في تعزيز الممارسات الذكية مناخيا، مما يعزز إلى حد ما التحسينات في في القدرة على الصمود في وجه الظواهر المناخية**. وتشمل هذه الممارسات نظم جمع مياه الأمطار، والمحاصيل القادرة على الصمود في الجفاف، والطاقة المتجددة، والزراعة المائية، وتقنيات الدفيئات. وكانت هذه النُّهج مناسبة تماما لزيادة القدرة على الصمود في وجه الظواهر المناخية على مستوى المجتمعات المحلية، على الرغم من أن نطاقها العام ظل محدودا. ولم يُدمج الحد من مخاطر الكوارث على نحو منهجي إلا في إقليم آسيا والمحيط الهادي، حيث لم تبدأ هذه الجهود إلا مؤخرا.

23- ويكشف التحليل الإقليمي عن مزيد من التفاصيل. ففي أفريقيا الغربية والوسطى، جرى بنجاح إدخال الري بالتنقيط وغيره من التكنولوجيات ذات الكفاءة في استخدام المياه. وفي حين أجرت غينيا - بيساو تقييمات لمخاطر المناخ، فقد افتقرت إلى استراتيجيات تكيف واضحة، وظل نطاق المشروعات القادرة على الصمود في وجه الظواهر المناخية محدودا. وأبلغت سان تومي وبرينسيبي عن نتائج محدودة في بحوث تكيف المحاصيل. وفي أفريقيا الشرقية والجنوبية، اعتمدت سيشيل بفعالية الزراعة المائية والبيوت الظلية، وجمعت جزر القمر بين إدارة مستجمعات المياه والمحاصيل القادرة على الصمود في وجه لجفاف، على الرغم من أن التغطية كانت محدودة. أما في أمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي، فاتسمت تقييمات المخاطر المناخية في كثير من الأحيان بالطابع الوصفي وكانت أقل فائدة لأغراض التخطيط. وفي غرينادا وبليز وغيانا، ساعدت تدخلات مثل جمع المياه ونظم المعلومات على التخفيف من حدة المخاطر، إلا أنّ مستوى الأخذ بالممارسات الذكية مناخيا ظل منخفضا في كوبا وبليز. وفي آسيا والمحيط الهادي، تباينت النتائج: فاستفادت بابوا غينيا الجديدة بفعالية من الدراسات المناخية، بينما لم تدمج كلٌّ من ساموا وجزر سليمان وتونغا تقييمات المخاطر المناخية على نحو كافٍ في عمليات التخطيط.

الأثر والاستدامة وتوسيع النطاق

الأثر: تشير نتائج التقييم إلى أداءٍ مرض عموما في المساهمة في تحقيق الآثار.

24- **تشير الأدلة إلى مساهمة المشروعات التي يدعمها الصندوق في زيادة دخل الأسر المعيشية وتحسين الأمن الغذائي في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية.** وفيما يخصّ الدخل، تفيد الأدلة المستمدة من بلدان من بينها سان تومي وبرينسيبي، وكابو فيردي، وجزر سليمان، وهايتي، وكوبا، وتونغا، وفيجي، وكيريباتي بأن الأسر المعيشية حققت دخلا أعلى بفضل زيادة الإنتاجية الزراعية (أساسا في المحاصيل)، وتوسيع إمكانية الوصول إلى الأسواق، أو تنويع مصادر الدخل. وقد ساهمت هذه التحسينات في زيادة القدرة على الصمود الاقتصادي في المجتمعات المحلية الريفية.

25- **وتحققت مكاسب في الأمن الغذائي نتيجة زيادة الإنتاج والتنويع الزراعي وارتفاع مستويات الدخل**، مع توافر أدلة قوية في سان تومي وبرينسيبي، وكابو فيردي، وجزر سليمان، وأدلة في غرينادا، وهايتي، وتونغا، وجزر

القمر. غير أنّ الحصائل المتعلقة بالتغذية كانت أكثر تفاوتا. ولوحظت استثناءات في سان تومي وبرينسيبي وجزر سليمان، حيث ساهمت المشروعات بدور كبير في تحسين تنوع الأنماط الغذائية. وفي العديد من الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، ساهم تعزيز زراعة الحدائق المنزلية في تحسين الأنماط الغذائية لدى الأسر المعيشية المستفيدة.

26- **وتشير الأدلة إلى تحقيق نتائج مُرضية في تعزيز رأس المال البشري والاجتماعي، فضلا عن وجود منظماتٍ شعبية فعّالة.** وساهمت استثمارات الصندوق في تعزيز تعاونيات المزارعين ومجموعات المنتجين والمنظمات المجتمعية في العديد من الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. وبرزت في هذا السياق سان تومي وبرينسيبي وتونغا: ففي الأولى تولت تعاونيات الكاكاو والبن أدوارا ومسؤوليات رئيسية؛ وفي الثانية جرى إضفاء الطابع المؤسسي على المنظمات الشعبية للمشاركة في التخطيط الإنمائي. ولوحظت أيضا حصائل اجتماعية إيجابية في كوبا وهايتي وغينيا - بيساو وسيشيل وفيجي وكيريباس. ودعمت المشروعات التدريب وتبادل المعرفة والتنمية التنظيمية، مما زاد من التماسك والمشاركة في المجتمعات المحلية. وفي حالات قليلة، كما هو الحال في غرينادا وجزر سليمان، أبرز تعزيز رأس المال الاجتماعي التحديات التي تواجه إنشاء الشبكات الاجتماعية وبناء الثقة.

27- **وظل التعزيز المؤسسي، لا سيما داخل الهياكل الحكومية، غير مكتمل.** وعلى الرغم من أن العديد من المشروعات تضمّن مكونات تهدف إلى بناء القدرات للجهات الفاعلة العامة، فإن الجهود غالبا ما اقتصرت على مستوى النواتج (مثل حلقات العمل والمساعدة التقنية) ولم تُترجم إلى إصلاحات مؤسسية مستدامة أو إلى تحسين في الحوكمة. وتؤكد هذه النتائج على الحاجة إلى مشاركة أعمق وأطول أجلا لتعزيز التغيير الهيكلي.

استدامة المنافع: تشير نتائج التقييم إلى أداء غير مرضٍ إلى حد ما بصورة عامة.

28- **كانت آفاق الاستدامة الاجتماعية متفاوتة في جميع الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية التي جرى تقييمها.** فقد عززت المشروعات المشاركة المجتمعية، ومكّنت المؤسسات المحلية، وشجعت على اتخاذ القرارات الشاملة، مما أسفر عن دعم قوي وشبكات للتعاون. وساهم تعزيز رأس المال الاجتماعي في استدامة النتائج بعد انتهاء تنفيذ المشروعات. ومع ذلك، ظلت الاستدامة الاجتماعية في معظم الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية هشة بسبب محدودية الملكية والضعف المالي الذي تعاني منه المنظمات المجتمعية. وشملت الاستثناءات البارزة فيجي، وسان تومي وبرينسيبي، وسيشيل، حيث طورت المنظمات روابط مستدامة مع مؤسسات عامة أو خاصة قوية. وفي غينيا-بيساو، ساعدت الملكية القوية من جانب المنظمات المجتمعية في جهود استصلاح الأراضي أيضا في دعم الاستدامة.

29- **وكانت الاستدامة الاقتصادية والمالية متواضعة عموما ومختلفة بين الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية.** وساعدت المشروعات التي عززت الوصول إلى الأسواق والأنشطة المدرة للدخل، كما هو الحال في غرينادا وكوبا وسان تومي وبرينسيبي وسيشيل وتونغا، الأسر المعيشية على بناء القدرة على الصمود الاقتصادي. ومع ذلك، كان الحفاظ على هذه المكاسب يشكل تحديا في سياقات الجزر المعزولة، حيث أدى ارتفاع تكاليف النقل ومحدودية حجم السوق وتعطل سلسلة الإمداد إلى الحد من الاستدامة. وكانت الشراكات القوية مع الجهات الفاعلة في القطاع الخاص، كما في حالتي سان تومي وبرينسيبي وسيشيل، حاسمة في الحفاظ على استدامة الحصائل. ومع ذلك، أدى ضعف الحوكمة، والاعتماد على المدخلات الخارجية، ومحدودية الفرص في الوصول إلى الائتمان وتقلبات السوق إلى الحيلولة دون تحقيق الاستدامة على نطاق أوسع.

30- **وكانت الاستدامة التقنية والمؤسسية منخفضة، ويعزى ذلك في جانب كبير منه إلى محدودية القدرات المالية والتقنية في المؤسسات الشريكة.** وكانت الأدلة الإيجابية قليلة جدا. ففي ملديف، كانت المعدات التقنية التي وفرها مشروع يدعمه الصندوق (2017-2019) لا تزال قيد الاستخدام وتُصان بصورة جيدة (كما لاحظ فريق التقييم). وفي تونغا، أفادت التقارير بأن البنية التحتية (مثل القاعات المجتمعية والنظم الزراعية) التي دعمها المشروع في

الفترة بين عامي 2014 و2017 كانت قادرة على الصمود في وجه الظواهر المناخية. وأظهرت فيجي التزاما قويا من الحكومة بالاستدامة المؤسسية، ولا سيما من جانب الوزارة المسؤولة عن الزراعة.

31- وعانت المؤسسات الحكومية الشريكة في معظم الحالات من عدم كفاية التمويل وارتفاع معدل دوران الموظفين وعدم كفاية الخبرة التقنية، مما حد من قدرتها على الحفاظ على استدامة التدخلات أو توسيع نطاقها. وفي ملديف، لم يكن المرفق الوطني للحجر الصحي، الذي جرى تجهيزه في إطار مشروع للصندوق، يعمل وقت إجراء التقييم بسبب ضعف القدرة المؤسسية وقيود الميزانية. وفي سان تومي وبرينسيبي، واجهت التعاونيات صعوبة في صيانة البنية التحتية بسبب قيود ارتفاع التكاليف ومحدودية الدعم الحكومي.

توسيع النطاق: تشير النتائج إلى أداء غير مرض إلى حد ما.

32- **لم ينجح توسيع النطاق إلا في حالات قليلة، وكان في الغالب مدفوعا بمشاركة قوية مع شركاء استراتيجيين**، بما في ذلك الحكومات، والمنظمات غير الحكومية، والجهات الفاعلة في القطاع الخاص، وهو ما يسّر تعبئة الموارد ومواءمة السياسات. وفي أفريقيا الغربية والوسطى، وسّع مشروع الزراعة التجارية لأصحاب الحيازات الصغيرة في سان تومي وبرينسيبي سلاسل قيمة الفلفل والكاكاو من خلال شراكة مع منظمة غير حكومية ممولة من الاتحاد الأوروبي. وفي أفريقيا الشرقية والجنوبية، توسع نموذج الزراعة المائية في إطار مشروع الابتكارات المحلية التنافسية لصالح الزراعة الصغيرة في سيشيل وبات يشمل سري لانكا والأرجنتين، وتجري مناقشات بشأن تكراره في كينيا وإثيوبيا ونيجيريا والكاميرون، مما يعكس إدماجا ناجحا في مبادرات القطاع الخاص. وفي أمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي، ساهم مشروع التنمية الريفية التعاونية في الإقليم الشرقي في كوبا في صياغة سياسة التعاونيات الوطنية وتلقى تمويلا حكوميا من أجل توسيع النطاق. وساهم أيضا المشروع التعاوني للثروة الحيوانية في البرمجة الوطنية.

33- وفي آسيا والمحيط الهادي، ساهمت الدروس المستفادة من مشروع تنمية مشاريع تربية الأحياء البحرية في ملديف في مبادرة البنك الدولي بشأن مصايد الأسماك المستدامة وفي البحوث الأكاديمية. وفي تونغا، أدت المرحلة الأولى من مشروع الابتكار الريفي إلى اعتماد رسمي لخطط التنمية المجتمعية في أطر السياسات الوطنية، وهو ما يُعد حصيلة مهمة على مستوى السياسات. غير أن توسيع النطاق واجه عقبات في كثير من الحالات بسبب ضعف تحديد الأولويات، وفجوات التنسيق، والقصور في نظم إدارة المعرفة. وكان أحد العوامل الرئيسية التي مكّنت من حدوث توسيع النطاق هو المشاركة الفعالة من جانب المجتمع المحلي في أنشطة المشروع.

الشمول

المساواة بين الجنسين وتمكين المرأة: تشير النتائج إلى أداء مرض إلى حد ما بصورة عامة.

34- **عمّم الصندوق من خلال الاستراتيجيات والعمليات التي دعمها في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية مواضيع ونُهجا متصلة بالمساواة بين الجنسين وتمكين المرأة بصورة كافية** من خلال الاستهداف الجنساني الصريح والأنشطة المصممة خصيصا للمرأة. ووضعت معظم المشروعات أهدافا محددة لمشاركة المرأة، تراوحت بين 10 و60 في المائة، باستثناء كابو فيردي وسيشيل وتونغا، حيث انصب التركيز بصورة أوسع على الأسر المعيشية الريفية أو المجتمعات المحلية. ووصلت المشروعات إلى ما مجموعه 321 207 امرأة، أي ما يمثل 97 في المائة من الهدف التراكمي. شملت النهج المتبعة أنشطة تدريبية في جميع الأقاليم، إلى جانب تدخلات مصممة خصيصا مثل: توفير رعاية الأطفال لتيسير مشاركة المرأة (على سبيل المثال غرينادا وكابو فيردي)؛ وتعزيز القيادة النسائية في المنظمات الشعبية (على سبيل المثال بليز وتونغا وغرينادا وكيريباس وكيريباس)؛ وتعزيز المجموعات النسائية (على سبيل المثال جزر القمر وغرينادا وغينيا - بيساو وغينيا بيساو). ومع ذلك، افتقرت تصاميم المشروعات إلى

تحليل واضح لدور السمات المحددة للدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، مثل العزلة وبُعد الموقع، في زيادة ضعف النساء الريفيات؛ ولم تجمع أيضا معلومات عن الحصائل المتعلقة بالنساء.

35- **وتشير الأدلة إلى أن النتائج كانت غير كافية فيما يتعلق بالتمكين الاقتصادي للمرأة وتخفيف عبء العمل عن كاهلها، في حين كانت النتائج متواضعة في زيادة تأثير المرأة في صنع القرار**. وساهمت المشروعات في أمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي وآسيا والمحيط الهادي في التمكين الاقتصادي للمرأة، مع تحقيق نجاحات ملحوظة في غرينادا وكوبا وكيريباس وتونغا وفيجي من خلال مبادرات مثل تجهيز زيت جوز الهند، ونسج الحصير، وتربية الخنازير وبيع المنتجات. غير أن المشروعات في بليز وهايتي وغيانا والجمهورية الدومينيكية وغيانا وهايتي لم تسفر عن أي نتائج في هذا المجال. وفي أفريقيا الغربية والوسطى (غينيا - بيساو وسان تومي وبرينسيبي وكابو فيردي)، ظلت الأدلة على التمكين الاقتصادي للمرأة محدودة. وفي جزر القمر (أفريقيا الشرقية والجنوبية)، أبلغت النساء المشاركات في إنتاج المحاصيل عن غلال أعلى. وأظهرت أربعة مشروعات (في جزر سليمان وتونغا وكيريباس وكوبا) نتائج ملموسة في تخفيف عبء العمل عن كاهل المرأة من خلال اعتماد تكنولوجيات وممارسات موفرة للعمالة. وقدم أكثر من ثلث مشروعات الحافظة أدلة على تنامي تأثير المرأة في صنع القرار، بما في ذلك: اضطلاع النساء بأدوار قيادية في لجان مستخدمي المياه في كيريباس وهايتي؛ والمشاركة في اتخاذ قرارات الحصاد الزراعي والتوزيع في تونغا؛ وتنفيذ نظام تعلم العمل الجنساني في ملديف.

التمكين الاقتصادي للشباب والشعوب الأصلية: تشير النتائج إلى أداء غير مرض إلى حد ما بصورة عامة.

36- من خلال معالجة أوجه الضعف الاقتصادية، سعت المشروعات في المقام الأول إلى الحد من بطالة الشباب وبناء المهارات. وأظهرت خمسة مشروعات في أمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي وآسيا والمحيط الهادي بعض الأدلة على التمكين الاقتصادي واستحداث فرص العمل للشباب، ولا سيما من خلال التدريب المهني ودعم العمل الحر؛ ومن الأمثلة على ذلك: التدريب المهني ودعم التوظيف في غرينادا؛ وإشراك الشباب في أنشطة التجفيف والتجهيز في كوبا؛ والتدريب على إنتاج الحرف اليدوية من خلال القاعات المجتمعية في تونغا؛ ودعم المزارعين الشباب وتشجيع العمل التعاوني في فيجي. وعلى الرغم من أن هذه الجهود وفرت مهارات وفرصا، فإن نطاقها العام وأثرها المستمر ظلا محدودين.

37- واستهدفت المشروعات الشعوب الأصلية حيثما وُجدت، ولا سيما في آسيا والمحيط الهادي وأمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي، ولكن المشروعات لم تشمل على نحو كاف نهجا ثقافية مصممة خصيصا. واقتصر إدراج مسائل متعلقة بالأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة على أحدث تصاميم المشروعات فقط.

الكفاءة والإشراف التشغيلي: تشير النتائج إلى أن الأداء كان غير مرض إلى حد ما بصورة عامة.

38- **لوحظت نتائج متباينة من حيث الكفاءة التشغيلية.** فقد أظهرت المشروعات في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية عموما سرعة أكبر في استهلال التنفيذ والصرف مقارنة بالمشروعات في غير الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. وبلغ متوسط المدة من الموافقة على المشروع حتى دخوله حيز النفاذ ما تراوح بين 3 و4 أشهر في مشروعات أفريقيا الشرقية والجنوبية وأفريقيا الغربية والوسطى وآسيا والمحيط الهادي، مقابل 8 أشهر للمشروعات في غير الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. وفي المقابل، استغرقت المشروعات في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية في أمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي نحو 10 أشهر، وهي مع ذلك أسرع من المتوسط الذي بلغ 14 شهرا للمشروعات في غير الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية في الإقليم. وفيما يتعلق بالصرف، تفوقت المشروعات في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية أيضا، إذ بلغ متوسط الفترة من دخول المشروع حيز النفاذ حتى صرف أو دفعة من الأموال 6 أشهر، مقابل 8.3 أشهر للمشروعات في غير الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. ومع ذلك، كان من المرجح أن

تحتاج المشروعات في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية إلى تمديد فترات تنفيذها، وتكبدت أيضا تكاليف إدارية مرتفعة، وهو ما يعبر عن التحديات الهيكلية المتمثلة في بُعد الموقع، وصغر النطاق، والتعقيدات اللوجستية.

39- **وشكلت عمليات التوريد تحديا خاصا** بسبب الصعوبات في تطبيق إجراءات التوريد التي يتبعها الصندوق، وأوجه القصور الإدارية، والبيروقراطية المفرطة، وفجوات القدرات التقنية، ومسائل الامتثال، والعدد المحدود من المورّدين المحليين، والتأخيرات في الشحن الدولي إلى الجزر النائية. وغالبا ما أخّرت هذه التحديات الأنشطة المقررة. وعانت أفرقة إدارة المشروعات في عدة دول جزرية صغيرة نامية من فجوات في القدرات التقنية وارتفاع معدل دوران الموظفين، مما أعاق التنفيذ الفعال. ومع ذلك، لوحظت استثناءات إيجابية في تونغا وبابوا غينيا الجديدة، حيث ساهمت المشاركة القوية لأصحاب المصلحة (خارج المؤسسات الحكومية)، والالتزام الحكومي القوي والعمل السريع في تحقيق مكاسب ملحوظة في الكفاءة التشغيلية.

40- **وأسفرت الاستثمارات في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية عن كفاءات اقتصادية جيدة لكن قيمتها مقابل المال كانت منخفضة**. وكانت القيمة الاقتصادية المضافة المقدرة للمشروعات، استنادا إلى معدل عائدها الداخلي، أعلى بكثير من عتبة التكلفة الرأسمالية البالغة 8 في المائة في الأقاليم الأربعة. ومع ذلك، لم يرقَ الوصول إلى المستفيدين إلى المستوى المستهدف في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية الثماني عشرة، حتى بعد عمليات تنقيح الأهداف أثناء التنفيذ. وقد أثر هذا النقص على التكلفة الإجمالية لكل أسرة معيشية مستفيدة، مما أدى في نهاية المطاف إلى خفض قيمة المشروعات مقابل المال. وسجلت آسيا والمحيط الهادي أعلى تكلفة فعلية لكل أسرة معيشية، تلتها أمريكا اللاتينية والكاريبي، ثم أفريقيا الغربية والوسطى، وأفريقيا الشرقية والجنوبية.

41- **وفيما يتعلق بالإشراف على العمليات، كانت النتائج متباينة**. ففي حين قدم الصندوق الدعم التشغيلي والتقني للتنفيذ، فإن فعاليته تضاءلت بسبب عدم تكييفه مع الاحتياجات الخاصة بالدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. وتفاوتت فعالية آليات الإشراف الوطنية، ولا سيما اللجان التوجيهية للمشروعات، وتوقف ذلك إلى حد كبير على درجة مشاركة أصحاب المصلحة وقدراتهم.

42- **وأظهر الصندوق قدرة قوية على تعبئة الموارد في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية**. وكانت ترتيبات التمويل المشترك متنوعة في الغالب ومتوائمة مع التمويل المقدم من الشركاء الإنمائيين الآخرين. وكانت المساهمات الحكومية قوية أيضا. ومع ذلك فإن سوء المواءمة بين جداول الصرف بين الصندوق وشركاء التمويل المشترك أدى في كثير من الأحيان إلى تأخيرات وأوجه قصور. وتجدر الإشارة إلى أن تعبئة موارد القطاع الخاص ظلت ضعيفة في جميع الأقاليم.

ثالثا- الاستنتاجات

43- لا يزال بناء القدرة على الصمود هدفا بالغ الأهمية في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، حيث تتسم أوجه الضعف بتعدد الأبعاد، وتشمل المجالات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبيئية (بما في ذلك تغير المناخ) - وفي بعض الحالات، تتفاقم بسبب الهشاشة. وفي هذا السياق، قُيّمت الاستراتيجيات والعمليات المدعومة من الصندوق بأنها ملائمة ومركزة، وأُعيد تأكيد دور الصندوق المميز في تعزيز زراعة أصحاب الحيازات الصغيرة الشاملة والقادرة على الصمود، ولا سيما من خلال استهداف الجزر المحرومة من الخدمات والنائية.

44- وكانت المواضيع المواضيعية التي جرى تناولها، مثل التمكين الاقتصادي، والوصول إلى البنية التحتية، ومدخلات الإنتاج والأسواق، والإدماج الاجتماعي، وإدارة الموارد الطبيعية، والممارسات القادرة على الصمود في وجه الظواهر المناخية، متوائمة مع الاحتياجات الملحة للسكان الريفيين في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. ومع ذلك،

افتقرت استراتيجيات الصندوق وعملياته إلى نهج شامل لمعالجة الطيف الكامل لأوجه الضعف في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية وتمكين القدرة على الصمود بطريقة متكاملة.

45- وكانت الأنشطة غير الإقراضية في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية ضعيفة بشكل عام في دعم القدرة على الصمود الريفي. ففي حين كانت هناك شراكات استراتيجية مع الحكومات وتمويل مشترك واضح، كان الأداء في إدارة المعرفة، وتنويع الشراكات، والمشاركة في السياسات محدودا. وعلاوة على ذلك، عوملت أوجه الضعف المؤسسية، المتكررة في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، باعتبارها مخاطر في المقام الأول بدلا من معالجتها ضمن المواضيع الاستراتيجية أو المواضيع التشغيلية الأساسية.

46- وقُيّمت مساهمات الحافظة في القدرة على الصمود الاقتصادي باعتبارها مرضية إلى حد ما. وشملت الإنجازات الإيجابية تعزيز مجموعات المزارعين، وعمليات تحسين البنية التحتية، وتعزيز الممارسات الزراعية المستدامة. غير أن التحديات السياقية المستمرة، مثل بُعد الموقع وعدم كفاية البنية التحتية، أعاقت التقدم، وظلت جهود تنويع مصادر الدخل محدودة، ولا سيّما خارج نطاق إنتاج المحاصيل.

47- وأظهرت التدخلات المتعلقة بالبيئة وتغير المناخ تقدما كبيرا وساهمت بدور معقول في القدرة على الصمود البيئي والصمود في الظواهر المناخية. وأدخلت المشروعات ممارسات مستدامة ووسعت نطاقها، بما في ذلك الري وإعادة التحريج والزراعة العضوية، وحققت نتائج إيجابية في جميع الأقاليم. وجرى أيضا نشر الممارسات الزراعية الذكية مناخيا. ومع ذلك، كان نطاق الدعم محدودا، وكان التركيز على النظم الإيكولوجية البحرية وإدارة مخاطر الكوارث محدودا للغاية.

48- وقُيّمت حصائل القدرة على الصمود الاجتماعي على أنها مرضية إلى حد ما. وأسفر بناء القدرات وتقوية المجموعات، ولا سيّما في آسيا والمحيط الهادي وأفريقيا الغربية والوسطى وأفريقيا الشرقية والجنوبية، عن نتائج إيجابية. وكشفت تدخلات التغذية عن آفاق واعدة، على الرغم من أن انعدام الأمن الغذائي لا يزال يمثل مصدر قلق كبير. وكانت المكاسب في مجال تمكين المرأة متواضعة، في حين كان الدعم للشباب والشعوب الأصلية محدودا أو لم يوثق بصورة كافية.

49- وأخيرا، أكدت النتائج أن فجوات القدرات التقنية وارتفاع معدل دوران الموظفين أثّرت سلبا على كفاءة المشروعات. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، تبين في كثير من الأحيان أن الإجراءات التشغيلية غير ملائمة للسياقات الفريدة للدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، مما يحد من الفعالية والإنجاز في الوقت المناسب.

رابعا- التوصيات

50- وفقا لنتائج التقييم، تُقترح التوصيات التالية لتعزيز مشاركة الصندوق وأثره في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية.

51- **التوصية 1: اعتماد نهج شامل ومتعدد الأبعاد في بناء القدرة على الصمود في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية.** ينبغي أن يواصل الصندوق دعمه الاستراتيجي لبناء القدرة على الصمود في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية من خلال إدماج نهج متعدد الأبعاد لتحليل الضعف بشكل صريح في تصاميم مذكرات الاستراتيجيات القطرية، وبرامج الفرص الاستراتيجية القطرية، والمشروعات. وينبغي أن يشمل هذا النهج الأبعاد الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبيئية والمؤسسية للضعف. ولتفعيل ذلك، ينبغي للصندوق أن يضع وينشر توجيهات بشأن إجراء تحليل محدد السياق باستخدام إطار تحليلي شامل للضعف. وينبغي أن يوجّه هذا الإطار كيفية الاستفادة من المدخلات المستمدة من وثائق المعلومات الأساسية لإجراءات التقدير الاجتماعي والبيئي والمناخي وتقييمات الهشاشة والتحليلات الأخرى ذات الصلة لتطوير تدخلات شاملة للقدرة على الصمود. وينبغي أن يتضمن أيضا نهجين مقترحين لمعالجة تحديات

القدرات المؤسسية في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، بالاعتماد على جميع أدوات الصندوق (القروض والمنح والمساعدة التقنية والأنشطة غير الإقراضية).

52- **التوصية 2: تعزيز الشراكات الاستراتيجية والتشغيلية والاستفادة منها لتحسين الأداء في سياقات الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية.** بالنظر إلى خصوصية الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية في كل إقليم من أقاليم الصندوق، ينبغي وضع أطر شراكة إقليمية خاصة بالدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية بما يتواءم مع الاستراتيجية المتعلقة بالدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية للفترة 2022–2027. وينبغي أن تحدد هذه الأطر مجالات التعاون المواضيعي ونقاط الدخول الاستراتيجية للعمل مع المنظمات الإقليمية ذات الصلة في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. وعلى المستوى القطري، ينبغي أن تضع أفرقة الصندوق القطرية خرائط شاملة للشركاء المحتملين، بما في ذلك الوكالات الحكومية، والقطاع الخاص، والمنظمات الشعبية ومنظمات المجتمع المدني، والجهات الفاعلة الدولية في مجال التنمية، لتحديد أكثرها قدرة على دعم جهود بناء القدرة على الصمود. وينبغي بعد ذلك إقامة شراكات مع أصحاب المصلحة المختارين، ولا سيّما بشأن المسائل الحاسمة مثل فجوات القدرات المؤسسية، وبُعد الموقع، ومصايد الأسماك المستدامة، وحماية النظام الإيكولوجي البحري، والتأهب للكوارث. وينبغي أن تكون استراتيجيات تعبئة الموارد جزءا لا يتجزأ من هذه الأطر، استنادا إلى النجاحات الحالية في التمويل المشترك.

53- **التوصية 3: تكييف النُهج التشغيلية مع سياقات الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية من أجل دعم أكثر فعالية لبناء القدرة على الصمود.** لتحسين الأداء والاستدامة، ينبغي أن يكيّف الصندوق نُهجه التشغيلية لتتلاءم على نحو أفضل مع سياقات الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. وتشمل المجالات التي تتطلب المزيد من التكييف مع السياقات ما يلي:

- الوصول إلى الأسواق: ينبغي أن يعالج الدعم المقدم إلى المزارعين أصحاب الحيازات الصغيرة الحواجز اللوجستية من خلال الاستثمارات في البنية التحتية المادية والابتكارات الرقمية.
- تنويع الدخل: ينبغي أن تكون الاستراتيجيات متوائمة مع الفرص الخاصة بالجزر مثل مصايد الأسماك، والدواجن، والزراعة العضوية، والسياحة الإيكولوجية، والأنشطة غير الزراعية.
- التغذية: ينبغي إدماج تعزيز حدائق الزراعة المنزلية بوضوح كمسار لتحسين تنوع الأنماط الغذائية في إطار نهج أوسع للنظم الغذائية.
- الشمول: ينبغي أن تركز الجهود على الدفع قدما بالمساواة بين الجنسين وتمكين المرأة، وتحقيق التمكين الاقتصادي للشباب من خلال تكييف طرائق الدعم. وينبغي تحسين نظم الإبلاغ لجمع بيانات على مستوى الحصائل في المجموعات الرئيسية المستهدفة، بما في ذلك النساء والشباب والشعوب الأصلية.

54- وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، ينبغي تعديل الإجراءات التشغيلية المختارة لمراعاة التحديات اللوجستية والمؤسسية الفريدة للدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية، وبالتالي زيادة كفاءة التنفيذ وفعاليته.

55- **التوصية 4. تحسين تركيز نظم إدارة المعرفة في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية المتلقية بما يتماشى مع مواضيع الضعف مقابل القدرة على الصمود والاستفادة من حصائل السياسات وتوسيع النطاق.** وينبغي أن توجه إدارة المعرفة توجيها استراتيجيا حول مواضيع الضعف مقابل القدرة على الصمود في الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية. وينبغي أن يعزز الصندوق التعلم بين الدول الجزرية الصغيرة النامية بين أصحاب المصلحة في المشروعات على المستوى الإقليمي، بما في ذلك موظفو المشروعات، والشركاء المنفذون، والمستفيدون.

56- ولدعم ذلك، ينبغي للصندوق أن يضمن حصول المشروعات والشركاء الحكوميين على المساعدة التقنية الكافية بشأن نظم إدارة المعرفة، بما في ذلك تصميم نظم الرصد والتقييم الموجهة نحو تحقيق النتائج التي تعزز التعلم

المستمر وتثري الحوار بشأن السياسات، والإدارة التكيفية، وتوسيع نطاق النهج الناجحة. وسيدعم أيضا تعزيز القدرات في مجال إدارة المعرفة اتخاذ القرارات المستندة إلى الأدلة وتحقيق استدامة حصائل القدرة على الصمود لأصحاب الحيازات الصغيرة الريفيين.

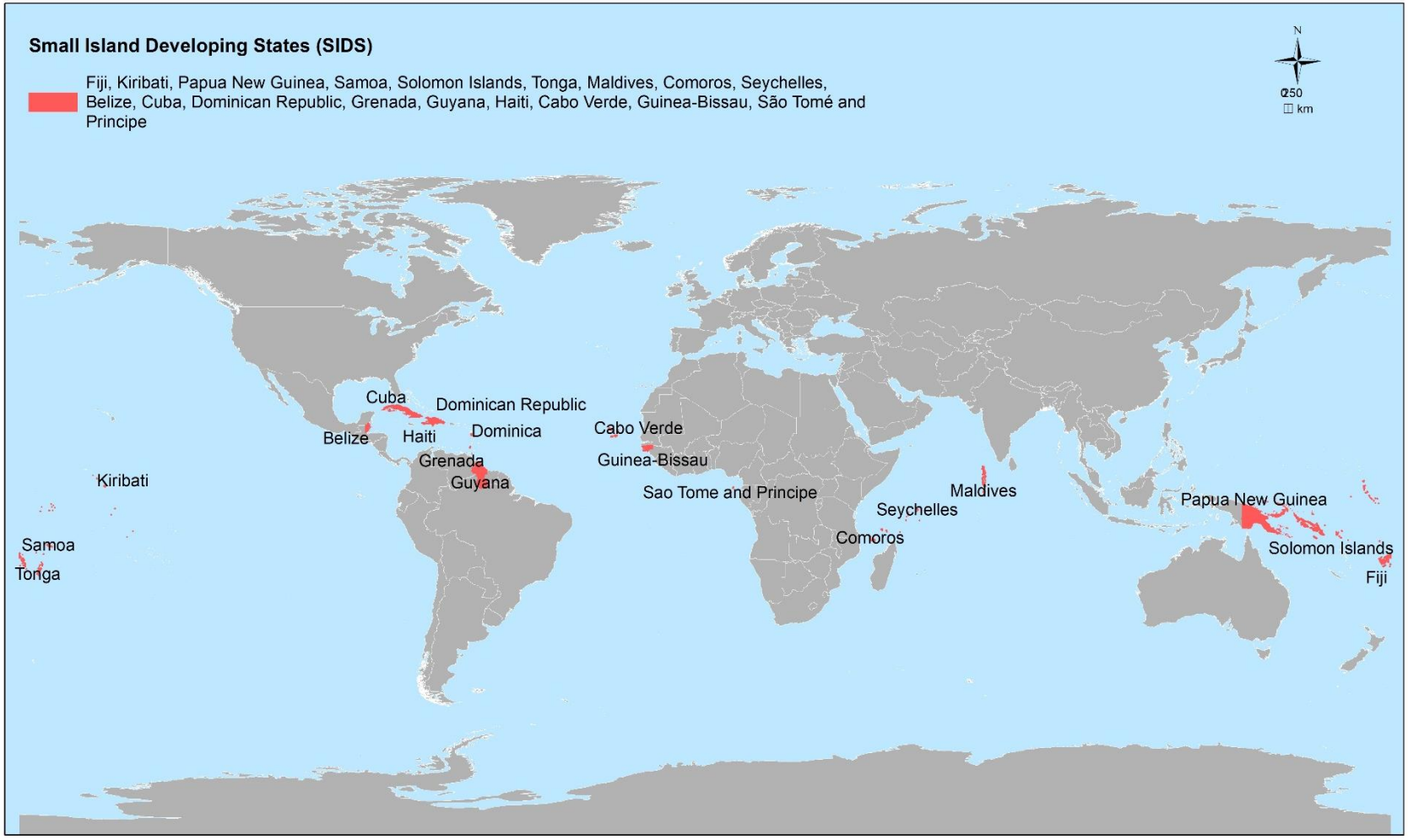
Main report

Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms

ABAS	Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS
AF	Adaptation Fund
APR	Asia and Pacific Region
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CD	Country Director
CDP	Community Development Plan
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Programme
CPO	Country programme Officer
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture
CSN	Country Strategy Note
DSF	Debt Sustainability Framework
ENRM	Environment and Natural Resources Management
ESA	East and Southern Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HA	Hectares
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Score
IA	Impact Assessment
I-BE	Inclusive Blue Economy Project
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IP	Indigenous People
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
JP RWEE	UN Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
KM	Knowledge management
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
PRODEGAN	East Central Region Livestock Cooperative Development Project (Cuba)
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MP	Micro-Projects
NRM	Natural Resources Management
PBAS	Performance-Based Allocation System
PCR	Project Completion Report
PCRV	Project Completion Report Validation
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPE	Project Performance Evaluation
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
PWD	People with disabilities
RWHS	Rain Water Harvesting Systems
SAMOA	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
VCO	Virgin coconut oil
WCA	West and Central Africa
WFP	World Food Programme
WUG	Water User Groups

Map of SIDS countries covered by the evaluation (period 2014-2024)



Les appellations employées et la présentation des données n'expriment aucune position particulière du FIDA quant au tracé des frontières ou limites ni aux autorités concernées.

FIDA *Source: FIDA* | 19-12-2024

List of SIDS projects covered by the evaluation

Country	Region	Project Acronym	Project Name
Fiji	APR	1. FAPP	Fiji Agricultural Partnerships Project
Kiribati	APR	2. OIFWP	Outer Islands Food and Water Project
Maldives	APR	3. MEDEP	Mariculture Enterprise Development Project
Maldives	APR	4. MAP	Maldives Agribusiness Programme
PNG	APR	5. MVF	Market for Village Farmers Project - Maket Bilong Vilis Fama
Samoa	APR	6. SAFPROM	Samoa Agriculture & Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project
Solomon Islands	APR	7. RDP II	Rural Development Programme - Phase II
Solomon Islands	APR	8. AIMN_SLB	Agricultural Investment for Markets and Nutrition - Solomon Islands
Tonga	APR	9. TRIP	Tonga Rural Innovation Project
Tonga	APR	10. TRIP II	Tonga Rural Innovation Project - Phase II
Comoros	ESA	11. PREFER	Family Farming Productivity and Resilience Support Project
Seychelles	ESA	12. CLISSA	Competitive Local Innovations for Small-scale Agriculture Project
Belize	LAC	13. Be- Resilient	Resilient Rural Belize Programme
Cuba	LAC	14. PRODECOR	Cooperative Rural Development Project in the Oriental Region
Cuba	LAC	15. PRODEGAN	Livestock Cooperatives Development Project in the Central-Eastern Region
Cuba	LAC	16. PRODECAFE	Agroforestry Cooperative Development Project
Dominican Republic	LAC	17. PRORURAL Inclusivo	Rural Families' Productive Inclusion and Resilience Project
Dominican Republic	LAC	18. PRORURAL Joven	Productive Inclusion and Resilience of Poor Rural Youth Project
Grenada	LAC	19. MAREP	Market Access and Rural Enterprise Development Programme

Country	Region	Project Acronym	Project Name
Grenada	LAC	20. SAEP	Climate Smart Agriculture and Rural Enterprise Programme
Guyana	LAC	21. Hinterland Project	Hinterland Environmentally Sustainable Agricultural Development Project
Haiti	LAC	22. PPI 3	Small Irrigation and Market Access Development Project in the Nippes and Goavienne Region
Haiti	LAC	23. PITAG	Agricultural and Agroforestry Technological Innovation Program
Haiti	LAC	24. I-BE	Inclusive Blue Economy Project
Haiti	LAC	25. PURRACO	Project for Strengthening the Resilience of Small Farmers to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic
Cabo Verde	WCA	26. POSER	Rural Socio-economic Opportunities Programme
Guinea-Bissau	WCA	27. PADES	Economic Development Project for the Southern Regions
Guinea-Bissau	WCA	28. REDE	Family Farming Diversification, Integrated Markets, Nutrition and Climate Resilience Project
São Tomé & Principe (São Tomé and Príncipe)	WCA	29. PAPAC	Smallholder Commercial Agriculture Project
São Tomé and Príncipe	WCA	30. COMPRAN	Commercialization, agricultural productivity, and nutrition project

Evaluation of IFAD's Engagement in Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Global and Regional Perspectives

I. Background

A. Introduction

1. **Rationale.** The IFAD Executive Board, at its 140th Session in December 2023, approved the results-based work programme of the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) for 2024, which included an evaluation of IFAD's engagement with Small Island Developing States (SIDS). In accordance with the IFAD Evaluation Policy (2021) and the IFAD Evaluation Manual (2022), IOE conducted the evaluation to assess IFAD's support to SIDS over a 10-year period, from 2015 to 2024, considering subregional, regional and global SIDS issues aligned with the Fund mandate.[1] It covered 30 loan-funded operations across 18 SIDS, for a total cost of US$797.6 million, with 37.6 per cent (US$300.9 million) financed by IFAD.

2. The IFAD's Approach in SIDS (2014) clarified IFAD's strategic approach to strengthen food security and promote sustainable smallholder agriculture in SIDS. IFAD acknowledged the importance of having a tailored approach for SIDS. IFAD recognized the specific challenges of SIDS in its Strategic Framework (2016-2025)[2] and the IFAD12 replenishment commitments contributed further to understanding the need to support reliance for SIDS.[3]

3. IFAD's Strategy for SIDS (2022) reflects the ambition to accelerate progress towards inclusive and sustainable rural transformation through engagement with SIDS. It echoes the unique vulnerabilities and development challenges in SIDS that result from their small size, remoteness, limited resource base, and exposure to climate and natural disasters.[4] The IFAD13 replenishment commitments put a priority focus on countries in fragile situation (including those facing challenges of vulnerability, e.g. SIDS) with the purpose of "boosting support for climate resilient agriculture, environmental sustainability and biodiversity management, and to unlocking more private sector investment to achieve greater impact on rural livelihoods".[5] Hence, this evaluation is of critical strategic importance for IFAD.

4. **Evaluation objectives.** This evaluation seeks to derive insights from past and ongoing IFAD's strategies and operations in SIDS, to provide useful recommendations to enhance IFAD's engagement in SIDS. The evaluation uses the 2014 IFAD's SIDS approach as a first reference point for analysis of operations designed after 2014, and then the 2022 IFAD SIDS strategy as a second reference point to provide a forward-looking perspective. The specific objectives are to: (i) Assess the performance of IFAD strategic and operational supports in recipient SIDS; (ii) Ascertain the extent to which these contributed to mitigate vulnerability challenges to strengthen resilience, and to enhance institutional frameworks aligned with the purpose of sustainable and inclusive rural transformation.[6] The conclusions and recommendations will be used to improve partnership frameworks (strategies

[1] The cut-off year of 2015 corresponds to the year that followed the approval of the IFAD's SIDS approach in 2014.
[2] According to the strategic framework, IFAD has learned important lessons from its operations and recognises the need for targeted and tailored approaches and this specifically applies to its operations in fragile and conflict-affected states and situations, low-income countries (LICs), middle-income countries (MICs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which will shape the broad direction of future engagements with them.
[3] Report of the Consultation on the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources: Recovery, Rebuilding, Resilience. IFAD12/4/R.2/Rev.1.
[4] IFAD Strategy for Engagement in Small Island Developing States 2022–2027
[5] Report of the Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources: Building Rural Resilience for a Food-Secure Future. Document: IFAD13/3/R.2/Rev.1, p.1.
[6] This entails exploring what works at strategic and operational levels, and what does not work, how and why, especially taking into account contextual features of SIDS within each sub-region and region.

and operations) between IFAD and the recipient SIDS Governments and contribute to further development effectiveness.

5. **Structure of the report.** This report is structured into eight chapters. This background chapter establishes the foundation of the evaluation by outlining key concepts, the scope of the evaluation, the design framework, and the methodology; it also provides an overview of the SIDS context, along with IFAD's strategies and operations related to these countries. Chapters two through six deliver in-depth evaluative analyses and findings. The final chapter presents conclusions and actionable recommendations for future improvements.

B. Key concepts and SIDS' features

6. **SIDS in IFAD.** SIDS are a group of 58 countries and territories (38 are United Nations (UN) Members while the rest are non-United Nations Members or Associate Members of Regional Commissions.[7] IFAD's Membership includes 38 SIDS (36 UN Members and 2 non-UN Members: Cook Islands and Niue), as presented in Annex VI.

7. **Main SIDS features.** SIDS are generally clustered into three regional subgroups: (i) the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the South China Sea; (ii) Caribbean SIDS; and (iii) Pacific SIDS.[8] SIDS share common features, including limited resource bases, reliance on environment-dependent economic sectors, limited industrial activity, physical remoteness, and limited economies of scale. SIDS exhibit significant differences in territorial areas, population size, governance systems, national and per capita income, debt burden, regional priorities and development context, and geographic characteristics.[9] Many SIDS have relatively high per capita income driven by tourism and remittances; however, their economies remain fragile and vulnerable to external shocks, natural disasters and climatic events. (see Annex VI Table A2 for more detail)

8. **Vulnerability of SIDS.** Vulnerability is widely acknowledged as the main common feature of SIDS (See Box 1). They are the most vulnerable group of countries worldwide, when it comes to the interrelation between environment, economic and structural development.[10] The concept of vulnerability is broad and is viewed differently according to the disciplines.[11] For SIDS, it focuses on (i) the exposure to risks (harm, damage, loss, etc); (ii) the characteristics and causes of the risks; (iii) the way forward in identifying measures to mitigate those risks. Furthermore, SIDS typically face multiple vulnerabilities – related to environmental, climate change, economic and financial aspects – that shape their development trajectory and overall performance, hence, the concept of multidimensional vulnerability.

9. The multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI) was adopted by the UN in July 2024, to provide a framework for measuring the diverse aspects of SIDS vulnerability, in relation to the risk of harm from exposure to adverse external or exogenous shocks, thereby highlighting the structural challenges faced by SIDS.[12] The MVI captures two pillars or domains of vulnerability: (i) structural vulnerability, linked to the exposure to adverse external shocks and stressors, and (ii) structural resilience, which is associated with the capacity (or lack thereof) of a country to withstand such shocks.

[7] As classified by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

[8] In this report. the IFAD regions are used to categorised SIDS evaluated as presented in paragraph 11.

[9] Even in the same region, there are differences. Especially, the Pacific SIDS are highly diverse in geography, culture, languages, and development contexts. They range from large volcanic islands (like Fiji and Papua New Guinea) to tiny low-lying atolls (like Tuvalu and Kiribati). Culturally, they encompass hundreds of distinct languages and traditions spread across Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

[10] Massa I., Marinescu S., Fuller G., Bermont Diaz L., and Lafortune G., 2023. *Addressing structural vulnerability and financing SDGs in SIDS*. SDG Transformation Centre.

[11] Alwang*,J, Siegel* P and *Jorgensen,S.,2001 Vulnerability: a view from different disciplines*, World Bank, 2001.

[12] UN, 2024. High level panel on the development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index. Final report. "the primary objective of the MVI index is not to reflect overall progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but to provide a robust, acceptable, and simplified assessment of vulnerability that can be effectively operationalized by and for the benefit of vulnerable countries" p. 7.

This means that the development of structural resilience capacities remains the main goal sought in SIDS contexts. These considerations of multidimensional vulnerability have been applied in conducting this evaluation, as per further details below under the analytical framework.

Box 1
Key characteristics of SIDS in relation to vulnerability

SIDS share several structural characteristics that contribute to their vulnerability, including geographical isolation, small size, ecological uniqueness and fragility, high population densities, limited natural resources, and a heavy reliance on seasonal marine resources. They are highly susceptible to severe natural disasters, climate change, and sea-level rise.

Economically, SIDS face challenges such as small domestic markets, limited opportunities to exploit economies of scale, heavy reliance on exports, high import dependency, and economies dominated by tourism with minimal diversification potential. Their economies rely heavily on external finance and remittances and face limited investment opportunities, particularly in communication infrastructure and public administration.

SIDS experience insularity, resulting in high transaction costs, marginalization, supply uncertainties, and the necessity to maintain large stock reserves. Many SIDS struggle with developing and maintaining effective institutions, governance structures, policymaking processes, and efficient service delivery.

Source: Ghina (2003). Sustainable development in SIDS Environment, development, and sustainability, 5, 139-165

10. **Fragility of SIDS.** The fragility concept is slightly different from vulnerability but triggers similar actions / reactions. The term fragility emphasizes the weak capacity to deal with shocks, harms and/or risks. IFAD defines fragility as "a condition of high vulnerability to natural and man-made shocks, often associated with an elevated risk of violence and conflict. [13] The term vulnerability puts greater focus on the level of exposure to those risks or harms. In 2024, SIDS classified as institutionally fragile (for institutional and social fragility) by the World Bank (list of countries in fragile situation, 2024) were: Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Federated States of Micronesia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, and Tuvalu. Additionally, Haiti was classified as in conflict-affected situation. In relation to both vulnerability and fragility, building resilience remains a critical goal, to mitigate the burdens and challenges associated with these conditions. This is achieved by developing absorptive and adaptive capacities, and ultimately transformative ones.[14]

C. Evaluation design and methodology

Scope and key evaluation questions

11. **Scope**. The evaluation covered SIDS countries globally that benefited of IFAD's support over the evaluated period 2015-2024, in four (out of five) IFAD operational regions, namely: Asia and the Pacific Division (APR), East and Southern Africa Division (ESA), Latin America and the Caribbean Division (LAC), and West and Central Africa Division (WCA). It covered loan-financed operations (completed and ongoing), grants-financed activities, non-lending activities (i.e. knowledge management, partnership development, policy engagement), and grant-funded projects. In line with the IFAD Evaluation Manual (2022), the evaluation used the criteria of relevance, coherence (including non-lending aspects), effectiveness, efficiency, impact, gender, and sustainability to structure the findings. See Annex I for criteria definitions.

[13] IFAD 2016 Strategy for Engagement in Countries with Fragile Situations, https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/119/docs/EB-2016-119-R-4.pdf.
[14] See IOE-IFAD (2023), Sub-regional evaluation of countries with fragile situations in IFAD-WCA. Learning from experiences of IFAD's engagement in the G5 Sahel countries and northern Nigeria.

12. The evaluation explored common and divergent performance aspects (in terms of strengths and gaps) of IFAD's support in the recipient SIDS, to generate lessons and conclusions that are applicable in those countries, considering regional or subregional contexts as appropriate.

13. **Evaluability.** Of the projects covered, 13 projects reached their completion dates at end of 2024 and were reviewed for all evaluation criteria. A further 16 projects had mid-term reviews (MTR) reports and were assessed for all evaluation criteria, except impact and sustainability. One project was approved in 2023, subsequently was reviewed for only two criteria, relevance, and efficiency. Documentary evaluative evidence consisted of a total of three Project Performance Evaluations (PPEs), ten Project Completion Report Validations (PCRVs) and two Country Strategy Performance Evaluations (CSPEs), and three Impact Assessment (reports conducted by the Research and Impact Division of IFAD (RIA) (See Table 1). The PPE of Cabo Verde and the CSPE of the Dominican Republic were conducted in 2024, while the CSPE of Guinea Bissau was conducted in 2022. The completion and MTR reports, complemented by IOE reports, were the basis for generating preliminary evidence.

Table 1
Projects covered by the evaluation

Region	No. projects	No. completed projects	No. on-going with MTR reports	Recently approved	Availability of IOE products
APR	10	5	4	1	1 PPE & 3 PCRVs
ESA	2	1	1	0	1 PCRV
LAC	13	6	7	0	1 PPE, 2 PCRVs and 1CSPE*
WCA	5	1	4	0	1 PPE, 1 PCRV and 1 CSPE
Total	**30**	**13**	**16**	**1**	**3 PPEs, 7 PCRVs, 2 CSPEs**

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team

14. **Overarching and key evaluation questions.** The overarching evaluation question was: How and to what extent did IFAD's support to recipient SIDS perform (over the period 2015 - 2024) in contributing (i) to mitigating vulnerability challenges, especially in rural settings, and (ii) to enabling greater resilience of social, economic (including institutional) and ecological system?

15. Six key evaluation questions are presented below, noting their link to the evaluation criteria. The evaluation framework (in Annex II) presents the specific questions under each key question and respective sources of information.

a) How relevant have IFAD's strategies and operations been in line with: (i) global and regional strategic initiatives and frameworks for SIDS; (ii) the unique contextual challenges of SIDS, including climate change, social and economic vulnerability challenges; (iii) the needs of rural smallholders; and (iv) the targeting of rural poor populations? (**Relevance**)

b) To what extent has IFAD developed and implemented strategies and operations that were coherent across SIDS countries and IFAD regions to address vulnerability challenges of rural communities and households? How aligned were these strategies with other development initiatives in SIDS countries? And how have these fostered (i) effective knowledge management systems, (ii) useful partnerships, and (iii) improved policy frameworks? (**Coherence**)

c) Given the challenges of operating in SIDS, how and why could IFAD-financed operations deliver efficient results and value for money? How did operational oversights contribute to efficient results, and why? (**Efficiency**)

d) To what extent have IFAD's operations in SIDS achieved results that contribute reducing vulnerabilities (in short and medium terms) along the three dimensions and contribute building resilience? How evidence available demonstrates that IFAD supported operations in SIDS have contributed to

enhancing overall resilience in the medium and long term? (**Effectiveness and Impact**).

e) To what extent did IFAD-financed operations in SIDS effectively target rural women, youth, indigenous people, and other marginalized groups? How have these operations contributed to improving their resilience and to enabling better social livelihoods in a sustainable manner? (**Inclusiveness**)

f) How and why have the results achieved through IFAD's support been sustained and scaled up to further benefit rural populations and strengthen institutions? (**Sustainability**).

Theory – based analytical framework

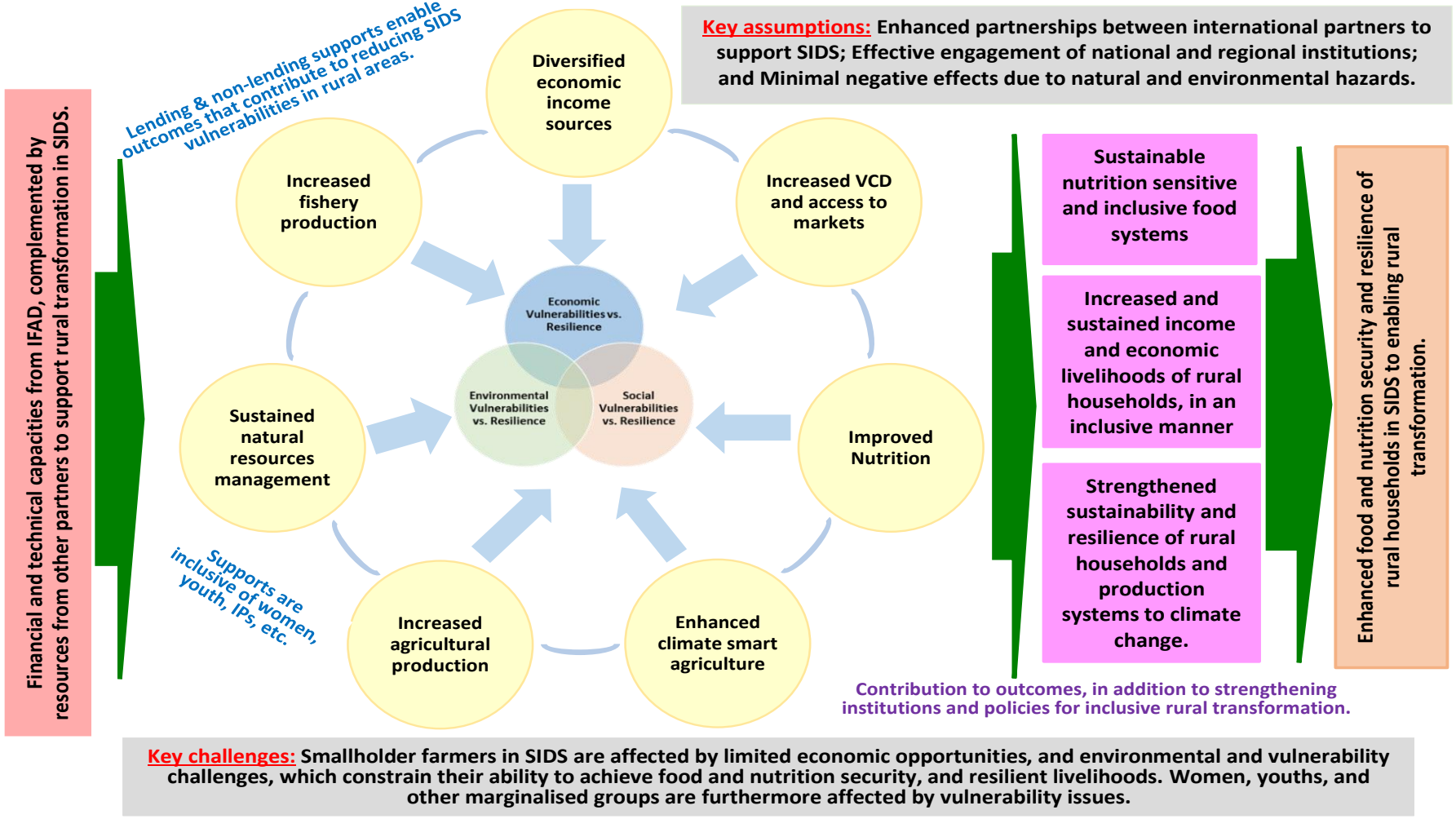
16. The evaluation design was theory-based aligned with the guidance of the IFAD Evaluation Manual (2022). As part of this process, the evaluation team reconstructed a Theory of Change (ToC) considering the objectives and results detailed in IFAD's corporate documents related to its engagement and support in SIDS (both strategic and operational), thereafter validated during interviews with relevant stakeholders.[15] Given the prominence of the vulnerability topic for this evaluation and its variable manifestations across SIDS, the evaluation team included the vulnerability dimensions (social, economic and environmental) to construct a theory-based approach and analytical framework, as described as follows (see Figure 1).

17. **The underpinning change theory.** Three impact pathways are sought through IFAD's engagement in SIDS. The underpinning theory is that IFAD's support, strategic and operational in recipient SIDS, will contribute to driving rural transformation (long term impact) through: (i) sustainable, nutrition-sensitive, and inclusive food systems; (ii) increased, inclusive, and sustained incomes and economic opportunities for rural households; and (iii) strengthened resilience and sustainability of rural households and production systems in the face of climate change. These impacts are enabled through seven operational themes supported: nutrition, fishery, agricultural (crop and animal) production, value chain development and access to markets, natural resources management, adaptation to climate change, and economic diversification. Additionally, there are the crosscutting themes of SIDS institutional capacity and inclusiveness are also critical. Key assumptions underlying this theory encompass: strengthened partnerships between international actors to support SIDS governments; effective collaboration with national and regional institutions addressing SIDS-specific challenges; and minimal adverse impacts from natural and environmental hazards. IFAD financing will primarily draw on core resources, supplemented by additional funding sources, with private sector contributions.

18. **Resilience as a key strategic theme.** Due to the prominence of vulnerability issues in SIDS contexts, the various dimensions – social, economic and environmental (including climate change) – have been incorporated into the ToC. This entails that IFAD supported strategies and operations will contribute to mitigate vulnerabilities. Subsequently, the development of effective resilience capacities remains a critical strategic theme that guides IFAD supported operations in SIDS' contexts. As such, IFAD's supported operations will contribute to the development of structural resilience capacities, considering social, economic, and environmental (including climate change) dimensions in targeted areas of SIDS countries. **This evaluation has applied the multidimensional resilience considerations, thus adopted a holistic approach, in conducting assessments.**

[15] The reconstructed ToC was valided at inception stage during interviews with regional teams, and with projects' teams during missions of case-studies.

Figure 1
Theory-based analytical framework: expected changes aligned with resilience goals



Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team

Evaluation methodology and processes

19. **Methodological approach.** The evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data sources and analyses. The key methodological steps undertaken were as follows: scoping meetings and desk reviews, virtual interviews for data collection, an online survey, internal interim reporting, field missions for case studies (to gather primary data), data analysis and interpretation, and reporting. Detailed descriptions of each methodological step are provided in Annex VI. The evaluation commenced in January 2024 and was fully completed in May 2025.

20. **Desk review and virtual interviews.** The team conducted in-depth desk reviews for the extraction of documentary evidence on the 30 projects covered by the evaluation. AI tools were used, at initial stage of the desk review process, to extract specific information from various documents (design, MTR and completion reports). All AI extracted information were checked and analysed by the evaluation analysts and thereafter triangulated. The evaluation team further carried out virtual interviews with IFAD's staff and various partners and stakeholders in each of the regions.[16] The identification of interviewed stakeholders considered ongoing IFAD operations and future IFAD engagement, as indicated by the regional and country teams during the scoping discussions. Results of desk reviews and virtual interviews allowed generated finding trends and to identify evidence gaps that the cases studies contributed to fill.

21. **Country missions for cases studies.** The evaluation team conducted case-studies missions in six SIDS countries. They were (i) APR, Kiribati and Maldives; in ESA, Comoros; in LAC, Belize and Grenada; and WCA, São Tomé and Príncipe. The in-country field missions allowed to gather primary data on IFAD's strategic and operational achievements in the context of each SIDS and region.[17] The missions were conducted in the Caribbean (May 2024), Kiribati, (June 2024), Maldives, (August 2024), Sao Tome & Principe, and Comoros (October 2024), providing an opportunity to capture stakeholders' perspectives on the program delivery, constraints and opportunities. Following the cases studies missions, four virtual meetings were held with relevant stakeholders—both headquarters- and field-based—to present and discuss regional preliminary findings.

22. **Online survey.** The evaluation team conducted an electronic survey directed targeting a range of stakeholders, including IFAD staff, government officials from SIDS, IFAD-funded project staff, and implementing partners. The survey was launched on 21 October 2024 and closed on 9 December 2024. To encourage broad participation among the target audience and to reduce language barriers, the survey was made available in English, Spanish and French. The response rate with complete valid responses was 25 per cent of respondents, indicating low response rates within each category. Consequently, the survey was not used as a primary source of evidence but rather for triangulation purposes (in footnotes), focusing on questions that were similar across at least two categories. More details on the survey methodology and results are provided in Annex VII.

23. **Data analysis and reporting.** After completing the analysis for all four regions, the evaluation team synthesized the findings to produce a consolidated preliminary report that underwent a thorough IOE internal peer review process for quality assurance. Subsequently, the draft evaluation report was shared with IFAD management and relevant stakeholders for their feedback. IOE finalized the report and prepared an audit trail detailing how each comment was addressed. To conclude the evaluation, a virtual learning event will be organized to discuss key findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

[16] Table A1 present the mapping of stakeholders, and the detailed list of persons interviewed is presented in Annex-.
[17] The choice of the six countries took into account the recently completed IOE evaluations in SIDS countries (Guinea Bissau in 2022 and Solomon Island in 2023), and ongoing ones (Cabo Verde and Dominican Republic).

24. **Limitations.** A main limitation was the lack of rigorous monitoring data on operations' achievements, especially on outcomes and impacts. Projects' endline surveys were found for completed projects, but they were of poor quality. Only three projects, in Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Principe and the Solomon Islands benefited from a rigorous IFAD impact assessment. This resulted in very limited availability of robust impact data to generate evidence of contribution to long term changes in the evaluated SIDS. Additionally, only 40 per cent of projects covered were completed, which have self-evaluations completion reports. Another limitation was the inability to reach various project sites during the case study missions (due to short durations of the missions and remoteness challenges), which restricted the diversity of sites and results observed by the evaluation team only to the most accessible sites. To overcome these limitations, the evaluation team has ensured triangulation using various sources of evidence before concluding.[18]

D. Context of IFAD-supported SIDS

25. **Economic context.** Many SIDS have relatively high GDP per capita. Their economies often depend largely on sectors such as tourism, fishery, alongside financial aid, and remittances. While the tourism sector accounts worldwide for roughly 15 per cent of a country's GDP on average, for SIDS that value reaches 30 per cent.[19] The GDP per capita of IFAD-supported SIDS ranged in 2023 from US$951 in Guinea-Bissau to US$ 20,765 in Guyana (see Table A4, Annex IV). For the SIDS covered in this evaluation, there is a great variability across regions, reflecting SIDS differences in economic structures, resource endowments, trade patterns, and development challenges. Guyana and Seychelles are outliers (of the Caribbean and Africa SIDS respectively), with GDP per capita above US$15,000. Overall, the data show that the Caribbean SIDS have the highest average GDP per capita, and the highest Gini index, thus, reflecting greater situations of inequality, while the SIDS in APR and Africa have lower GDP per capita in average. Within each region, there are significant disparities among countries.[20] Finally, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, which is about 0.6 per cent of global FDI, according to the World Investment Report 2023,[21] and remittances (see paragraph 11) are critical to SIDS' economic performance. (See Annex VI for details)

26. **Poverty and human development index.** The economic poverty (headcount at US$2.15 - 2017 PPP)[22] varies widely among the IFAD-supported SIDS.[23] While the poverty headcount is nil for Maldives and Tonga (2019 values), it was less than 1 per cent for the Dominican Republic, Grenada and Seychelles. SIDS with higher poverty headcount of above 15 per cent are: Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, PNG, São Tomé and Príncipe, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste grapple (all were countries in fragile situations in 2024). Similarly, SIDS countries exhibit considerable diversity in their human development index (HDI) across regions and categories. The regional average HDI values are 0.719, 0.657, and 0.64 respectively for SIDS in the Caribbean, APR, and Africa; while the overall average HDI value for the IFAD-supported SIDS is 0.67.[24] The lowest HDI are found in Haiti and Guinea Bissau, that are countries in fragile situation, and five SIDS have high HDI above 0.750: Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Maldives, and Seychelles.

[18] Information sources, aligned with the previous paragraphs, included: secondary data (quantitative and qualitative) from numerous reports and documents, stakeholders' interviews (see the list of persons interviewed), primary data collected during case-study missions, and on-line survey results.
[19] https://unctad.org/news/impact-covid-19-tourism-small-island-developing-states
[20] Thus, confirming the heterogeneity of SIDS as mentioned in paragraph 7.
[21] World Investment Report 2023, UNCTAD. https://unctad.org/publication/world-investment-report-2023
[22] The poverty headcount ratio at US$2.15/day (2017 PPP per cent) is the per centage of the population living on less than US$2.15 a day in 2017 international prices.
[23] Multidimensional poverty data are available, but are not recent as from 2009 to 2015, while many are unavailable.
[24] Marginally lower than the global average of 0.69

27. **Remittances.** Remittances are a vital for the economy of many SIDS.[25] Tonga and Samoa have the highest remittance-to-GDP ratios in the APR, with Tonga leading globally at 41 per cent in 2023. In the Caribbean, Haiti (21.4 per cent) and the Dominican Republic have significant remittance inflows, especially post-COVID-19. In Africa, remittance levels vary widely among SIDS, with Comoros (20.8 per cent) and Cabo Verde (12.2 per cent) being highly dependent, while Seychelles (0.5 per cent) and São Tomé and Príncipe (1.7 per cent) have much lower reliance. Guinea-Bissau, a post-crisis state, also depends heavily on remittances (9.4 per cent). See detailed elaboration in Annex VI, Table A5 and Box A1.

28. **Gender equality.** SIDS ranked from 73rd (Cuba) to 159th (Guinea Bissau) on the Gender Inequality Index (see Table A4, Annex VI). Caribbean SIDS had the lowest average gender inequality score, followed by African SIDS and APR SIDS. Women and girls in SIDS play a crucial role in poverty eradication, climate change resilience, and national economic growth as food producers, processors, and traders. However, they encounter significant barriers in accessing assets, resources, leadership, and decision-making opportunities due to entrenched gender inequalities. Women in SIDS are more likely than their male peers to work in the informal sector, or to be employed in temporary or seasonal work. This makes them vulnerable to losing their jobs when SIDS are affected by economic shocks and are left without safety nets given the informal nature of work. Women are 22 per cent more likely to live in extreme poverty compared to men. At the same time, women in many SIDS remain primarily responsible for domestic work, and have less access than men to agricultural assets (including lands), financial services, extension advice and ICTs, limiting their access to credit and economic potential).[26] In addition, data on SIDS shows that women are also typically less involved than men in decision-making processes, while gender-based violence presently remains relatively high in SIDS, particularly in the Pacific.[27]

29. **Youth.** Unemployment, particularly for youth is also a significant challenge, which results in migration to other countries (IFAD 2022 SIDA Strategy). Unemployment in SIDS is high among young men and especially young women across all three regions. According to ILO data (see Table A7 in Annex VI), the share of youth not in education, employment, or training in 2021 ranged from 7.0 per cent in the Solomon Islands, to 47.6 per cent in Kiribati. In twelve SIDS, the proportion of youth not in education, employment or training was greater than 25 per cent and the average proportion of youth not in education, employment, or training in 2021 was above 25 per cent in all three regions (African SIDS: 25.3 per cent, Caribbean SIDS: 30.6 per cent, and Pacific SIDS: 27.7 per cent). Furthermore, unemployment is higher among young women compared to young men (FAO, 2022). Across the SIDS, the unemployment rate was 1.6 times higher for young women, compared to young men. In eleven SIDS, unemployment was higher for young women compared to young men, however, youth unemployment was similar among young men and women in Cuba and Comoros. Notably, the unemployment rate was lower for young women compared to young men in Maldives and PNG.

30. **Indigenous peoples.** Indigenous peoples / populations are present in SIDS countries of the LAC and APR regions. In the LAC region, indigenous peoples are minorities in Belize and Guyana. In both countries, they face significant challenges, including limited access to decision-making and ongoing threats to their territories and ways of life.[28] By contrast, the APR region is home of the largest indigenous

[25] Sources: IFAD 2022; WB 2024a; WB 2024b
[26] FAO, 2019; FAO et al, 2017 In the matrilineal societies of Palau and the Comoros women have access to formal land tenure rights though inheritance from their mothers, while in Samoa they have customary land rights.
[27] UN Women's data hub, 2019
[28] In Belize, the Maya and Garífuna are predominantly subsistence farmers, facing encroachment by non-Indigenous settlers and large-scale logging and petroleum activities, which threaten their lands. In Guyana, the majority of Amerindian communities (90 per cent) reside in the interior, where their standard of living is lower than that of non-Indigenous Guyanese, and they have limited opportunities to participate in decisions impacting their lands, cultures, and natural resources.

peoples, with over 260 million individuals, making up 70 per cent of the global indigenous population.[29] Despite their large populations, Indigenous peoples in the APR face significant challenges, including the loss of ancestral lands, lack of legal recognition of their rights, and marginalization of their traditional livelihoods, all of which threaten their cultural identity and food security.

31. **Agriculture and fishery.** The average share of agricultural sector in the GDP of SIDS (covered by this evaluation) is 14 per cent, while the average share of the service sector was 57.6 per cent, which is largely driven by tourism. The lowest contribution of the agricultural sector to the GDP is in in Cuba, 0.8 per cent of GDP (2022), and the highest in Comoros 37.2 per cent (2023).[30] The fishery sector is of particular importance for the SIDS both from a food security and employment perspective; and fish products account for about 70 per cent of SIDS exports.[31] SIDS share several challenges that contribute to agriculture systems instability making them uniquely vulnerable to food insecurity. These include limited land mass and population; fragile natural environments and lack of arable land; high vulnerability to climate change, external economic shocks, and natural disasters; typically, high dependence on food imports; logistic and storage challenges; and difficult access to global markets.[32] Many SIDS face a scarcity of arable land which limits livestock raising and crop cultivation, particularly on smaller islands with rocky soil or unsuitable climate conditions. Furthermore, infertile soils, and limited freshwater coupled with excessive drainage, make agriculture more challenging, often restricting annual crop production to the only rainy season (Batra and Norheim, 2022). In relation to fishery, main constraints are limited access to resources and services, climate change, natural disasters, and illegal - unreported and - unregulated fishing practices.

32. **Food security and nutrition.** According to the World Bank data (see Table A2, Annex VI), Haiti and Guinea Bissau exhibit highest severe food insecurity rates among the population (42.4 and 32 per cent respectively), followed by Comoros (27.4), PNG (27), Dominican Republic (19) and São Tomé and Príncipe (14, while Tonga, Samoa, Seychelles, and Maldives have the lowest food insecurity rates. Domestic agricultural production and food value chains remain underdeveloped in most SIDS, even in some upper-middle-income countries where tourism and other services drive revenues. As a result, many SIDS in the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions heavily rely on food imports, placing significant pressure on foreign exchange reserves. This dependency on imported food has led to poorer nutritional quality, characterized by increased consumption of energy-dense foods high in fat, salt, and sugar. Consequently, most SIDS face a "triple burden" of malnutrition, where undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and over-nutrition coexist within the same populations, communities, households, and sometimes even individuals over their lifetime. While some SIDS have made progress in reducing undernourishment, their overall efforts to combat hunger have lagged behind the global average.[33] [34] Chronic undernutrition is a serious concern in many SIDS, particularly among specific vulnerable population groups, including women of reproductive age and children less than five years of age.[35] Prevalence rates of

[29] According to International Labour Organization, see https://www.ilo.org/resource/indigenous-and-tribal-peoples-0.
[30] According to World Bank data. In APR, the highest SIDS shares are in Solomon Islands (33.8 per cent) and Kiribati (27.8 per cent), while the lowest is in Maldives (5.1 per cent). In LAC, most SIDS have low share of agriculture in the GDP (Cuba 0.8 per cent, Grenada 3.3 per cent, Dominican Republic, 6.4, Belize 8.1, Guyan 10 per cent), except Haiti (18.2 per cent). In Africa, the lowest are found with Seychelles (2.8 per cent) and Cabo Verde (4.6 per cent) and the highest in Comoros (372) and Guinea Bissau (30.7). All other SIDS have a share between 10 and 20 per cent.
[31] FAO, 2022, Fisheries in SIDS in the focus at the Third SIDS Solution Dialogue. See here.
[32] FAO, 2017. Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States
[33] Undernourishment is defined as inability to acquire enough food to meet the daily minimum dietary energy requirements, over a period of one year.
[34] FAO, 2017. Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States
[35] Micronutrient deficiencies, such as iron, iodine, and vitamin A, are widespread in SIDS, affecting more than 30 per cent of the population in some countries. For example, in Haiti, 59 per cent of children under 5 years of age and 48 per

obesity and non-communicable disease (NCDs) associated with poor-quality diets are in many SIDS amongst the highest worldwide, being now the leading cause of morbidity and mortality.[36]

33. **Environment and climate change challenges**. SIDS face critical environmental challenges that threaten their economic viability and, in some cases, threaten their existence. Perhaps most pressing is the heightened vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and disruptions in precipitation patterns, despite contributing minimally to climate change (Massa and al., 2023). See detailed elaboration in Annex VI.

34. **COVID-19 pandemic and SIDS vulnerabilities**. The global economic crisis triggered by the pandemic led to steep recessions in many countries and disproportionately affected SIDS. Many of these states, reliant on tourism and imports, were forced to close their economies to protect their vulnerable populations. In 2020, SIDS's GDP contracted by 4.7 per cent, compared to 3 per cent globally.[37] The impact was uneven across SIDS, reflecting their varying dependence on larger economies. The economic downturn deepened rural poverty and weakened resilience to natural disasters and environmental degradation. Key effects included: (i) a sharp decline in tourism and related income; (ii) disruptions in food supply chains and increased waste of local produce due to restaurant and hotel closures;[38] (iii) a significant drop in diaspora remittances; and (iv) fewer development financing opportunities. In this context, diversifying SIDS' economies is key to bolstering resilience to economic shocks, and many SIDS started to give a greater importance to agriculture. However, most SIDS lack the human and financial resources needed for economic diversification, and opportunities remain to reduce reliance on food imports by developing alternative industries.

E. Overview of IFAD's strategy and operations in SIDS

Historical perspectives

35. In 1992, during the UN Conference on Environment and Development, the global community formally recognized SIDS as a unique case requiring special attention for both environmental and developmental concerns. This acknowledgment marked the beginning of a global commitment to support SIDS in achieving their sustainable development goals. This pledge was reinforced through major international milestones, starting with the first Barbados Programme of Action (1994), followed by the Mauritius Strategy (2005), the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action – SAMOA Pathway (2014), and most recently, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS – ABAS (2024).

36. Figure 2 illustrates key global strategic milestones and events that shaped the international cooperation efforts for SIDS, with the relevant strategic steps at IFAD level. Alongside with the evolution at international level, IFAD's engagement in SIDS has progressed through three distinct phases: (i) Pre- (SAMOA Pathway) period: when the Fund engaged with SIDS without a specific focus on regional differentiation; (ii) 2014–2021: during this period IFAD's involvement in SIDS was guided by an approach paper highlighting thematic anchors to shape its interventions; (iii) post-2021: IFAD adopted a dedicated SIDS strategy, positioning

cent of women of reproductive age suffer from anaemia. Stunting rates among children under-5 are categorised as 'high prevalence' in PNG (49.5 per cent), Solomon Islands (32.8 per cent), Guinea-Bissau (27.6 per cent) and Haiti (21.9 per cent) (Global Nutrition Report, 2016). These figures tend to mask wide disparities e.g. in Vanuatu, stunting prevalence in rural areas is 1.7 times higher than in urban areas (Vanuatu Demographic and Health Survey 2013).

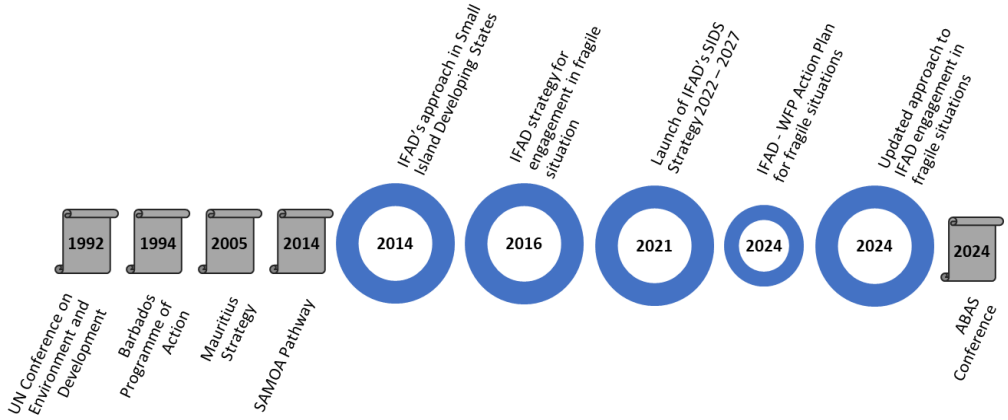
[36] The top seven most obese countries in the world are in the Pacific and of the ten countries with the highest diabetes prevalence in the world, seven are Pacific SIDS (Pacific Possible: Health and Non-Communicable Diseases. Background Paper. The World Bank, 2016)

[37] IFAD SIDS Strategy, 2022.

[38] See I. A. Naidoo, 2023.

itself for a greater impact through enhanced and targeted forms of engagement.[39] IFAD's engagement in SIDS started in 1978 in Haiti and Cabo Verde with projects focusing on irrigation and agricultural development. IFAD gradually expanded its operations in SIDS across various regions investing a total of US$1.7 billion (since 1978) with an IFAD funding of US$763 million into 102 projects implemented in 25 SIDS countries.[40]

Figure 2
Evolution of programmes of action in SIDS and IFAD
Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team



IFAD global strategic approaches in SIDS

37. **IFAD global SIDS strategy and approach.**

[39] IFAD (2022) Strategy for Engagement in Small Island Developing States 2022–2027
[40] As of March 2024. The data of projects approved after March 2024: Force-Jeunes in Comoros, EFOSE in Haiti and AIMN in Vanuatu are not included

38. Table 2 below outlines the objectives of both the 2014 SIDS' Approach and the 2022 SIDS' Strategy (2022-2027). The 2014 IFAD's Approach in SIDS (A global response to island voices for food security) marked the first step in IFAD's strategic vision to enhance food security and promote sustainable smallholder agriculture in SIDS, addressing the compounded impacts of climate change and persistent challenges in market access. The Strategy for Engagement in SIDS (2022-2027) acknowledge the unique social, economic, environmental and nutrition-related vulnerabilities faced by SIDS. Its strategic objectives (SOs) highlight the thematic priorities for engaging with SIDS. Both the 2014 SIDS Approach and 2022 SIDS Strategy recognize the pivotal role of partnerships and coordination, advocating for the implementation of multi-country and regional programming alongside intensified resource mobilization.[41] Both strategies emphasize the importance of resilience for environment and climate change and promotion of economic diversification.

[41] The 2022 strategy, however, introduces key refinements, including an enhanced in-country presence to improve responsiveness to local realities and evolving priorities. Overall, while both build on the importance of collaboration, the 2022 strategy introduces adjustments to better align with current priorities and enhance the development effectiveness of IFAD's interventions in SIDS.

Table 2
Objectives of IFAD 2014 approach and 2022 strategy in SIDS

IFAD SIDS objectives in 2014 approach paper	IFAD SIDS strategic objectives in 2022 Strategy
Promote sustainable small-scale fisheries, including aquaculture and mariculture of nutrition-rich fish, and strengthen fish value chains	Promote sustainable, nutrition-sensitive, and inclusive food systems;
Enhance opportunities for smallholder agriculture to become a vibrant business by catering to new dynamic markets and providing employment opportunities and financial inclusion, especially for women and youth	Promote rural non-farm employment and the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;
Strengthen resilience to environmental and climate change and enhance adaptation capacity	Strengthen the resilience of rural households and agricultural production systems to environmental and climate change

Source: IFAD 2014 approach and 2022 IFAD's strategy in SIDS

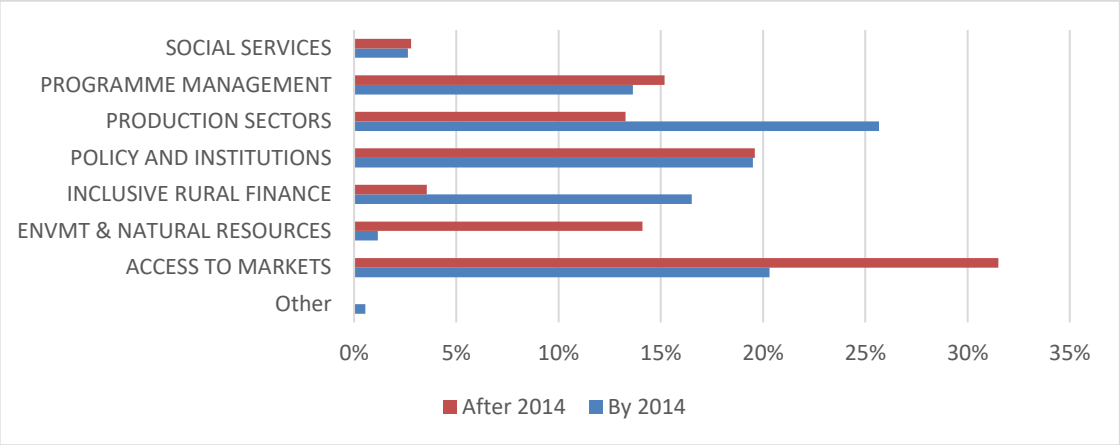
39. **IFAD's country strategies in SIDS.** IFAD's operations in SIDS have been primarily guided by Country Strategy Notes (CSNs) with only few COSOP developed in specific cases such as Comoros, Cabo Verde, Dominican Republic and Cuba. In total, 27 COSOPs and CSNs were available in the period of 2015 to 2023 (see Table A8 in Annex VI for details). They were all used and analysed in this evaluation. The review identified the main strategic themes addressed by IFAD: climate change; agricultural production and productivity; rural enterprises and employment opportunities; access to markets; value chain development; nutrition, environment and natural resources management; and fishery development. These themes are linked to the SIDS vulnerabilities as further discussed in the relevance section below.

40. **SIDS Portfolio of projects evaluated.** The total cost of the portfolio evaluated of (30 loan-financed projects) is US$797.6 million, with an IFAD contribution of US$300.8 million (37 per cent) and an international co-financing of US$310 million (38 per cent), and government contributions of US$161 million (20 per cent of the total cost). (Further details are in the chapter on efficiency).

41. **PBAS allocation and financing terms.** SIDS have historically received a modest share of the PBAS allocation (see Graph A1, Annex VI), representing 4 per cent during the replenishment periods of IFAD-9, -10 and -12.[42] This share decreased to 3 per cent during IFAD-11 and IFAD-13.[43] Papa New Guinea (PNG) and Haiti have consistently been the largest recipients, each receiving over US$80 million since 2013. Financing terms for SIDS vary significantly by country, including concessional, ordinary, and blended terms, as well as Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) for selected countries (see Table A11 in Annex VI). Among the 30 loans evaluated in the portfolio, 19 were financed through DSF grants or highly concessional terms. The remaining 11 loans were financed under blended or ordinary conditions.[44]
Figure 3 presents the sub-sector categories of IFAD financing in SIDS before and after 2014. It shows a clear shift from agricultural production and inclusive rural finance before 2014, to access to markets, environment and natural resources management (ENRM) after 2014.

[42] This because of their low rural population size. The majority of SIDS receive the minimum PBAS allocation to ensure that they receive operationally viable volume of resources, as done by other MDBs that use the PBAS approach to resource allocation. The minimum allocation was increased in IFAD11, from US$3m per cycle to US$4.5m.
[43] IFAD-9 (2013-2015), IFAD-10 (2016-2018), IFAD-11 (2019-2021), IFAD-12 (2022-2024), and IFAD-13 (2025 – 2027). Graph A1 in Annex VI illustrates the allocation per country across these cycles.
[44] including with PNG, a SIDS in fragile situation

Figure 3
Macro themes of IFAD portfolio in SIDS by 2014 and after



Source: Evaluation team, using ORMS data

42. **Programme of grants for the SIDS countries and other supports.** Since 2015, IFAD has supported SIDS through 20 grants, valued US$44.4 million, with IFAD contributing US$16.3 million.[45] These initiatives were implemented across the Pacific, Caribbean, and African islands, with a predominant focus on the Pacific. Beneficiaries included governments, which received the largest share (43 per cent), followed by no profit organization (23 per cent), research institutions and NGOs (10 per cent each) and other small actors. Among those grants, twelve were regional and eight were country-specific.[46] Also, through the regional grant mechanism, IFAD was able to provide support to countries not covered by loan-funded projects. This is the case of the Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Niue, Tuvalu, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.[47] See Annex IV for the list of grants and elaboration on their focus the coherence sub-section.

43. **IFAD presence in SIDS countries.** With the IFAD decentralization process, two country offices (ICO) were established to oversee activities in SIDS within their respective regions: one in Latin America (Haiti), covering 6 small islands countries between 2019 and 2025 and another in Asia and the Pacific (Fiji), overseeing 13 small islands states.[48] Both offices initially operated as Country Programme Officer (CPO)-led offices and transitioned to Country Director (CD)-led offices in 2021 (Haiti) and 2022 (Fiji), with the Country Directors of Fiji based in the capital, while Haiti a CD-led ICO between 2019 and 2024, is since 2025 led by a country coordinator. Those are the only two countries that have an ICO among the 18 evaluated (see Table A12, Annex VI). In Africa, the management of SIDS portfolios is divided between two regions. In East and Southern Africa (ESA), the portfolio of Comoros, Mauritius, and Seychelles is managed by the Country Director based in Madagascar. In West and Central Africa (WCA), the portfolio management is more dispersed: Guinea-Bissau is overseen by the Country Director based in

[45] IFAD's 2021 Regular Grants Policy encourages the use of grants in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to strengthen the outcomes of IFAD's Lending Operations. Even SIDS classified as Upper Middle-Income Countries (UMICs) can benefit from grants, provided their activities support other SIDS classified as Low-Income or Lower Middle-Income Countries (LICs or LMICs). See https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/132/docs/EB-2021-132-R-3.pdf
[46] The Solomon Islands received the highest number of grants (six), followed by Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, and the Dominican Republic each with four. Additionally, two global initiatives — the Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (FO4ACP) and the UN Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (RWEE Phase II) — implemented in partnership with RBAs and UN agencies, also benefitted SIDS countries worldwide.
[47] The case of the Marshall Islands is particularly interesting, as it benefited from four grants despite never having had an IFAD loan program.
[48] This include countries where there have been an active portfolio of loans and / or grants as of 2024

Senegal, São Tomé and Príncipe by the Country Director based in Cameroon, and Cabo Verde by the Country Director based in Senegal.

Key points - IFAD's strategy and operations in SIDS

- Since 1992, the global community has recognized SIDS as requiring special attention for sustainable development, leading to key international commitments such as the Barbados Programme of Action (1994), the Mauritius Strategy (2005), the Samoa Pathway (2014), and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda (2024).
- IFAD's engagement in SIDS has evolved from an unstructured approach before 2014 to a more targeted strategy post-2021. The 2014 SIDS Approach focused on food security, smallholder agriculture, and climate resilience, while the 2022-2027 Strategy emphasizes inclusive food systems, rural employment, and environmental sustainability.
- IFAD has approved US$763 million for 102 projects across 25 SIDS for a total investment of 1.7 billion since 2014. Yet, IFAD's funding in SIDS remains modest, averaging 4 per cent of its Performance-Based Allocation System (PBAS), with Haiti and PNG receiving the largest shares.
- IFAD's portfolio has shifted post-2014 toward market access and environmental management, while grant funding has supplemented loan projects, particularly in the Pacific and Caribbean.
- IFAD has established offices in Haiti and Fiji to cover the portfolio in LAC and APR, respectively but manages African SIDS portfolios through the ESA and WCA regional offices.

II. Relevance and coherence

44. This chapter presents the assessment of the relevance and coherence criteria. Under the relevance criterion the evaluation provides answers to the key question: how relevant IFAD's strategies and operations were aligned to global and regional strategic initiatives and frameworks for SIDS; unique contextual challenges faced by the evaluated SIDS; the needs of rural smallholders; and in targeting of rural poor populations.

45. Under coherence, the following key questions are answered: (i) to what extent IFAD developed and implemented SIDS strategies and operations that were coherent across IFAD regions, in addressing vulnerability challenges of rural communities and households (internal coherence); (ii) how these strategies and operations were aligned with other development initiatives in the SIDS countries (external coherence); and (iii) how these fostered effective knowledge management systems, useful partnerships, and effective policy frameworks.

A. Relevance

Relevance of strategies

46. **The IFAD's Approach for SIDS (2014) was aligned with IFAD corporate and international strategic frameworks related to SIDS. It embraced a non multidimensional approach to resilience building.** The IFAD's Approach for SIDS (2014) was elaborated in the context of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (Samoa, September 2014),[49] which led to the adoption of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) pathways.[50] With its focus on the three main strategic themes – (i) sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture; ii) opportunities and employment for smallholder agriculture; and iii) environment and climate change – the 2014 Strategy was relevant and in alignment with the IFAD's global strategy (2011-2015) of that moment, as well as with the SAMOA Pathway (2014) that prioritizes sustained and sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth in SIDS. In terms of vulnerability, the 2014 IFAD's SIDS approach explicitly focused on economic and environment (including climate change), while social vulnerability was of indirect focus. A main gap of the 2014 SIDS Approach is the fact that resilience was viewed mainly in relation to environmental and climate change vulnerabilities,[51] as social and economic vulnerability dimensions were not ascertained in that way.

47. **The IFAD's SIDS Strategy (2022-2027) also aligns with IFAD's 2016-2025 Strategy and recent international strategic frameworks.** The 2022 IFAD SIDS strategy aligns with the most recent international SIDS strategy, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS 2024), which was adopted in Antigua and Barbuda in 2024.[52] The theme of nutrition gained greater focus in the 2022 Strategy, in line with the food system approach,[53] and resilience building objectives include economic, environmental, and climate change aspects. The 2022 IFAD's strategy embraces the goal of resilience building in SIDS and is thereby, well aligned with the IFAD's global strategic framework (2016-2025), which recognizes

[49] It was elaborated by the ESA division with the contribution of all other key IFAD's staff and stakeholders working at that moment on SIDS. No reference found on its approval by the IFAD governing board, may be because it was published as a technical paper.
[50] The SAMOA Pathway was adopted on September 4, 2014, during the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States held in Apia, Samoa.
[51] Ecosystem-based approaches, such as the "ridge-to-reef" framework, are promoted to conserve resources and enhance resilience against natural disasters and environmental degradation.
[52] It has considered the MVI pillars and embraces a comprehensive approach for resilience building, through (i) resilient economies with inter-island connectivity and global trade integration; (ii) strengthened governance and institutional capacities; and (iii) sustainable ocean-based economies and resilient tourism sectors.
[53] The Food system approach gained momentum with the release of the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) Report on Nutrition and Food Systems in 2017.
See: https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/39441a97-3237-46d3-91d9-ed1d13130420

the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by SIDS. It is also aligned with the IFAD13 commitments that put a strong focus on the biodiversity and climate resilience of small-scale producers.[54]

48. **The 2022 Strategy has a significantly lower focus on marine ecosystems and resources,** as the emphasis on marine resources and blue economy is significantly less, compared to the 2014 SIDS Approach.[55] This is not consistent with the importance of marine resources in SIDS contexts and opportunities, as they offer for economic diversification. Indeed, improving livelihoods for smallholders can be achieved by enhancing economic opportunities related to marine resources through sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, as highlighted in the IFAD 2016-2025 Strategy.[56]

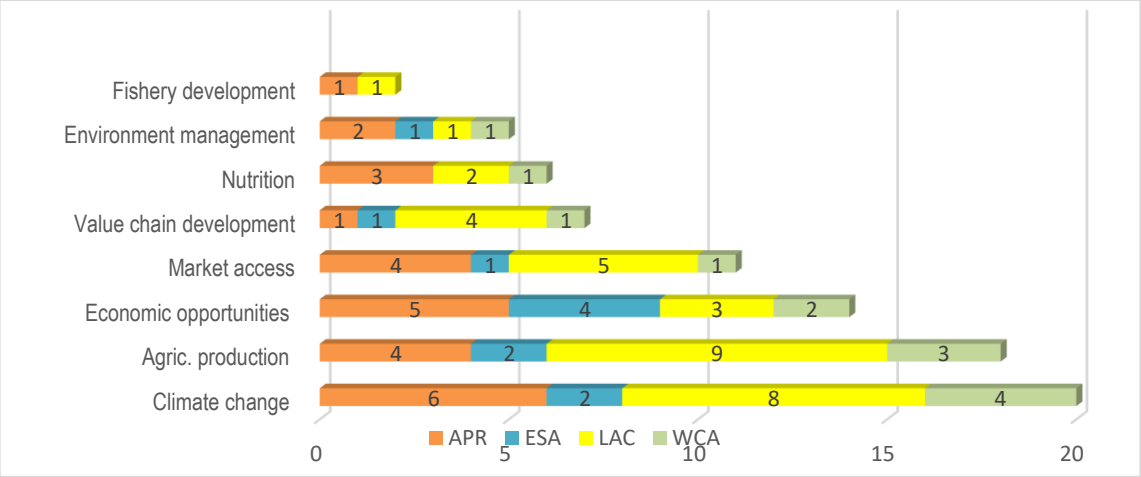
49. **IFAD's SIDS country strategies (COSOPs and CSNs) incorporate to a moderate extent the three resilience dimensions explicitly.** CSNs and/or COSOPs were developed to guide IFAD's engagement in all SIDS covered by the present evaluation (except Fiji).[57] COSOPs were elaborated for four SIDS, Comoros, Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Cabo Verde, while CSNs were developed in thirteen cases. Review of the COSOPs and CSNs strategic objectives revealed that the three vulnerability dimensions were clearly considered in the objectives of twelve (out of the 17) of the strategic documents reviewed. **Social vulnerability** aspects were explicitly addressed in thirteen cases (of COSOPs and CSNs objectives), to empower communities, enhance their adaptive capacity, improve inclusiveness and equity, and improve living conditions for marginalized groups, especially in rural and vulnerable areas. Aspects of **economic vulnerability** were explicit addressed in fifteen cases with an emphasis on increased agricultural production, income generation, market access, and economic opportunities; while aspects of **environmental and climate change** vulnerabilities were explicit in thirteen cases, in terms of sustainable agricultural practices, climate-smart practices, and climate resilience. IFAD's Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) include a vulnerability assessment and contributed to the development of objectives.[58]

50. **Key themes in country strategies were not fully consistent with strategic priorities for SIDS.** The analysis of COSOPs and CSNs strategic objectives reveal that the theme of climate change resilience is the most mentioned, followed by agricultural production, the diversification of economic opportunities, and access to markets for smallholders, (see Figure 4 below). The lower mentions of key themes for SIDS were for fishery (linked to the blue economy) that was explicit in only two regions (APR and LAC). Natural Resource Management (NRM) focus was less explicit but however indirectly addressed through climate resilience.[59] This is in line with the reduced attention to those aspects in the 2022 IFAD's SIDS strategy, compared to the 2014 Approach. Yet, as far as rural livelihoods in SIDS are concerned, and in line with their contexts (see chapter 1), sustainable fishery development and marine ecosystems remain of paramount importance for many

[54] Document IFAD13/2/R.2
[55] It is mentioned once under the strategic objective 1, referring to SIDS locations close to oceans. While this presents a challenge, it can also provide opportunities to promote domestic smallholder fisheries and aquaculture. The explanation obtained on this point suggests a deliberate strategic choice to diversify the focus of projects.
[56] "IFAD recognizes the specific challenges and vulnerabilities facing SIDS. Its approach for these countries will focus on three thematic areas: sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture; opportunities and employment for smallholder agriculture; and environment and climate change." P.30
[57] No COSOP nor a CSN was available for Fiji valid for the evaluated period. This was justified based on COSOP/CSN guidelines and due to the lack of an ongoing investment project in the country. However, one was developed and approved in January 2025. On the other hand, Vanuatu that has no loan financed project had a CSN.
[58] See: https://www.ifad.org/en/social-environment-assessment-procedures. SECAP describes IFAD's key mainstreaming themes (youth, gender, nutrition, environment and climate) and encompasses nine social, environmental and climate standards: biodiversity conservation; resource efficiency and pollution prevention; cultural heritage; Indigenous Peoples; labour and working conditions; community health and safety; physical and economic resettlement; financial intermediaries and direct investments; and climate change.
[59] As climate resilience topic gained great interest since 2015.

SIDS. Similarly, the preparedness for natural hazards was absent in the strategic orientations of SIDS of the four regions.

Figure 4
Explicit mention of operational themes in COSOPs and CSNs objectives



Source: Evaluation team elaboration (Horizontal axis: no. of strategic objectives that explicitly mention the theme)

Relevance of projects' designs

51. **Explicit consideration of multidimensional vulnerabilities in project designs was insufficient, hence not comprehensive in supporting resilience building.** An analysis of projects' goals and objectives reveals that in only nine cases (less than third) themes linked to the three dimensions of resilience were explicitly mentioned,[60] while all projects explicitly include at least two of the three dimensions. The social dimension is the least explicitly mentioned in projects objectives, partly as being considered as one of IFAD's mainstreaming themes, therefore it is indirectly addressed in most cases. Climate resilience is systematically mentioned for all projects in the APR and LAC regions. ToCs were developed for selected countries and projects. An analysis of these ToCs suggests that environment and climate resilience are a core common theme across the four regions (see Box A2, Annex VI). Background analyses underpinning these ToCs were not comprehensive in considering various vulnerability, linkage among these, to identify effective supports to build resilience. The lack of a specific vulnerability framework to guide the design of operations in SIDS contexts is one explanatory factor of this shortfall.

52. **IFAD support was largely relevant in addressing the needs of targeted rural smallholders and communities.** IFAD addressed rural smallholders' specific needs in SIDS in relation to (i) economic empowerment through increased agricultural production, income sources diversification and access to markets; (ii) access to basic infrastructure, production inputs and markets, reducing inequality and improving inclusion; and (iii) protection of natural resources and use of climate-resilient practices. While these needs are addressed in all four regions, the extent to which they are addressed varies in each region. Only in few SIDS, sustainable fishery activities were promoted, and IFAD's support was highly relevant to those rural dwellers whose livelihood depend on marine resources (see further elaboration in the effectiveness sections). Interviewed IFAD stakeholders argued that IFAD does not have a comparative advantage in fishery, consequently, fishery interventions were of limited scope.

[60] These cases are: Solomon Islands, Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau and São Tomé and Principe. See the list of projects in Annex III.

Relevance of approaches

53. **Targeting approaches and measures in SIDS country strategies and projects' documents were consistent and relevant.** All targeting methods mentioned in COSOPs and CSNs were aligned with key guidance of IFAD's Targeting Policy. These include geographic targeting, self-targeting, and direct targeting. Strategic documents included an analysis of the national and rural poverty situation, examining government poverty reduction policies and institutional capacity. They also identified suggested areas for IFAD activities, such as targeting regions with high poverty levels (e.g. Kiribati, Dominican Republic), remote outer islands (Kiribati), and areas with a high concentration of smallholder farmers (Samoa). Targeting measures across the four regions included plans to reach very poor individuals, with the potential to benefit from improved access to assets and opportunities for agricultural production and rural income-generating activities. These strategies were supported by enabling measures aimed at creating and sustaining a policy and operational environment favourable to poverty targeting. Empowerment and capacity-building measures were also emphasized, designed to encourage the active participation and inclusion of people who traditionally have less voice and power in planning and decision-making.[61] Project designs clearly identified the intended target groups, with specific attention given to marginalized populations. For instance, in Guyana, marginalized groups included indigenous peoples, women, and people with disabilities, while in the Solomon Islands, the marginalized groups identified were women, youth, and people living in remote areas.[62]

54. **Country strategies and projects missed the opportunity to include SIDS institutional capacity within key strategic or operational themes.** Institutional capacity is a critical challenge across several SIDS. Yet, it was not embedded in project designs as a strategic or operational topic. Rather, it has been treated as a risk to be mitigated, even in SIDS in fragile situations. The key importance of institutional gaps was confirmed by interviewed who mentioned recurrent problems of limited availability of technical capacity (human resource constraints) due to skill shortages and brain drain (especially with SIDS in Africa and APR), inadequate training opportunities (especially in agriculture) and a weak system of governance, procurement, interagency coordination. These weaknesses trigger projects' inefficiencies in all SIDS cases studied by the evaluation, which in turn affect effectiveness. The IFAD approach of considering SIDS institutional capacity gaps as risk problem rather that a strategic area to be systematically addressed represents a missed opportunity to address underlying reasons of limited projects effectiveness and efficiency.[63] [64]

55. **Implementation arrangements of IFAD projects were not tailored for SIDS unique challenges.** As presented in above the context section SIDS faced specific challenges that differentiate them from non-SIDS. Interviewed national stakeholders highlighted the fact that IFAD apply similar implementation models as in non-SIDS countries (e.g. for procurement and supports). Projects had to rely on international consultants, given the limited availability of technical expertise locally, who have not significant experience in SIDS contexts. Logistical complexity was another recurrent issue. Additionally, there was an insufficient integration of projects into national programs and systems, which have affected the projects'

[61] For instance, enabling measures identified in the country strategy documents included strengthening governance at the grassroots level and promoting social dialogue in Guinea-Bissau, capacity building, and promoting inclusive policies in Samoa, as well as building public-private partnerships in the Dominican Republic.
[62] Furthermore, most country strategy documents made reference to consultations with target vulnerable groups such as women, youth, indigenous people and persons with disabilities (15 out of 17 strategy documents).
[63] An IFAD staff member commented in the e-survey "The weakness of institutions is often not taken into account in project design. There is no specific strategy for support, debt payment, targeting, etc.".
[64] The CSPE found a grant that addressed institutional capacity, as presented in para 61.

deliverables in several SIDS.[65] Consequently, this remains a gap to be treated as critical when defining implementation arrangements at design stage. The e-survey results show a significant proportion of respondents (35 per cent overall, while it reaches 46 per cent for IFAD staff respondents) that do not agree or strongly not agree that "IFAD's operational approaches are tailored considering SIDS vulnerability issues" (see Annex VI). This confirms a need for more tailored approaches to SIDS.

56. **IFAD demonstrated flexibility in supporting SIDS to mitigate vulnerabilities exacerbated by the COVID 19 pandemic.** The IFAD Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF), implemented from 2020 to 2022, supported vulnerable rural populations to recover from the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The RPSF proved to be instrumental in helping rural communities, including in few SIDS countries, to address COVID-19-induced vulnerabilities, with tangible successes in household outreach, agricultural productivity, and market facilitation. However, there were challenges linked to the short implementation timelines, insufficient focus on youth and gender inclusion, and SIDS logistic challenges (see Annex VI). The Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus (PIRAS) Facility, implemented between IFAD and the Australian Government, also aimed to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on rural households through existing IFAD-funded projects and programmes (see more details in para 70).

Key findings by region

In APR, IFAD aligned with regional needs, emphasizing climate resilience and economic empowerment. However, focus on fisheries and the blue economy was very limited, despite their importance in SIDS. Although smallholder market access and income diversification were prioritized, projects struggled to reach remote island communities. Institutional weaknesses were viewed as risks to be managed rather than as strategic focus areas.

In ESA, interventions' focus was on climate resilience and economic empowerment, but nutrition and fisheries were underrepresented. While social resilience was acknowledged as a critical area to be developed, it was not often explicitly integrated into projects. Weak institutional capacity, particularly in governance and human resources were not address systematically in country strategies or project designs. Although the COVID-19 response provided critical support, logistical issues limited its reach.

In **WCA,** IFAD prioritized agriculture, climate resilience, and economic development in SIDS, but paid little attention to the blue economy. Nutrition was inconsistently addressed in country programs and integration across resilience dimensions was lacking. Governance challenges, skill shortages, and weak training systems were not systematically tackled.

In LAC, IFAD targeted supported rural smallholders, promoting climate resilience, agricultural diversification, and market access. Fisheries and the blue economy were largely overlooked, except in Haiti. Nutrition was inconsistently addressed, leaving gaps in food security efforts. Projects approaches for resilience were incomplete. Institutional capacity constraints were acknowledged, but not directly addressed. IFAD's COVID-19 response was relevant; however, it lacked focus on youth and gender inclusion.

B. Coherence

Internal coherence

57. **IFAD financed operations in SIDS across the regions exhibit low coherence in addressing the resilience dimensions and themes.** Approaches for climate

[65] For instance, during the cases studies missions in Belize, Grenada and the Maldives, the evaluation team found the projects' management units (PMUs) are not well connected with the line ministries, due to their physical locations. The situation has improved in Grenada with the creation of the rural development unit directly under the supervision of the ministry permanent secretary. In Comoros, the PMU is well integrated into the ministry physically, but the lack of a national programme to which the project is tied has negatively affected its delivery.

resilience, across the four regions were consistent as objectives and approaches applied were similar. Economic resilience focused on supporting value chain development,[66] entrepreneurship development and diversification of income sources. However, efforts to foster partnerships with private actors were uneven, limiting smallholders' access to broader markets and their ability to sustain access to profitable markets.[67] Interventions in LAC and APR showed weak smallholders' market integration, partly due to high transportation costs and isolation. In WCA and ESA, structural weaknesses, such as poor infrastructure and institutional fragility hindered market connectivity. In the APR and LAC regions, investments were consistent for rainwater harvesting and irrigation systems to address water scarcity. In these two regions, despite the critical role of the blue economy and the dependence on marine ecosystems, the focus on these aspects was limited. Similarly, in WCA and ESA, efforts to promote mangrove conservation and coastal resilience (Guinea-Bissau and Comoros) were not mainstreamed into broader resilience strategies. Social resilience operations were highly coherent across the four regions considering (i) women targeting and empowerment, (ii) enabling inclusive access to resources (e.g. water and lands), and (iii) building capacity of individuals, groups and communities. (See Chapter V)

58. **Lessons learnt from past experiences informed designs for resilience support, except for institutional capacity strengthening.** In the Caribbean, key lessons were incorporated to promote gender inclusion, climate-smart practices, and value chain development to enhance rural resilience and economic opportunities. In APR, projects benefited from lessons on participatory planning methods, prioritizing the needs of remote populations and fostering small-scale enterprise development. For WCA, lessons improved the focus on value chains for export crops, sustainable agroforestry practices, and participatory community engagement to drive local development. In ESA, lessons from past projects enabled advancing approaches of climate-smart agriculture, post-harvest, infrastructure development, and community-based planning. More lessons learned are provided in Annex VI. Overall, very few or no lessons were drawn to address SIDS' institutional challenges and poor coordination across development partners. According to stakeholders interviewed, these issues consistently hindered efficiency, effectiveness and long-term sustainability.[68]

Grants' contributions in SIDS

59. **IFAD grant-supported activities were relevant in addressing environmental vulnerabilities, especially in the APR.** The Vanuatu Post-Cyclone Rapid Recovery in Agricultural Production grant, implemented after Cyclone Pam in 2015–2016, prioritized restoring livelihoods through interventions in agriculture and fisheries. Activities included distributing seeds, chicks, and fishing equipment, as well as re-establishing food gardens. The grant yielded immediate benefits, as beneficiary households increased sales in the fish market by 90 per cent and that protein consumption from poultry farming also increased by 90 per cent. However, logistical challenges and delays in the supply chain, which led to significant losses of imported potato seeds, highlighted vulnerabilities in supply chains and underscored the need for robust coordination in emergency responses.

60. **Grant-supported activities were relevant for economic resilience.** Grants focused on income sources diversification, strengthened local economies, and

[66] With constructed storage facilities, and rural roads to reduce post-harvest losses and enhance market access.
[67] Projects in Guyana and Cuba facilitated infrastructure improvements and established market linkages, Grenada and Belize lacked sustained engagement with private actors for an increase access to markets. Cape Verde and Comoros placed significant emphasis on production, but access to markets and value chains was not adequately addressed, leaving smallholders vulnerable to market fluctuations. Inadequate focus on market linkages and private sector engagement was encountered by projects in the APR region.
[68] less than a half of IFAD respondents of the e-survey agreed that IFAD strategies and projects are informed by lessons learned on vulnerability issues.

improved livelihoods, for instance, in the ESA region, the "Alternative Livelihoods for Food and Income Security" initiative, implemented in Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, and Zanzibar between 2015 and 2022, demonstrated the potential of modern beekeeping as a means of income diversification.[69] The initiative generated over US$20,000 in honey sales and proved to be a valuable income source during the COVID-19 pandemic, when tourism—a major economic driver for many SIDS—collapsed. Despite challenges such as high input costs, certification hurdles, and competition from imported honey, the initiative highlighted the potential for income diversification and suggested exploring additional opportunities, such as silk farming and organic waste recycling. Other grants in APR, as for instance "Leveraging the Development of Local Food Crops and Fisheries Value Chains for Improved Nutrition and Sustainable Food Systems" and "Melanesian Rural Market and Innovation-Driven Development Programme (MERMAID)" were also relevant for economic resilience by contributing to address nutrition goals as presented in Box A5, Annex VI.

61. **Grants that addressed social vulnerability issues were not effective.** While some initiatives to build human capital, such as training sessions and knowledge exchanges, were successfully implemented, some activities were incomplete, such as study tours on agriculture and rural industries, leading to limited impact overall. For instance, the "Employment for Youth in the Caribbean" grant facilitated youth employment and entrepreneurship by training over 800 young people, funding 123 business projects, and offering mentorship and capacity-building initiatives, particularly in the Dominican Republic and Guyana. However, delays in grant disbursement in Belize and Cuba hindered project implementation, and the lack of robust support systems left many youth enterprises requiring additional technical assistance and mentorship beyond the grant's timeline. The regional grant "Young Leaders in the SICA Region" (2018–2022) sought to promote social and economic inclusion of rural youth in Central America and the Caribbean through policy dialogues and leadership programs. The grant supported a study in Belize on rural youth aspirations and challenges, identifying key areas to improve youth inclusion in economic and social activities. In the Dominican Republic, the grant supported the development of the youth strategy of a loan supported project (PRORURAL Joven).

62. **IFAD-supported grants that addressed institutional capacity gaps achieved insufficient results.** Challenges in terms of sustainability and integration of grants into broader frameworks, limited the long-term impact of capacity building grants. For instance, the Solomon Islands DELIVER grant[70] focused on institutional capacity development;[71] According to the end survey results, targeted stakeholders reported improvements in institutional performance. However, the lack of linkages with IFAD's loan-funded projects, such as RDP II in the Solomon Islands, limited the broader influence of these improvements. In Haiti two grants,[72] supported capacity building efforts, however the political instability and logistical challenges hindered the effective institutionalization, coordination and long-term sustainability of these efforts. See further examples in Annex VI. Overall, there were weak linkages between grants and the loan portfolio.[73]

[69] During Phase I, the project introduced over 1,800 Langstroth hives and established 290 apiaries, alongside training for government staff in beekeeping technologies and honey quality control. Phase II expanded the scope with the introduction of stingless beekeeping, support for organic certification, and the establishment of additional apiaries.
[70] "Driving Delivery of Results in the Agriculture Sector in Solomon Islands"
[71] By training 27 senior officials and civil servants in results-based management through the Deliverology approach
[72] the "Innovative Crop and Soil-based Technologies in Haiti" grant strengthened local capacity for soil mapping and restoration, training nine agronomists in agroforestry techniques. The "Strengthening Decentralized Agriculture Programming and M&E" grant enhanced planning and monitoring capacities within Haiti's Ministry of Agriculture, aiding the Project Management Unit of the PPI-3 loan program
[73] Some exceptions, like the MERMAID program informing the AIMN loan project in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and SIFWAP's alignment with the KOIFAWP loan project in Kiribati, demonstrate the potential for better integration.

External coherence

63. **IFAD's strategies and programmes in SIDS addressed regional SIDS priorities** by focusing on sustainable food security, climate resilience, improved and inclusive economic livelihoods for smallholders. For instance, LAC projects aligned with the focus of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCC)[74] on building climate resilience by introducing climate-smart agriculture practices like water-efficient irrigation and crop diversification. IFAD's interventions contributed to regional goals to reduce dependence on traditional exports like sugar by developing agro-processing value chains for spices in Grenada and fruits in Guyana. In APR, IFAD operations aligned with the Framework for Resilient Development of Pacific Islands[75] focusing on improving water security through rainwater harvesting systems, drought-resistant crops,[76] and supporting integrated farming systems and home gardening initiatives in Kiribati. The IFAD paper "Investing in rural people in the Pacific Islands" highlighted the importance of increasing and diversifying food production and consumption to improve nutrition.[77] In WCA and ESA, IFAD's focus on sustainable cocoa production in São Tomé and Príncipe and on agroforestry and post-harvest infrastructure in Comoros are coherent with the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme of Africa Union.[78]

64. **IFAD's niche of focus complements broader regional initiatives and fills gaps in geographical areas often overlooked by other agencies.** IFAD operates in geographically challenging and remote locations where other partners are reluctant to intervene,[79]– such as the outer islands of Kiribati or rural areas in São Tomé, or underserved islands in the Maldives – due to high costs or logistical difficulties. With its focus on smallholder agriculture and climate-resilient practices, IFAD complement the large-scale, policy-driven, and/or large infrastructure-related interventions financed by other MDBs. However, interviews with stakeholders noted that IFAD's limited presence in SIDS countries reduces its ability to fully leverage its comparative advantage and maximize its additionality. There are also coordination challenges due to the varying mandates and operational frameworks of different development partners at the country and regional levels, preventing synergies and partnerships at both country and regional levels. More considerations on IFAD's specific niche by region is presented in Box A7 Annex VI.

[74] The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)focuses on Caribbean SIDS, improving the region's framework for and activities that address climate change; and providing policy advice during international climate change negotiations. See https://www.greenclimate.fund/ae/ccccc

[75] The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in 2016 endorsed the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP): An integrated approach to address climate and disaster risk management in the Pacific. The FRDP provides guidance to stakeholder groups on how to enhance resilience in ways that contribute to and are embedded in sustainable development.
https://pacificresiliencepartnership.org/framework-resilient-development-pacific/

[76] KOIFAWP mitigated water scarcity in remote islands, addressing regional goals for disaster risk management and sustainable livelihoods.

[77] Two versions, 2015 and 2024, were reviewed by the evaluation team. Both papers have a significant focus on nutrition improvement and sustainable economic livelihoods.

[78] Through CAADP, African governments agreed to allocate at least 10 per cent of national budgets to agriculture and rural development to target at least 6 per cent per annum. Underlying these investment commitments are targets for reducing poverty and malnutrition, increasing productivity and farm incomes, and improving the sustainability of agricultural production and use of natural resources. CAADP supports countries to enhance resilience to climate variability through disaster preparedness policies and strategies, early warning response systems and social safety nets.

[79] Interventions sites in Grenada, Belize, Guinea Bissau, Kiribati, Maldives and STP confirmed this.

Key findings by region

In APR, IFAD's work aligned with the Pacific Resilience Framework, particularly in improving water security. IFAD's niche role focused on underserved areas such as Kiribati's outer islands. Climate resilience was consistently addressed through investments like rainwater harvesting and irrigation in Kiribati. Grants like the Vanuatu Post-Cyclone Recovery boosted fish sales and poultry production but exposed supply chain weaknesses and the blue economy remained underexplored.

In ESA, IFAD's intervention with the African Union's agricultural strategy was relevant, operating in fragile contexts like Comoros. Poor infrastructure and fragile institutions hinder market access and IFAD was coherent in promoting climate-smart agriculture and post-harvest infrastructure. The beekeeping initiative under the "Alternative Livelihoods" grant diversified incomes during the COVID-19 crisis. Mangrove conservation efforts, such as in Comoros, were not adequately mainstreamed.

In WCA, IFAD's work, including cocoa production in São Tomé and Príncipe, aligned with regional agricultural goals and focused on areas like rural São Tomé, where other agencies are less active but structural issues limit smallholder market access. IFAD did address climate resilience, but efforts in coastal protection, like Guinea-Bissau's mangrove restoration, were not integrated into wider strategies.

In LAC, IFAD's operations aligned with CCCC goals, including climate-smart agriculture in Grenada and Guyana, while also targeting underserved areas like rural Guyana. Isolation and transport barriers were identified but not coherently addressed. Projects advanced irrigation and diversification but lacked a strong focus on the blue economy. The "Employment for Youth in the Caribbean" grant trained 800+ youth but faced delays in Belize and Cuba, limiting its impact.

Non-lending activities

Knowledge management

65. **COSOPs and CSN documents highlight the relevance and main themes of knowledge management (KM).** They outline KM as a key tool to inform policies, partnerships, and new project activities, building from intervention's lessons learnt and with a focus on SIDS vulnerability issues. Main topics for KM include innovation, promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, nutrition-sensitive interventions, social inclusion, and resilience. At project level, most design documents mention the need to develop KM strategies and action plans, knowledge sharing and assessment of results. Nonetheless, the establishment of a KM strategy was varied significantly across projects and regions (see Annex VI).

66. **Knowledge products and approaches were developed in all regions focused on projects' themes.** In ESA, training manuals, workshops and knowledge sharing platforms gathered farmers to discuss and apply climate-smart practices. The CLISSA project in Seychelles created practical training manuals on climate-resilient agricultural practices, equipping farmers with actionable techniques to adapt to climate variability. It also established a knowledge-sharing platform that fostered a community of practice, allowing farmers to exchange ideas and adopt innovative methods. In Comoros, initiatives such as farmer field schools and workshops offered hands-on, experiential learning opportunities, allowing farmers to practice new techniques to strength farmers' adaptive capacities for climate resilience. Similarly, in WCA, the dissemination of knowledge products was delivered trough workshops, exchange visits, and printed materials, mainly focusing on projects' activities; however, studies to document successful practices and draw lessons learned were very limited. A similar approach was used in LAC SIDS, where main activities of knowledge focused on communications related to project activities and dissemination of good practices using social media and other web-based platforms.

67. **Knowledge dissemination was limited to the projects' sphere, with mixed outreach results.** In all regions, training sessions, workshops and farmer field schools proved to be the most used mechanisms to share knowledge and foster new practices among beneficiaries, particularly for climate change adaptation and resilience. In Belize, farmers benefited from study / learning tours within the country and in neighbouring countries (e.g. Guatemala).[80] Dissemination and usage of data through web-based platforms shows mixed results. In Seychelles, the CLISSA project did not consider that SIDS targeted population have low internet connectivity and limited technological infrastructure accessible to project beneficiaries and relevant local stakeholders, limiting its outreach. However, in Samoa, IFAD organized a series of workshops to share findings from a study on soil health and crop rotation.[81] Digital platforms were used to make resources accessible to those who could not attend in person, further expanding outreach. In LAC, projects made use of social media and internet to share key data on project activities and lessons. However, evidence of outreach to audience groups is limited.

68. **Knowledge products were relevant for resilience building, as linked to project activities.** The knowledge products focused on SIDS vulnerability issues such as climate change adaptation, water resource management, resilience, and sustainable agricultural practices, as observed in Seychelles, Comoros, Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa, Haiti, Cuba, São Tomé and Príncipe and Cabo Verde. In Fiji, projects documented traditional and indigenous agricultural practices that enhance climate resilience. These practices were compiled into comprehensive guides and research papers, providing valuable insights into sustainable farming techniques. The CLISSA project in Seychelles created practical training manuals on climate-resilient agricultural practices, equipping farmers with actionable techniques to adapt to climate variability. In Comoros knowledge products were developed and disseminated on the improved community-based agroforestry system of ''bocage practice'' (see further explanation in the section on environmental vulnerabilities). In Haiti, the PURRACO project produced training materials,[82] including guidelines for goat production, as well as the guidelines for sorting, harvesting, and preserving vegetable seeds. For the APR SIDS, knowledge products were produced on nutrition aspects, as for instance how to integrate nutrition into IFAD's investments as a key to driving rural transformation, and on nutrition behavior for improved diets.[83]

69. **Very few evidence of KM systems found that informed the development of new policies or strategies.** Good examples of KM influencing policy action are found in APR and WCA. In Kiribati, the government used findings from IFAD-supported research on coastal erosion to develop the national climate adaptation strategy. This policy shift has led to the implementation of more effective coastal protection measures, safeguarding communities from the adverse effects of climate change. Similarly, in PNG, lessons from IFAD supported projects were used in the development of policies aimed at supporting smallholder farmers, ensuring that they have access to necessary resources and training. In Cabo Verde, studies on water issues for the POSER project were conducted based on specific requests from the government and were used to inform decisions regarding water resources and to establish a new water irrigation agency. Apart from these examples, which represent about 10 per cent of projects, the evaluation found no other evidence on KM contribution towards a new strategy, or policies. This is due to the non implementation by supported projects of approaches for systematic generation and

[80] In Seychelles, Samoa and STP, projects developed workshops, farmer field schools and printed material accessible and tailored to the farmers learning needs and capitalizing their own knowledge.
[81] These workshops brought together local farmers, government officials, and NGOs, ensuring that the knowledge reached a broad audience.
[82] These materials were developed to better adapt to the rural Haitian context. They are written in Creole language with illustrative images, which allows for better appropriation by the participants.
[83] Integrating nutrition into IFAD's investments in the Pacific as a key to driving rural transformation at this Link. And Enhancing Diets: A Nutrition Behaviour Change Strategy for Malaita, Solomon Islands at this Link.

utilisation of lessons learned, to feed into government policy analysis and decisions.

70. **Poor Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems hindered effective KM systems.** Despite project's efforts to establish sound monitoring systems, including training, deployment of experts and engagement of local and governmental stakeholders, aspects such as inadequate data collection mechanisms and processes, as well as inadequate design of monitoring indicators affected the contributions of M&E systems to effective project implementation and KM systems. For instance, in ESA, the PREFER project in Comoros made progress by developing a database management tool, and CLISSA in Seychelles successfully developed baseline studies and began improving its M&E framework. However, both projects struggled with incomplete or delayed implementation of key M&E processes. Moreover, neither project was successful in capturing and providing sufficient information on impact indicators, limiting decision making and sharing lessons with key stakeholders or other project partners. In LAC, most projects presented challenges for robust data collection process and overall mechanisms, particularly for gender, youth, climate change and adaptation and environmental resource management related activities. For example, in Grenada, the case study reports indicate that the lack of consistent monitoring of fishery resources affected project results in this area.

71. **Evidence of grants' contribution towards effective KM systems was found only in APR.** Two examples of grant-financed interventions demonstrated a direct contribution of KM. The MERMAID grant implemented in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, developed training a learning exchange through the Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility (PIRAS),[84] to share knowledge on nutrition and food security in communities. Subsequently, PIRAS strengthened its nutrition experts in the field and developed nutrition knowledge products. Lessons learned from MERMAID informed the design of the AIMN loan project design in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Similarly, the 'Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific (CBRAP)' grant implemented in the Cook Islands, Niue and Marshall Islands, aimed to enable young farmers to work with producer organizations and improve income. While engagement of youth fell short of expectations, community engagement in local markets provided positive results. Following the development of training materials, awareness campaigns and training to local stakeholders, farmers' markets were replicated in non project areas.

72. **South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in SIDS yielded insufficient results.** The 2022 IFAD's SIDS strategy promotes SSTC to share successful project lessons learnt across SIDS. Most COSOPs and CSNs refer to promote SSTC through partnership approaches. The 2022 CSN of Guyana places SSTC as a key aspect to foster policy making for improved agricultural best practices and innovative rural development solutions. Belize's 2022 CSN discusses the relevance of SSTC interventions to scale up operations and finance regional initiatives that address common vulnerabilities of Caribbean SIDS. In APR, the CSNs and COSOPS of Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Maldives showcase the relevance of SSTC activities towards enhanced knowledge sharing and partnerships, particularly for climate smart agriculture and market development. In ESA and WCA, the country strategies envisage SSTC activities to support knowledge management and sharing of experiences as well as fostering partnerships, particularly for sustainable value chains, technology transfer and social inclusion. Despite the explicit reference to SSTC in COSOPs and CSNs, there is limited evidence of activities conducted for supporting resilience building in SIDS.

[84] The Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus (PIRAS) Facility is a collaboration between IFAD and the Australian Government. It aimed to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on rural households through existing IFAD-funded projects and programmes. https://www.ifad.org/en/initiatives/rural-poor-stimulus-facility/pacific-islands-rural-stimulus-facility

73. **There were successful examples of grant-supported SSTC activities in the LAC region.** The regional grant Regional Rural Dialogue Programme (PDRR) supported the Dominican Republic efforts for youth inclusion in policy dialogue, through exchange of lessons learnt between Central America and the Dominican Republic.[85] The PRODEGAN project in Cuba conducted SSTC exchanges with Uruguay, to support capacity building of farmers and government authorities for sustainable livestock production and commercialization of beef and milk. As a result, government authorities have begun to search new technologies that improve cattle and milk production that also reduce dependency on external inputs for production. Interviews during case study missions noted that IFAD provided no opportunity to smallholders of SIDS countries to share their experiences on approaches to overcome similar specific challenges.

Partnership-building

74. **Strategic partnerships outlined in COSOPS and CSNs sought to address key SIDS vulnerabilities.** COSOPs and CSNs of SIDS in the four regions aim to establish partnerships with regional and national institutions, local organizations, research centres, and international cooperation, with emphasis on the private sector. The focus of partnerships was similar across all regions, but the relevance and main expected contributions varied across regions (see Table A13, Annex VI). For example, in LAC and APR, country programmes promoted public private partnerships (PPP) to encourage efficiency gains in project activities and generate synergies with the public sector. Conversely, in ESA and WCA, private sector alliances were mainly set to support sustainable market access and, in some cases, to leverage policy dialogue on selected value chains. In LAC, ESA and WCA, partnerships were promoted mostly to support projects implementation to enable synergies with ongoing operations, particularly in the areas of nutrition and climate change adaptation. In APR, partnerships with UN agencies intend to support IFAD's interventions to implement projects, draw lessons and generate knowledge, promote policy dialogue and enable.

75. **Strategic partnerships for the development of national food systems pathways were evidenced only in three SIDS.** Following the 2021 Food Systems Summit, 13 SIDS of the 18 evaluated have developed national food system pathways. However, IFAD's contribution was evident in only three SIDS.[86] In the Dominican Republic, IFAD collaborated with FAO and WFP on food security plans; however, some planned initiatives remained unimplemented. In Haiti, FAO, IFAD, and WFP co-managed the National Commission for Food and Nutritional Security, supporting national planning and financing initiatives. In Samoa, the plan to hire a food systems expert to support the ICO based in Fiji has stalled.[87] IFAD's limited presence and small portfolio in SIDS have constrained its impact, as well as the lack of joint programs with of other Rome-based agencies (RBAs) during the evaluated period.[88]

76. **Partnership results with international partners, including UN agencies and regional bodies, were insufficient. Many initiatives started within the past two years.** In Samoa, the SAFPROM project successfully promoted a strong partnership with the FAO for sustainable fisheries development. In Kiribati APR, partnership development with UN agencies was minimal, despite existing opportunities of collaboration. In Guinea-Bissau the projects have established

[85] The PDRR fostered South-South cooperation with networks like COPROFAM and Grupo de Diálogo Andino (GDA) and contributed to regional public policy dialogue on family farming.
[86] Grenada, Maldives, Cabo Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe, with the Solomon Islands pathway still in draft and under revision at the time of the evaluation.
[87] The multi-country grant 'Small Islands Food and Water Project (SIFWaP)', implemented in Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Tuvalu, aims to integrate food systems activities and support the delivery of Road Maps for Pathway implementation together with FAO, the grant is still in its inception phase and results are yet to be shown.
[88] The joint 2024 IFAD-WFP Action Plan on Fragility targets Haiti, Fiji, Kiribati and Tuvalu appears as an opportunity to strengthen the collaboration and piloting RBA collaboration in APR SIDS, which can be assessed after few years.

collaborations with WFP and FAO to support rural communities through a school nutrition program and to conduct three studies that informed one of the IFAD-funded projects. The PRODECOR project in Cuba established a collaboration with FAO in response to the limited availability of data on the impact of the project. Using project data, FAO conducted a study that included estimations of crop yields and production obtained under PRODECOR interventions. The study made it possible to appreciate the project achievements and limitations in a context of lack of available data due to COVID-19 restrictions. In Dominican Republic, the collaboration with FAO and WFP in the implementation of PRORURAL Inclusivo helped embedding resilience issues into food security and nutrition aspects.[89] Partnerships with regional bodies happened only through grants, thus activities were very limited.[90]

77. At the global level, IFAD implemented in partnership with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and other UN agencies the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP-RWEE),[91] which Phase II is currently under way in the APR SIDS countries, in addition to the initiative of Pacific RBAs partnership launched in 2023, to strengthen sustainable and inclusive food systems across the sub-region. At the time of this evaluation, a very little evidence was found.[92] Additionally, considering the importance of remittances for SIDS, IFAD established the Financing Facility for Remittances (FFR), in partnership with other donors, to support projects in relation to global and domestic remittance markets. The aim is to maximise the development effectiveness of migrant financial contributions to their families and communities, thus appears relevant and helpful for SIDS' smallholders.[93] Beyond these examples, there was no evidence of effective strategic partnerships with UN agencies over the evaluated period. Instances of duplication of actions with other UN agencies were reported to the evaluation team, for instance in Belize.[94] Similarly, the 2022 CSPE of Guinea-Bissau reports overlaps of activities among local and international partners, due to the lack of coordination.

78. **Effective strategic partnerships with SIDS governments were instrumental in leveraging results towards resilience building.**[95] In Fiji, collaboration with the government has facilitated the integration of climate-smart agricultural practices into national strategies, enhancing food security and resilience. In Samoa, government partnerships have supported the development of fisheries and agricultural sectors, improving livelihoods and economic stability.[96] Partnering with the Seychelles Agricultural Agency (SAA) contributed to providing technical support and training to farmers in support of climate resilient agricultural activities for the CLISSA project. Similarly, in Comoros, the partnership established between the

[89] It worth to mention that the Caribbean Development Bank and IFAD signed on 27 September 2024, a procurement framework agreement to boost efficiency in co-financed projects.
[90] One can mention the following grants: Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific ((2015-2019), covering Cook Islands, Niue, Marshall Islands, implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community; Support to the integration of the regional agricultural markets of the Indian Ocean Commission (2018-2022), covering Seychelles; Mauritius; Comoros, implemented by the Indian Ocean Commission; and Young Leaders for Rural Development in SICA Region Programme (2017-2022), implemented by Corporación Regional de Capacitacion En Desarrollo Rural, covering 8 LAC countries (SIDS an non-SIDS).
[91] Implemented by FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and WFP with the financial support of Norway, Sweden.
See https://www.jprwee.org/
[92] The following information was found on IFAD Intranet, "In the Pacific Islands, FAO, IFAD, and WFP launched the Pacific RBAs Partnership in August 2023, to address food security, climate resilience and nutrition across 14 Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This contributed to initiatives including the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP-RWEE) and the Samoa National Food Systems Transformation Agenda (SNFSTA), in which the RBAs supported 7 000 women farmers and engaged 7 000 participants in tackling food insecurity and climate challenges."
[93] RemitSCOPE is a platform for remittance that the Facility supported. See details at https://remitscope.org/about/.
[94] These mainly happened with other UN agencies, e.g. UNDP and/or international NGOs that also supporting the governments for climate resilience.
[95] With the e-survey results, 81 per cent of all respondents agreed that partnerships with government enhance the effectiveness of IFAD's work in SIDS.
[96] In Mauritius, not covered by this evaluation, the implementation the Reimbursable Technical Assistance (RTA) demonstrated strong government partnership with IFAD and ownership to implement tailored approaches to fit national priorities, including technical support and capacity-building efforts.

PREFER project and the National Institute for Agricultural Research and the Environment (INRAPE) enabled the introduction of innovative farming practices and climate adaptation strategies.[97] In Cabo Verde, the partnerships with government institutions were key to effectively deliver projects outputs for several project activities, particularly for gender inclusion.

79. In Grenada, the strong partnership between IFAD and the Ministry in charge of Agriculture and Lands enabled the set up of a dedicated rural development unit to address the needs of small-scale farmers, fishermen, and rural communities. Similarly, there were effective collaboration with key stakeholders to implement projects' activities,[98] allowing to leverage specialized expertise, resources, and networks towards improved food security, and economic livelihood opportunities. In Dominican Republic, the PRORURAL-IR project established an effective collaboration with Sistema Unico de Beneficiarios (SIUBEN), a governmental office that oversees implementation and outreach of social protection programmes in the country. This partnership ensured that IFAD's interventions under the project reached the most vulnerable and poorest targeted population.

80. **Successful partnerships with local institutions helped in farmer engagement and capacity building.** The CLISSA project in Seychelles developed partnerships with NGOs to facilitate community participation and disseminating knowledge on sustainable farming techniques. Partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) and producer organizations in Kiribati were instrumental to promote community engagement and capacity building. In Sao Tome and Principe, the PAPAC project's supports to farmers organizations and cooperatives in the cacao sector was very effective (see details in the effectiveness). In Grenada, there was a limited engagement of the MAREP and SAEP projects with grassroots organizations such as farmers' associations, fishermen's cooperatives, and women's networks, thus hindering community ownership and sustainability of interventions.

81. **Partnerships with the private sector actors are limited. Very few positive examples found that enabled access to technologies and to market.** In the Dominican Republic, the design of the PRORURAL INCLUSIVO and PRORURAL JOVEN projects sought to enhance operational efficiencies through public-private partnerships, but the intended contribution to project goals was obtained at a lower level than expected, ultimately affecting overall project performance.[99] In Haiti, numerous partnerships with different stakeholders, including the private sector, were reported to have substantially contributed to PITAG project's main achievements.[100] In Tonga IFAD's collaboration with private companies facilitated the development of agri-value chains, improving market access for small-scale farmers. In PNG, partnerships with private sector actors supported the adoption of new technologies and farming techniques, thus boosting productivity and sustainability. These private-sector collaborations provide financial resources, technical expertise and create opportunities for local entrepreneurs, contributing to economic diversification and resilience. In WCA, engagement with the private sector is still weak, except in Sao Tome and Principe. In ESA, the PREFER project in Comoros intended to engage the private sector to enable smallholders access to

[97] Similarly for the the partnership between PREFER and the Ministry in charge of Health for improvement of nutritional status of poor rural people.
[98] Such as the Grenada Food and Nutrition Council (GFNC), the Grenada National Training Agency (GNTA), and the Grenada Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC)
[99] IFAD established a collaboration with the Junta Agroempresarial Dominicana (JAD), following its contribution to increased disbursement and design of farmers business plans under PRORURAL Centro y Este. However, the inadequate technical support provided by the JAD for the design of the business plans affected project performance and efficiency. Source: CSPE Dominican Republic.
[100] According to project reports, one of the key elements of PITAG's good performance is its strategy of establishing partnerships with a large number of actors at various levels: a) International Level: (donors and research centres) b) National Level: Service Operators, Quisqueya University, WFP, and private local sector, such as Greenfresh (private companies that market fresh products) and c) Departmental Level: Suppliers of goods and services, departmental and communal directorates of the Ministry, cooperatives, and farmers' associations.

markets; however, this did not materialise. Conversely, in Seychelles, the of CLISSA project facilitated seven PPPs, as presented in the section on results achieved. Overall, efforts to engage with the private sector actors for access to markets have been hindered by SIDS insularity, competitiveness (against imported products) and productive capacity of supported farmers.

Policy engagement

82. **SIDS strategies lack clarity on how to engage in policy dialogue.** The 2014 SIDS approach mentions policy dialogue together with partnerships, in relation to public – private – producer partnerships to be a solid basis for policy dialogue and advocacy, while the 2022 SIDS Strategy mentions to achieve impacts of IFAD's support with improved in-country presence and policy engagement.[101] In both strategic documents, activities for engaging in policy dialogue were not identified, nor was there a linkage established between policy engagement goals and SIDS resilience objectives. This latter point was addressed in CSNs and COSOPs. Indeed, the CSNs and COSOPs mention policy engagement goals to promote resilience. In APR, policy engagement aims to create an enabling environment for sustainable agricultural and fishery development by improving institutional capacities and policy frameworks, as well as integrating climate-smart agricultural practices into national policies and strategies. In LAC, policy engagement focuses on strengthening institutional capacities for building resilience in rural areas. In ESA and WCA regions, fostering partnerships was proposed aligned with policy frameworks. In all cases, approaches for engaging in policy dialogue were lacking.

83. **Few examples of policy-related results were achieved, due to efforts from projects' teams.** In APR, Community Development Plans (CDPs) supported by TRIP, where were institutionalized as the national approach to rural development planning, and the Government of Tonga formally endorsed 136 CDPs, integrating them into District and Island Development Plans. This participatory planning model now informs national budgeting processes and guides development partner investments—representing a notable policy-level impact in the region. In the Maldives, the National Mariculture Development Plan (NMDP) and National Aquatic Animal Health Management Strategy were developed under the MEDEP project, thus advancing the mariculture policy of the country. In Samoa, the Agriculture and Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project contributed to the integration of climate resilience into national agricultural policies. In Cuba, the East Central Region Livestock Cooperative Development Project influenced national policy by integrating 20 recommendations into Cuba's Livestock Law. The SAEP project in Grenada has supported the establishment of the Rural Development Unit within the Ministry of Finance. In Guyana, the HESAD project facilitated the formation of a Hinterland Unit within the Ministry of Agriculture, which, advanced school-feeding institutional and policy frameworks.[102] In WCA, the PAPAC project in São Tomé and Príncipe PAPAC initiated the process to obtain a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). This support led to PGI registration of cocoa at national level.[103] In Seychelles, ESA, the CLISSA project influenced policy development through a comprehensive market study that shaped the strategies and investment plans of the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture and the Seychelles Agricultural Agency. PREFER played an active role in drafting the Union of the Comoros' post-COVID 2022–2026 recovery plan.

[101] The ICOs will be fully equipped to facilitate engagement with governments, increase face-to-face time with clients, improve project supervision and promote collaboration for resource mobilization and policy engagement. At the time of the evaluation, IFAD's presence in the recipient SIDS was very minimal (2/18).
[102] In Cuba, PRODEGAN has significantly influenced policy and legislation, by contributing to the issuance of Decree Law 76 in October 2023, establishing second-degree cooperatives based to strengthen service-providing cooperatives supported by the project.
[103] In Cabo Verde, the POSER project played a critical role in forming the Irrigation Agency (AdR) in 2019, based on preliminary studies it funded, thus contributed to improving irrigation water management through concession contracts and a pricing policy.

84. **Considering the analysis of all non-lending activities, multiple constraints limited the extent of policy results,** including: ineffective collaborations with intended partners (Grenada, Maldives); changes in government (Guinea Bissau, the Maldives and Fiji) disrupting project momentum and alignment with policy priorities; weak capacity of governmental institutions and of partners (Comoros, Guinea Bissau Solomon Islands) and non governmental local partners (Guyana); ineffective knowledge management systems (Guyana, Solomon Islands); coordination gaps among actors (Belize, Guinea Bissau, Dominican Republic); absence of IFAD in most SIDS countries.

Key findings by region

In **APR**, Fiji and Samoa had strong government partnerships for climate-smart agriculture and fisheries. Private sector engagement was largely weak but in PNG, partnerships with private sector actors supported improved farm technology adoption. Poor digital infrastructure in Kiribati and Solomon Islands limited KM efforts. Some success was achieved in Fiji through documentation of indigenous agricultural practices. Project level policy dialogue initiatives influenced agroforestry policies in Fiji, contributed to developing the Mariculture Plan in the Maldives, and improved fisheries policy enforcement in Samoa.

In **ESA**, partnerships with governments contributed to implementing implement climate-resilient agriculture approaches; however financial constraints limited impact. Climate-smart innovations (e.g., drought-resistant crops) were integrated into national policies in the Seychelles. The CLISSA project in Seychelles developed training manuals and knowledge-sharing platforms; but dissemination was hindered by poor infrastructure, limited access to digital tools, and financial constraints. The project did generate a comprehensive market study that shaped the strategies and investment plans of the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture

In **WCA**, international partnerships contributed to nutrition and resilience initiatives, but private sector involvement was minimal. Knowledge products supported government decisions on water management but systematic KM strategies in São Tomé were developed only with the more recent project (COMPRAN), but they were lacking in the previous project (PAPAC). The development of Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) for cocoa was initiated in Sao Tome and Principe and taken over by other donors. In Cabo Verde, project POSER influenced the establishment of Água de Rega, showcasing effective KM and policy impact on national irrigation management.

In **LAC**, collaboration with RBAs in Belize, Cuba, and Haiti improved financing; however, they lacked a broad multi-stakeholder involvement. Private sector engagement was weak, especially in Belize, Grenada, and the Dominican Republic. KM activities strengthened institutional capacity for rural development in Grenada and Guyana but lacked deep thematic studies. Community of practices structured mechanisms for continuous learning.

85. **In conclusion, the evaluation findings suggest a moderately unsatisfactory performance overall for relevance and non-lending activities,[104] while this is moderately satisfactory for coherence.** The IFAD SIDS Strategy 2022 demonstrated an improved recognition of SIDS' multidimensional vulnerabilities, compared to the 2014 IFAD's Approach, but fell short in incorporating aspects of marine ecosystems and fisheries themes. SIDS' country strategies across all regions aligned with IFAD global strategy and international frameworks on SIDS, emphasizing environmental, climate and economic resilience, while social resilience was not of explicit focus. Institutional capacity-building was identified as a key challenge but treated more as a risk than an operational priority. Less than 30 per cent of projects clearly incorporated in their objectives social, economic, and environmental (including climate) resilience dimensions, underscoring a gap in embracing holistic approaches. Projects failed to learn explicit lessons from past

[104] The comparison of ratings for the relevance criteria shows a higher average rate for non-SIDS projects (4.3) compared to SIDS (3.96), so a difference of 0.34, which is statistically significant as presented in Annex V.

experiences, as they did not address resilience holistically. IFAD's niche in supporting rural communities in remote outer islands remains clear in all SIDS, but its engagement with other international partners in identifying tailored solutions, in applying effective knowledge management systems, and to enabling policy change remains insufficient overall. Reasons of these shortcomings include IFAD physical absence in most evaluated SIDS, and coordination gaps.

III. Effectiveness in mitigating vulnerabilities

86. This chapter responds to the key evaluation question on the extent to which IFAD's operations in SIDS achieved results that contribute reducing vulnerabilities (in the short term) considering economic, environmental, climate change, and social vulnerabilities. It is worth to recall that in situations of vulnerability (as well as fragility), the aim is to develop effective resilience capacities. Various operational themes of IFAD supported, presented with the ToC, have contributed to this aim, as presented below aligned with each dimension.

    a. Economic vulnerability versus resilience: increased agricultural (including livestock) production, improved value chai development and access to markets, diversified income sources and fisheries development.

    b. Environmental vulnerability versus resilience: sustainable farming practices and of environmental management.

    c. Climate change vulnerability versus resilience: climate-smart practices and adaptation strategies.

    d. Social vulnerability versus resilience: improved inclusiveness, and improved households' nutrition. Aspects of households' nutrition are elaborated in the chapter IV on impacts, while inclusiveness are in chapter V.

A. Economic vulnerabilities

87. **Support for access to markets yielded significant results in WCA and ESA, while results in the APR were modest, and less than modest in LAC.** In WCA, substantial investments were made to strengthen farmers' organizations and link farmers to buyers, with processing equipment playing a key role. The case of cocoa in São Tomé and Príncipe represents a successful instance where strong and strategic partnerships with international cocoa buyers were developed (prior to the period evaluated) to enhance market access (see Box 2). Pilot partnerships were developed in Cabo Verde between three communities and the institutional market to sell vegetables to the National School Feeding and Health Programme, while in Guinea-Bissau, farmers were linked to a WFP purchasing program. In ESA, improving market access and capacity building were essential components of projects through the development of storage facilities, transportation solutions, PPPs, and direct market linkages. For instance, strong partnerships with reliable buyers were successfully established in the Seychelles. The CLISSA project successfully created PPPs with key private sector buyers, including Hilton Hotels and the Seychelles Trading Company, providing stable markets and better prices. Thus, in both WCA and ESA regions, support contributes to enhance economic resilience strategies.

88. In Grenada (LAC region), the development of market linkages was actively pursued through business clusters and contractual arrangements, but projects faced significant challenges, such as fragmented support systems and inadequate infrastructure, which hindered market linkages and limited broader market access for agricultural products. In the APR, projects successfully promoted value chain development and market access in Tonga, PNG, and the Solomon Islands, while lesser successes were obtained in Fiji, and disappointing results in Kiribati and the Maldives, as access to markets remains a significant challenge for farmers on the outer islands as well as linking farmers with buyers.[105] Box A10, Annex VI provides further elaboration on interventions for value chain development and market access. Hence, in the LAC region and, contributions to economic resilience through effective market access was very low.

[105] In Kiribati, there is little evidence of the project's contribution to improving access to markets for smallholders. The field mission found that fruits and vegetables are sold exclusively to meet local demand through home-based sales.

Box 2
São Tomé and Príncipe Cooperatives: Unlocking Niche Markets to Enhance Market Access

From 2003 to 2015, IFAD funded the PAPFPA project to support small-scale commercial farming by organizing farmers into associations and cooperatives. These farmers sold certified products to European niche markets. The PAPAC and COMPRAN projects later strengthened these cooperatives, enlarging the number of beneficiary farmers.

A major success was integrating two cocoa cooperatives into niche markets. Cocoa, São Tomé and Príncipe's traditional export, benefited from IFAD's targeted interventions, including fair trade and organic certifications to attract buyers. One cocoa cooperative has 2583 members in 4 associations. Since its establishment it has one main international buyer that strongly invested in the processing capacity of the cooperative. It also pays a premium quality price. In 2024 the cooperative exported 1600 tons of cocoa. The other cooperative, with 1,078 members in 21 associations has a diversified range of commercial buyers and in 2024 exported 600 tons of cocoa. Today, these cooperatives sustain their certifications and export independently.

Efforts to apply this strategy to coffee and pepper faced challenges. Coffee production remains limited due to geographic constraints, with the country's only coffee cooperative focusing on local sales after abandoning fair trade certification in 2018 and organic certification in 2024.

Pepper, a newer crop, struggles to attract buyers based solely on origin and quality. After PAPAC ended, the pepper cooperative reduced staff and salaries but continues to operate. In 2024, it successfully exported 35 tons of pepper, showing resilience despite reduced support.

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team based on desk review

89. **Transportation investments addressed remoteness and improved market access. Those achievements were substantially lower than targeted.**[106] An aggregation of projects' log frames data shows that 113 km of rural roads have been rehabilitated or constructed, which represents only 24 per cent (at the time of the evaluation) of targets across the SIDS of ESA, WCA, and LAC. Weak capacity of projects' team led to delays, design and implementation challenges. For instance, the Fiji Agricultural Partnership project completion report specifies that no investment was made to rehabilitate the planned 139 km of roads.[107] In São Tomé and Príncipe, the rehabilitation of rural roads was included in the project design report of COMPRAN. However, once the decision was made to rehabilitate roads using hand-placed surfaces, concrete curbs, and drainage, the available resources were only sufficient for 4 km of roads instead of the originally planned 15 km.[108] In PNG, at the mid-term of the MVF project, none of the planned end-of-project target of 100 km were rehabilitated. minor investments to rehabilitate rural roads took place in Belize, Tonga, Seychelles, and the Solomon Islands.[109] In Grenada, the MAREP successfully provided essential infrastructure improvements, such as concrete roads, to farmers, enhancing their access to farms and improving the transportation of produce, which positively impacted agricultural activities in the region, even though only a minor part of the planned kilometres of roads was rehabilitated.

90. Substantial investments in road rehabilitation occurred mainly with the PADES project in Guinea-Bissau, where IFAD has already rehabilitated 99 km. Additionally, the procurement of transportation means in Guinea Bissau and the Solomon Islands contributed was effective to address remoteness, thus, enabling

[106] In line with the survey responses, as not so overly positive agreement: 39per cent agree, 27per cent strongly agree.
[107] This was due to the 2019 supervision mission concluding that there was not enough time to achieve the target.
[108] In Guinea-Bissau, the REDE project MTR reported that none of the targeted 107.5 km of rural roads for the mid-term were rehabilitated by the time the mission took place (in March 2024).
[109] In Belize, three main roads are planned for rehabilitation by the Resilient Rural Belize Programme. At the time of this evaluation, one road, measuring 4.7 km, was completed, while the other two projects are still far from completion. In Seychelles, IFAD funded the construction of 1.9 km of farm-to-market roads to facilitate access to markets. The Tonga Rural Innovation project funded one community road, while the Solomon Rural Development Programme Phase II funded four projects to rehabilitate roads and bridges. At the time of this evaluation, the COMPRAN project in São Tomé and Príncipe was far from achieving the 4 km target for road rehabilitation.

smallholders access to markets. With PADES (Guinea Bissau), the supervision report (2024) specifies that two boats were delivered to farmers' federations to link the Bijagós islands to the capital, with a third boat planned for delivery.[110] In the Solomon Islands, RDP II provided transport assets, including two- and three-ton trucks, as well as outboard motorboats to selected agribusiness partners. However, the RDP II PPE report (2025) found that remoteness challenges remain largely unaddressed, due to the magnitude of needs.[111]

91. **Investments in storage and processing of agricultural products were useful for value chain development (VCD) in SIDS, with varying results across regions.** The analysis of log frame data across all countries indicates that 350 processing, marketing, and storage facilities were rehabilitated in the countries considered for this evaluation. This amounts to 76 per cent of the aggregated target, which is high, considering that 19 out of the 30 projects are still ongoing. Improvements in processing and storage facilities were consistent and significative in WCA SIDS (especially Guinea Bissau and Sao Tome and Principe), hence contributing to enhance smallholders' absorptive and adaptive capacities. In ESA the improved storage and processing infrastructure was instrumental to the promoted VCD strategies, as for instance in Seychelles. In Grenada, promoted investments were underdeveloped for meat and cassava. In Kiribati (APR), the project showed small positive results for virgin coconut oil, syrup, and charcoal briquette value chains, while in the Maldives, there was limited progress so far in establishing VCD storage facilities. In Samoa, the project improved smallholders' market integration by facilitating the transition of subsistence and semi-commercial farmers into more commercial activities.[112]

92. **Improved agricultural practices of intensification contributed to increase productivity, thereby relevant for economic resilience.**[113] Robust estimates for productivity were available for Cabo Verde, São Tomé, and the Solomon Islands. In all three countries, the impact assessments conducted by RIA were based on a quasi-experimental design and clearly indicate a significant increase in productivity.[114] Supported interventions include land rehabilitation, irrigation, training, and the promotion of improved agricultural inputs. Investments in irrigation drove a substantial increase in yields and production in Cabo Verde, as found by the 2024 Impact Assessment. In WCA, irrigation was also planned in other countries, such as Guinea Bissau and São Tomé; however, so far, investments in these countries have been limited. In LAC, investments in irrigation were made in Haiti, where, by the end of the completed project (PPI3), 10 irrigation schemes were rehabilitated over a total area of 949 hectares. Water harvesting was also widely promoted in several SIDS, with the rainwater harvesting systems (RWHS) that played a crucial role to enhancing agricultural productivity. An analysis of data from all logical frameworks reveals that the total land area with rehabilitated water infrastructure was 17,547.47 hectares, which is

[110] The same report indicates that the project was in discussions with the relevant government counterpart regarding an investment in a bridge instead of the originally planned ferry boat.
[111] The investment was specified in the revised financial agreement. However, a subsequent supervision mission recommended cancelling it (along with the previously mentioned plan for rural road rehabilitation), as the project lacked sufficient time to build the towers before completion.
[112] In Tonga, the TRIP project facilitated access to markets for remote communities producing tree crops such as vanilla, sandalwood, and pandanus. TRIP II (still ongoing) has provided substantial investments in processing facilities and storage infrastructure. In Fiji, VCD efforts were constrained by the short implementation period and lack of sustained institutional support.
[113] The e-survey results show that 83% of respondents are in agreement or strongly in agreement with that.
[114] For Cape Verde, the 2024 Impact Assessment (IA) found that the IFAD-funded project (POSER) increased the total value of production increased by 77 per cent, and the value of crop production per hectare of cultivated land by 64 per cent. For São Tomé and Príncipe, the 2019 IA found that beneficiary households experienced significantly higher crop yields than their control counterparts, with increases of 26 per cent for cacao, 37 per cent for coffee, and 16 per cent for pepper. Similar gains were observed for non-project cash crops, fruits, and tubers, with average yields 45 per cent, 74 per cent, and 37 per cent higher, respectively. For the Solomon Islands, the 2022 IA found that treated households had a cocoa harvest that was 46 per cent higher, and yields per tree were 12 per cent greater compared to the control group. All reported increases are statistically significant.

equivalent to 92 per cent of the combined target and that investments in small scale irrigation contributed to significant increases in agricultural productivity (see Box 3).

Box 3
Investments in small scale irrigation to increase agricultural productivity

An analysis of aggregated log frames figures across projects reveals that 17,547 hectares (ha) of agricultural land were developed and/or rehabilitated with irrigation water infrastructure. This is equivalent to 92 per cent of the cumulative target. Irrigation water infrastructure was funded in all regions; however, the majority of investments were in Guinea-Bissau, where the PADES project rehabilitated 9,990 ha of lowland areas for rice and vegetable production. Other countries with significant irrigation investments included Haiti (949 ha), Cabo Verde (190 ha), Seychelles (212 ha), and Cuba (6,206 ha). Smaller investments were made in Belize (13 ha), São Tomé and Príncipe (10 ha), Comoros (20 ha), Kiribati (with 553 rainwater harvest systems), Grenada, and Guyana. These investments have contributed to addressing challenges related to the availability of water and arable land.

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team based on desk review

93. **Capacity building of farmers facilitated the adoption of agricultural practices.** Training was extensively utilized to promote the adoption of improved agricultural practices and inputs. Indeed, the aggregation of log frame data across all projects reveals that about 109,383 farmers participated in training and received technical assistance and technologies, which corresponds to 86 per cent of the total aggregated target. Further, across all countries, 61,780 beneficiaries gained access to agricultural inputs, representing 82 per cent of the target.

94. **Diversification of income sources was promoted across all regions with limited success.** Overall, supported activities were more focused on crop diversification, lesser on animal production, and limited in promoting alternative off-farm income sources. For instance, income diversification was actively promoted during the first phase of POSER project in Cabo Verde through micro-projects.[115] However, following a strategic reorientation of the project due to limited success and operational challenges, IFAD interventions shifted away from funding microprojects. Similarly, in Guinea Bissau, the 2022 CSPE highlighted the discontinuation of supports for income diversification with PADES, to re-orient the funding for infrastructure development. In São Tomé and Príncipe, there were only a small number of funded off-farm interventions. In APR, off-farm and non-crop activities were not considered or failed.[116] The only exceptions are Fiji and Kiribati, where income diversification was successfully promoted (see Box 4).

Box 4
Examples of successful income source diversification

Good examples of income sources diversification were found in Fiji and Kiribati. In Fiji, the FAPP project provided comprehensive training to highland farmers on diverse income-generating activities (IGA), including handicraft production, catering services, small retail shops, and investment in transport businesses. In Kiribati, the KOIFAWP project significantly contributed to reducing vulnerabilities by diversifying income sources and creating employment opportunities. The establishment of virgin coconut oil and charcoal briquette factories provided jobs and supplemental income for island residents. Additionally, the project promoted home gardens and integrated farming, which not only increased the availability of nutritious food but also generated income through the sale of surplus produce. These initiatives were particularly important given the high unemployment rates and limited market access on the outer islands.

[115] These are demand-driven small grants provided to individuals or small groups to fund entrepreneurial activities.
[116] The MEDEP project in the Maldives did not achieve its income diversification objective and the MAP project (still on-going) only promoted crop diversification rather than income diversification. In the Salomon Islands and in Tonga provided support and grants enabled a diversified agricultural and livestock production, but off-farm income was not considered. In PNG, the MVF project has limited contribution to diversifying economic activities and income sources.

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team based on desk review

95. In the SIDS of ESA, diversifying income sources was limited to crop diversification and backyard gardening.[117] In Comoros, the PREFER project promoted crop diversification, focusing on resilient market garden produce like tomatoes, carrots, and onions to reduce the risks of monocropping and improve food security.[118] In Seychelles, the project supported diversifying activities such as backyard gardening, poultry farming, and value addition to agricultural products through training. In LAC, a wide range of income diversification activities was promoted. Home gardening was a key activity in Haiti, Grenada, and Belize, while livestock rearing was promoted in Cuba. Support for agribusiness and micro-enterprises was actively promoted in the Dominican Republic and Guyana, focusing on activities such as handicraft production, ecotourism, and other small-scale businesses. These achievements were of great importance for enhancing the economic resilience of smallholders.

96. **Blue economy sector interventions were insufficient in scope and level of results.** In WCA, only two projects had interventions in the fishery sector, with limited scope. In Cabo Verde, micro-projects addressed both fish catch and fish processing / conservation, while in São Tomé and Príncipe, projects focused solely on processing and conservation. In Grenada (LAC), the two projects supported activities aimed at enhancing fisheries production through comprehensive training on proper fish handling and conservation techniques. This resulted in better quality fish products and increased income for young fishermen. However, significant delays in the procurement of essential equipment limited the potential productivity and income growth of planned fishery interventions.

97. In Kiribati, fishponds were integrated into farming systems, allowing community groups access to a steady fish supply for consumption and income generation. In Tonga, the first of the two TRIP projects constructed and rehabilitated six wharves, thus facilitating fishing activities. In the Solomon Islands, RDP-II distributed fishing gear and equipment, enhancing fishery efficiency and productivity, and facilitated market linkages for fishery products, resulting in a 32 per cent increase in gross fishery income. Aside from these three successful cases in APR, the evaluation found no evidence of other positive results.[119] Instead, in the Maldives, the mariculture (sea cucumber) pilot project was a failure due to a lack of prior feasibility study and technical knowledge. In ESA, fishery interventions in Seychelles achieved only moderate results.[120] In Comoros, no interventions in the fishery sector were promoted.

[117] The grant 'Alternative Livelihoods for Food and Income Security in four Indian Ocean Island Nations' Phase I and Phase II successfully piloted the introduction of beekeeping as an alternative source of income diversification, unfortunately it was not linked to any IFAD loan projects, and it resulted as a missed opportunity despite the positive results achieved.

[118] The project also planned to promote livestock production; however, at the time of this evaluation, the implementation of this component was just starting, raising doubts about the project's capacity to deliver concrete results before its completion in one year.

[119] In Fiji and PNG, there were no fishery actions. In Samoa, significant delays in the implementation of the SAFPROM limited the potential benefits of grants,

[120] Here, the CLISSA project facilitated seven PPPs, which mainly benefitted to agricultural producers, leading to very limited improvements in market access for small fishers.

Key findings by region

In **WCA**, strong investments in market access and value chain development, processing and storage facilities improved market access. Commodity VCD investments were successful for cocoa, less so for coffee and pepper. PPPs successfully linked farmers to institutional buyers. Investments in Cabo Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe for fish processing and conservation achieved limited success due to procurement delays.

In **ESA**, improvements in market access and VCD were achieved through investment in storage facilities, transport solutions, and PPPs. Capacity building, irrigation improvements, and rainwater harvesting systems supported increased yields. There was moderate success in income diversification through small scale gardening. Limited impact was achieved in the fishery sector.

In **APR**, results for market access and VCD were below target. Remoteness remained a major barrier. Investments in land rehabilitation and improved inputs increased productivity but income diversification was mostly unsuccessful. There were positive fisheries investments in Kiribati, Tonga, Solomon Islands, but failures in the Maldives due to poor feasibility studies.

In **LAC**, moderate success was achieved in agriculture productivity, market access, processing and VCD but challenges arose due to weak partnerships and infrastructure gaps. Efforts were made to develop contractual arrangements with small private actors, but larger-scale partnerships were lacking. Fishery sector support in Grenada experienced delays in equipment procurement.

B. Environmental vulnerabilities

98. **Solutions identified in environmental analyses conducted at projects' design stage were not used to inform interventions.** For all projects considered in this evaluation, a proper SECAP analysis was conducted at the design stage. In WCA, Cabo Verde's SECAP notes highlighted the severe vulnerability of the agricultural sector to climatic hazards, particularly droughts. The analysis is comprehensive and provides clear indications for addressing environmental and climate change vulnerabilities. In LAC, projects addressed environmental and climate change vulnerabilities. However, there was insufficient contextualization that led to failure to identify sustainable NRM pathways. In PNG, the MVF Project used SECAP studies to identify climate risks and implement adaptive measures, significantly enhancing the resilience of local farming communities. The OIFWP in Kiribati benefited from international cooperation and capacity-building initiatives, leading to improved water management practices resilient to climate variability. Conversely, countries like Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga exhibited gaps in integrating SECAP studies into strategic planning.[121] In ESA, the Comoros COSOP includes a comprehensive SECAP, reporting on the most relevant environmental and climate change vulnerabilities. The CSN of Seychelles does not include a SECAP.

99. **Approaches for sustainable management of natural resources varied, with positive results overall that enabled environmental resilience.** Aggregated results across 30 projects show that the number of people trained and supported in NRM, and climate change exceeded 80 per cent of the end-of-project targets with the number of individuals engaged reaching 27,635 out of a target of 34,228 (81 per cent). Detailed elaboration on projects' responses to address environmental vulnerabilities are presented in Annex VI. Below are key highlights.

100. In the APR, projects focused on climate-smart agriculture (CSA) techniques, such as drought-resistant crops and improved irrigation systems, which contributed to enhancing agricultural productivity, thus the adaptive capacity. The use of organic practices was actively promoted in the Solomon Islands, where RDP II farmers

[121] For instance, the Samoa Agriculture and Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project struggled to systematically incorporate climate risk assessments.

were trained in the production and use of compost from agricultural waste and in natural pest control methods. Additionally, recycling and waste management were prioritized, with waste materials being repurposed for biomass fuel and compost production. Also, projects in Fiji, Kiribati, and Tonga have promoted sustainable farming techniques, agroforestry, reforestation, and organic farming, leading to notable improvements in agricultural productivity and ecological balance. However, in Samoa and PNG, progress in enhancing sustainable NRM approaches has been insufficient.

101. In the LAC region, while positive efforts were made in promoting sustainable practices such as reforestation, agroforestry, organic farming, and water-efficient irrigation systems in countries like Haiti, Cuba, Belize and Guyana. Actions aimed at addressing critical issues like soil erosion and degradation of coastal resources were quite limited. Grenada, Haiti, and Belize faced challenges due to limited access to technical expertise, hindering the successful implementation of sustainable initiatives. In Grenada, the concept of sustainable fisheries management is part of the project discourse, but there was a lack of consistent monitoring of fishery resources and enforcement law to address overfishing and unsustainable practices.

102. In the WCA region, investments in irrigation and the rehabilitation of lowland areas have brought land into production in Guinea-Bissau. Similarly, actions such as protecting riverbank areas and restoring mangroves, have contributed to ecosystem preservation.[122] In Cabo Verde, the ASAP grants managed by the POSER project allowed to implement a strategic response to climate change incidence on small producers, but the RIA IA results suggest mixed performance in promoting sustainable and productive systems.[123] In São Tomé and Príncipe, productivity of cocoa, coffee, and pepper was increased while promoting organic and shade-grown production. While there were positive results in enhancing sustainable NRM, challenges remained in mainstreaming these interventions within and beyond projects.

103. Meanwhile, In the ESA region, IFAD-supported projects in Comoros and Seychelles have contributed to enhancing the sustainability of production systems through reforestation, soil conservation, water management, and organic farming. Projects emphasized integrated crop management (Comoros), the use of hydroponics, organic fertilizers (Seychelles), and community engagement (Comoros). For instance, reforestation and agroforestry efforts were significant in Comoros with bocage techniques, agro-ecological practices and biological control methods. With CLISSA project in Seychelles, there were successful actions to restore mangroves and coral reefs, underscoring the importance of ecosystem-based approaches to resilience building.

104. **Inadequate considerations of adverse effects and/or insufficient remedial measures led to environmental degradation in some cases.** In Grenada in areas where water tanks are installed, there are intense agricultural activities, with a decrease trend of the natural vegetation due to the increase in the intensity of agricultural production. Additionally, the rise in small ruminants induced by the project was not accompanied by measures to protect the soil from erosion, with risks of environmental degradation. In the Maldives, efforts to promote biodiversity-friendly mariculture practices through MEDEP were unsuccessful. The failure of the sea cucumber pilot mariculture resulted in abandoned cages in the ocean, causing localised environmental damage. Critical challenges and gaps that

[122] The promotion of freshwater lowland rice cultivation has positively affected NRM by increasing productivity and reducing pressure on forest resources.
[123] While farmers are applying more organic fertilizers, the short-term increase in productivity achieved through irrigation investments seems to come at the expense of erosion control measures and other practices essential to maintaining soil fertility, such as planting leguminous crops. Additionally, at the time of the evaluation, the impact of soil conservation measures funded through ASAP had yet to materialize.

prevent achieving better sustainable environmental results are presented in Annex VI. They include inappropriate or lack of indepthness of SECAP analysis or in usage the results, and insufficient contextualisation of environmental issues at stake.

Key findings by region

In **WCA,** SECAP analyses were completed for all projects, with Cabo Verde demonstrating a thorough assessment of climatic vulnerabilities (drought), but SECAPs for Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé lacked depth. Investments in irrigation and lowland rehabilitation enhanced productivity in Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau, while sustainable practices in São Tomé improved cocoa, coffee, and pepper production and freshwater lowland rice cultivation in Guinea-Bissau aided reforestation and mangrove restoration efforts.

In **ESA,** Comoros included a detailed SECAP in its CSN, while Seychelles did not. Projects emphasized sustainable agriculture, resource efficiency, and environmental conservation through reforestation, soil conservation, water management, and organic farming. The Seychelles project successfully restored mangroves and coral reefs.

LAC lacked sufficient NRM contextualization in project design and implementation. Sustainable practices in Haiti, Cuba, and Guyana made progress, but challenges such as soil erosion and water scarcity persisted. Limited access to technical expertise hindered implementation in Grenada, Haiti, and Belize, with Grenada facing environmental degradation due to unregulated agricultural expansion around project-supported water tanks.

APR SECAP studies in PNG and the Maldives informed adaptive measures that strengthened resilience. Yet, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga showed gaps in integrating SECAP studies into strategic planning. Climate-smart agriculture techniques, including drought-resistant crops and improved irrigation, were adopted in Fiji, Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga. The Maldives experienced localized damage due to unsuccessful mariculture efforts.

C. Climate change vulnerabilities

105. **Climate vulnerability assessments conducted under SECAP analyses were variable and insufficiently used overall.** In WCA, the SECAP analysis for the COSOP of Cabo Verde included a climate change vulnerability assessment. This analysis was partially used in the design and implementation of the project but while actions to improve water and energy efficiency were promoted, the risks associated with drought, soil erosion, and salinization were not adequately addressed.[124] In Guinea Bissau, the SECAP analysis included in the CSN was primarily descriptive and did not provide analytical options to address the main environmental and climate change challenges. Although climate risks were identified in the SECAP of the PADES project, the project design lacked a clear and coherent approach to promote farmers' resilience and adaptation to climate change. In LAC, SECAP vulnerability assessments in the design of SIDS strategies and projects were also often descriptive and did not offer comprehensive analytical options to address the issues at stake, limiting mitigation initiatives.[125] With APR, the evaluation found a wide variety of practices in the actual use of climate risk assessments. In PNG, the integration of IFAD's SECAP has been satisfactory, as the project utilized SECAP studies to identify climate risks and implemented adaptive measures, significantly enhancing the resilience of local farming communities.

[124] Investments in irrigation were only encouraged following a strategic reorientation during the second phase of the POSER project. But salinization remained a recurrent problem for the water infrastructure rehabilitated by the project.
[125] For example, in Belize, projects did not undergo thorough climate risk assessments, leading to a limited understanding of specific vulnerabilities and insufficient adaptation measures. In Cuba, projects lacked in-depth climate analysis and stakeholder engagement, impacting the relevance of adaptation measures. In the Dominican Republic, strategies focused on short-term goals without considering future vulnerabilities and climate impacts. In Grenada, the failure to conduct comprehensive vulnerability assessments resulted in ineffective adaptation measures. In Guyana, gaps in recent data availability limited the ability to perform thorough vulnerability assessments. In Haiti, projects struggled to integrate climate change considerations into their designs, which affected the mitigation of vulnerability issues.

Conversely, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga exhibited gaps in integrating climate into their strategic planning.

106. **Promoted approaches were largely sound for effective climate resilience strategies.**[126] Some of sustainable practices include climate resilience practices. In WCA, the POSER project in Cabo Verde promoted energy- and water-efficient technologies, such as drip irrigation and photovoltaic water pumping, and co-financed studies for improved water resource management. In Guinea Bissau, the PADES project supported the dissemination of climate-resilient rice varieties and hydro-agricultural development, but these activities were conducted on a small scale.[127] In LAC, initiatives such as water harvesting, small-scale irrigation systems, renewable energy adoption, climate information systems, and the dissemination of drought-resistant crop varieties addressed vulnerabilities to climate change in Grenada, Belize, and Guyana. Meanwhile, in Cuba, projects introduced solar-powered electric fences and biodigesters, advancing renewable energy adoption.

107. In APR, many SIDS' projects promoted RWHS with small scale irrigation (e.g. in Kiribati, Maldives and Tonga), drought-resistant and/or saline-tolerant crop varieties (e.g. in Tonga and Maldives), which were effective to improving the resilience of production systems.[128] In ESA, the CLISSA project in Seychelles has effectively integrated climate-smart technologies and practices, including hydroponics, organic fertilizers, shade house technology, water harvesting and drip irrigation systems. These initiatives have enhanced the resilience of local farmers and fishers by improving resource efficiency and sustainable agricultural practices. The PREFER project in Comoros exemplifies an integrated approach, combining anti-erosion measures, watershed management, and the dissemination of drought-resistant crop varieties. All the interventions across the regions have been supplemented by income diversification efforts targeting vulnerable populations, such as women and youth, to support long-term resilience building.

108. **Expanding the scale of climate smart practices remains a challenge to enhance climate resilience strategies.** The analysis of data aggregated across individual projects reveals that only 47 per cent of the target for the indicator "expansion of land under climate resilience practices" has been achieved.[129] Aligned with this finding, the evaluation identified key challenges that limited achieving a broader climate resilience impact. They relate to insufficient funding, inadequate climate risk assessments, and a lack of scalable strategies (see Box A13, Annex VI). For instance, in Cabo Verde, IFAD's investments contributed to build climate change resilience through agricultural intensification and irrigation initiatives, despite limited natural resources such as water and arable land. Excessive reliance on irrigation water led to missed opportunities to promote broader adaptation strategies. In São Tomé and Príncipe, research of adaptable food crop varieties yielded limited results due to the narrow genetic base of the tested crops, and biopesticide trials remain incomplete. In Cuba, Haiti, and Guyana, dissemination of climate-smart practices was matched with supports for diversified rural income sources, while in Grenada, the MAREP and SAEP projects displayed low adoption those practices despite extensive trainings. In APR, results contributed to climate resilience, with the RWHS, and constructed greenhouses, but still yet to be

[126] The e-survey results show that 85 per cent of respondents are in agreement or strongly in agreement with that.
[127] In São Tomé e Príncipe the PAPAC project (completed) did not implement specific climate vulnerability risk measures, while the COMPRAN project, designed with climate risk reduction measures in mind (such as crop diversification, irrigation schemes, and biopesticides) significantly lagged behind in implementing these measures.
[128] The MAP project (in the Maldives) promoted greenhouses, drip irrigation, thus strengthening the resilience of communities. In Fiji, the FAPP project introduced climate-adaptive technologies, including soil conservation and resilient crop varieties. In Solomon Islands, the RDP-II project promoted climate-smart practices through capacity-building activities.
[129] This figure was calculated over 30 projects, 19 of which are still ongoing at the time of this evaluation.

expanded.[130] In ESA climate-smart practices were positive but the scope was very limited. Overall, the evaluation identified several lessons learned from IFAD supported interventions related to climate resilience, including applying: (i) multi-scale approach, (ii) comprehensive integrated approach, and (iii) community-based development approaches. (See details in Box A14, Annex VI)

109. **Disaster management was not covered by projects, except in the APR region where this started very recently.** The evaluation team found that projects' activities did not address these issues explicitly, as projects only mentioned disasters as part of context analysis, not as an integral part of design and implementation approaches.[131] In fact, only 43 per cent of the PMU respondents of the evaluation e-survey agreed that disaster risk assessment and management measures were included in currently implemented projects, while just over half (51 per cent) of implementation partners agreed so. It appears, however, that APR has recently introduced the Zero Component 'Rapid Disaster Response' which serves as a contingency plan to address sudden disasters, including weather events, natural hazards, pandemics, or agricultural pests and diseases.[132] It reallocates uncommitted project resources from other components for disaster relief efforts.

Key findings by region

In **WCA** a climate risk analysis was conducted in Cabo Verde, but its implementation was incomplete, leaving drought, soil erosion, and salinization inadequately addressed, however, introduction of energy- and water-efficient technologies like drip irrigation and photovoltaic water pumping was successful. In Guinea-Bissau, climate risks were identified, but no clear adaptation strategy was established and climate-resilient rice investments remained small in scale. In São Tomé and Príncipe, there was limited success in crop adaptation research and biopesticide trials.

In **ESA**, projects effectively integrated climate-smart technologies. In Seychelles, hydroponics, organic fertilizers, shade houses, and drip irrigation improved resource efficiency. The Comoros project combined anti-erosion measures, watershed management, and drought-resistant crops while also supporting income diversification for women and youth. Despite these efforts, the scale of climate resilience initiatives in the region remained limited.

In **LAC**, climate vulnerability assessments were descriptive rather than analytical, limiting their impact on adaptation planning. In Grenada, Belize, and Guyana, water harvesting techniques, small-scale irrigation, and climate information systems mitigated climate risk. In Cuba, Belize and Granada climate-smart practices were not widely adopted and training programs did not lead to adoption of climate-smart practices.

In **APR**, the integration of climate risk assessments varied widely. In PNG, MVF effectively used climate studies to implement adaptive measures. However, in Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga, climate risk assessments were not fully incorporated into planning.

110. **In conclusion, the evaluation findings suggest a moderately satisfactory performance overall for effectiveness.[133]** Contributions to economic resilience in SIDS were very modest, due to insufficient outputs achieved for (i) investment in infrastructure (e.g. roads, transportation, storage and processing facilities) linked to value chain development and market access, (ii) for economic

[130] The OIFWP project installed 553 RWHS in Kiribati, addressing critical water scarcity issues. In Maldives 12 greenhouses are designed for high water efficiency and productivity. In Samoa, the SAFPROM project focused on activities aimed at increasing productivity and conserving water.
[131] A good example is the grant supported project of Post-Cyclone Rapid Recovery in Agricultural Production in Vanuatu.
[132] Included in the AIMN project in Solomon Islands and in the concept note of projects of Fiji Blue Economy and Green Village Development Project
[133] The comparison of ratings for the effectiveness criteria shows a higher average rate for non-SIDS projects (3.97) compared to SIDS (3.5), a difference of 0.47, which is statistically significant as presented in Annex V.

diversification and (iii) in the blue economy sector; while investment for agricultural production increase yielded significant positive results. Sustainable production approaches supported (e.g. small-scale irrigation, agroforestry, organic farming, etc.) contributed to environmental resilience in SIDS, while promoted climate-smart and water management approaches (e.g. RWHS, drought-resistant crops, renewable energy, greenhouse and hydroponic techniques) contributed to climate resilience, even if the scale of actions was limited.

IV. Impact and sustainability

111. This chapter covers two main evaluation criteria. The first is the impact criterion, which assesses the contributions to medium to long term changes: increased households' income and assets, improved food security and nutrition, strengthened human and social capital, as well as institutions and policies (aligned with rural transformation). It responds to the extent to which evidence demonstrates that IFAD supported operations in SIDS have contributed to enhancing overall resilience in the medium and long terms, to sustainably improving rural livelihoods. Only completed projects are included in this assessment and the evaluation team drew evidence from robust impact studies conducted by RIA in three SIDS, and less robust evidence from independent and self-evaluation reports.[134]

112. The second criterion is sustainability that assesses how results achieved (by completed projects) are sustained and up scaled in the SIDS contexts, aligned with the key question: the extent to which results achieved through IFAD's supports are sustained and scaled up to further benefit rural populations and strengthen institutions.

A. Income increase, improved food security and nutrition

113. **Impact on household incomes and assets was moderately satisfactory overall**. Robust studies attributing a positive causal change to IFAD projects are available for only one country. This is the case of the RIA impact assessment of PAPAC in São Tomé and Príncipe[135], which focused exclusively on export cash crops (cacao, coffee, and pepper). The other two projects for which robust impact assessment (IA) studies were conducted were in Cabo Verde and the Solomon Islands. For both cases, the studies show that the positive increase in productivity and production did not translate into an increase in household incomes or assets. In Cabo Verde, the results suggest that the increase in agricultural income occurred at the expense of wage income, indicating a substitution effect. Less robust income and asset assessment methods suggest that IFAD interventions contributed to income and asset increases in a few cases.[136] In Haiti, agricultural diversification and intensification caused by irrigation interventions contributed to a significant increase in incomes, while the PRODECOR project in Cuba has positively impacted assets. In APR, IFAD projects contributed to income increases in Tonga, Fiji, and Kiribati[137]. This did not occur in the Maldives, where the failed mariculture project yielded no tangible benefits. For ESA, there is evidence that smallholder farming and backyard gardening contributed to increases in household incomes and assets in the Seychelles.[138]

114. **IFAD-supported operations contributed to improved food security through increased production, agricultural diversification, and better income.** All three RIA reports indicate a statistically significant reduction in the Food Insecurity

[134] Only three projects RIA impact studies conducted in Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Principe and the Solomon Islands. PCRs were available for 13 projects, while for independent evaluations, they were 3 PPEs (Solomon Islands, 2023; Cuba, 2022; and Cabo Verde, 2024), and 2 CSPEs (Dominican Republic, 2024; and Guinea Bissau, 2023)

[135] The RIA impact assessment showed that beneficiary households had 45 per cent higher income than the control group, due to a significant increase in agricultural incomes, (82 per cent higher for beneficiary households) and assets (18 per cent higher than control group).

[136] These methods are based on a simple comparison of baseline and end-of-project results reported in PCR and PCRV, so these results should be viewed with caveat.

[137] The PCR of OIFWP reports that 2,293 women experienced increases in cash income from homegrown food (130 per cent of target). The PCRV of FAPP indicates that 75 per cent of survey respondents reported increased farm income, with 93 per cent of those attributing their income gains to the project. Also, the number of the poorest households decreased from 28 per cent in 2012 to 12 per cent in 2017. In Tonga, the percentage of households owning radios rose from 71 per cent to 85 per cent, refrigerators from 29 per cent to 44 per cent, bicycles from 31 per cent to 59 per cent, motorcycles from 2 per cent to 4 per cent, and vehicles from 26 per cent to 45 per cent.

[138] The PCR (2019) and PCRV (2019) of the CLISSA project report that 57 per cent of beneficiary households experienced an increase in income, surpassing the target of 40 per cent mainly from smallholder farming (65 per cent) and backyard gardening. Both reports used vehicle ownership as a proxy for improvement in assets. At the endline, 51 per cent of the surveyed population owned a vehicle, marking a significant improvement from the baseline figure of 25 per cent.

Experience Scale (FIES) with PAPAC in São Tomé and Príncipe, POSER in Cabo Verde, and RDP-II in the Solomon Islands. In LAC, there are indications of contributions to food security in Grenada and Haiti as presented in Box 5. In Tonga (APR), home gardens boosted the production of local, underutilized drought-resistant species. The survey conducted at the end of the project showed that the share of households experiencing food insecurity (measured by the FIES) almost halved, while the proportion of food-insecure households strongly declined.[139] At the end of the TRIP project in Tonga, the percentage of households facing a two-month hungry season decreased substantially from the baseline to the endline survey.[140] In the ESA region, during the field mission, interviewed women beneficiaries of the PREFER project in Comoros reported being able to provide three nutritious meals a day for their families, a significant improvement from their previous situation. (Additional evidence are presented in Box 4).

Box 5
Quantitative evidence on improved food security for selected projects

In São Tomé and Príncipe, the PACAP impact assessment (IA) found that the food insecurity of the treated group (measured by the FIES) was approximately 13 per cent lower than that of the control group (significant at 1 per cent level). In Cabo Verde, the FIES for the treated group was 9 per cent lower (significant at 10 per cent) that the FIES of the control group.

In the Solomon Islands, the IA of RDP-II found that the FIES of the households in the treated group was 25 per cent lower than the FIES in the control group (significant at 10 per cent), thus an improvement in food security.

In Grenada, the MAREP impact survey reports a notable decrease in the number of households experiencing a hungry season. By the end of the project, only 13.9 per cent of survey respondents reported experiencing a hungry season, compared to 22 per cent at baseline. Furthermore, the duration of the hungry season was reduced; at baseline, 10 per cent to 22 per cent of households faced a hungry season lasting three to six months. This figure decreased to 10 per cent to 17 per cent by the project's conclusion.

In Haiti, the PPI3 project contributed to increasing the number of families who had at least one meal a day when baseline data are compared to those from the endline survey. Over 85 per cent of families consumed at least one meal a day, a remarkable increase from 2014 when only 13.1 per cent of households reported eating regularly.

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team based on desk review

115. **There are few examples of contribution to nutrition improvement. Overall, access to nutritious food remains an issue.** Desk review evidence suggests that nutrition related outputs were achieved through wide training and awareness-raising interventions. In Tonga, the TRIP I provided nutrition education in farmer field schools and promoting household and community green gardens. This initiative played a key role in improving the nutritional practices of participants. Similarly, the MVF in PNG project trained 8,459 smallholder farmers in areas such as nutrition, gender, livelihood, and financial literacy. This training led to enhanced nutritional knowledge and improved practices among the participants. A commonly supported approach was the development of backyard gardens, which allowed for diversified production of fruits and vegetables.[141] Partnerships with national and international organizations were also formed to provide meals for schools in Guinea Bissau, Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Guyana, while school gardens were established in São Tomé and Príncipe.

[139] FIES decreased from 12 per cent to 7 per cent, while the proportion of food-insecure households (both moderate and severe) declined from 29 per cent to 23 per cent.
[140] The percentage of households experiencing a hungry season dropped from 30 per cent to 17 per cent. Additionally, 2 per cent of households reported experiencing their first hungry season for one month at baseline; this percentage fell to zero by the endline.
[141] During the field visit in Kiribati, interviewed beneficiaries reported that the project contributed to diversify their home consumption and increased the affordability of fruits and vegetables among beneficiary households engaged in backyard gardening and integrated farming activities.

116. Strong evidence of contribution to nutrition improvement was found in São Tomé and Príncipe and in the Solomon Islands. In both cases, a robust quasi-experimental design showed a statistically significant improvement in the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS).[142] The other country where an impact assessment was conducted is Cabo Verde, but here the improvement in dietary diversity is not significant.[143] However, the average HDDS in the comparison group was already high, suggesting an overall good level of dietary diversity even without project interventions. Nutrition improvements were reported in Seychelles with CLISSA where the PCR indicated that 69 per cent of smallholder households reported increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. Interviews with project beneficiaries in São Tomé and Príncipe and Comoros revealed that effective training improved knowledge, but food accessibility in remote areas remains a significant constraint. This hinders families' ability to obtain improved nutrition, suggesting a need for more integrated approaches that consider food production, food access, and food availability. On the other side the promotion of backyard gardens in many SIDS helped the households to improve their diets. In Kiribati, there were indications of positive nutrition change in outer islands targeted by KOIWFP.[144]

Key findings by region

In **WCA**, there is robust evidence of an increase in household incomes and a reduction in food insecurity and an improvement in nutrition for the PAPAC project in São Tomé and Príncipe. In Cabo Verde, while increased agricultural productivity was observed, it did not boost overall household income due to a substitution with wage income. Partnerships in school feeding programs (e.g., in Guinea Bissau) supported nutrition improvements.

In **ESA**, initiatives such as smallholder farming and backyard gardening in Seychelles have contributed to increases in household incomes and assets. In Comoros, interviews reveal positive nutritional impacts.

In **LAC**, interventions like irrigation and agricultural diversification significantly boosted household incomes in Haiti. The PRODECOR project in Cuba contributed to improved household assets. Projects in Grenada and Haiti have led to notable reductions in the prevalence and duration of hungry seasons, while school meal partnerships in Guyana and elsewhere have further bolstered nutritional outcomes.

In **APR**, results are mixed. In Tonga, Fiji, and Kiribati, IFAD projects have helped raise incomes and diversify agricultural production. However, in the Maldives, a mariculture project failed to generate any tangible benefits. In the Solomon Islands and in Tonga's home gardening initiatives significantly reduced food insecurity, while in Kiribati, efforts have improved access to diverse and nutritious food. The Maldives' nutrition-focused interventions are either absent or pending.

B. Impact on human and social capital, and institutions

117. **Moderately satisfactory projects' results in strengthening human and social capital.** In WCA, the PAPAC project in São Tomé and Príncipe stands out as a clear example of success. By strengthening cocoa, pepper, and coffee cooperatives, the project empowered rural institutions to take on key roles in member supervision, product promotion, and management of post-harvest infrastructure.[145] In Guinea-Bissau, the PADES project strengthened women's

[142] Beneficiary households of PAPAC in Sao Tome e Principe, on average, enjoyed a gain of about 5 per cent in their HDDS relative to the control group. The HDDS of RDP-II beneficiaries in the Solomon Islands was 11 per cent higher among treatment households compared to control households. This improvement was particularly driven by increased consumption of dairy products and sweets.
[143] The authors did not find a statistically significant impact of the program on HDDS when using an Inverse Probability Weighted Regression Adjustment (IPWRA) estimation. However, findings obtained using a Nearest-Neighbour Matching (NNM) suggest instead that the HDDS was increased by 0.24 points.
[144] The project's PCR reported a decrease in the number of cases of nutrition-related NCDs like diabetes and high blood pressure in all outer islands supported by the project.
[145] These efforts not only enhanced the operational independence of cooperatives—especially cocoa cooperatives, some of which achieved full financial autonomy—but also directly supported thousands of producers across 108 communities.

capacity to manage resilience funds and improved literacy, empowering members of water user associations (WUG) with skills that extended beyond the project's immediate objectives. In Cabo Verde, however, while the establishment of Community Development Associations and Regional Partner Commissions aimed to empower local actors, these organizations did not evolve into autonomous agents of development. Moreover, the scope of intervention for the farmers' organizations created remained narrow, focusing primarily on water management. In ESA, initiatives like CLISSA in Seychelles adopted innovative approaches to social capital development, grouping small-scale farmers and fishers to strengthen collective action and market access. The PREFER project in Comoros established three out of the targeted nine cooperatives to enhance market access, collective action, and bargaining power. However, while these cooperatives have become operational, they are still in the early stages of development.

118. In LAC, efforts to strengthen social capital were uneven. In Grenada, insufficient support for farmers' cooperatives weakened their ability to build social networks and achieve long-term sustainability. Conversely, in Haiti, the creation of Mutual Solidarity (MUSO) groups under the Small Irrigation and Market Access Development Project provided a structured platform for pooling resources, enhancing members' economic capacities, and fostering social cohesion through informal financial safety nets. Similarly, in Cuba, the PRODECOR project's participatory approach to decision-making and strategic planning empowered cooperatives while increasing the involvement of women and youth and promoting more inclusive governance.[146] In APR, the Tonga Rural Innovation Project promoted social cohesion through community infrastructure such as multipurpose halls, fostering spaces for collective planning and collaboration. Meanwhile, in Kiribati, WUGs integrated women, youth, and people with disabilities into decision-making processes, creating more inclusive governance structures and strengthening community ties. However, the Solomon Islands' experience under the RDP II underscored the challenges of sustaining social capital, with limited trust and cohesion.

119. **Grassroots institutions positively influenced local development processes, especially in the APR.** In Kiribati, the KOIFAWP project exemplifies how participatory processes can strengthen grassroots institutions. Through the formulation and endorsement of 79 Community Development Plans (CDPs), the project involved community members in identifying and prioritizing their development needs. This participatory approach fostered a sense of ownership, strengthened community bonds, and enhanced collective responsibility. These efforts created a foundation for grassroots institutions to actively contribute to the local development process. In Fiji, the FAPP project achieved notable results in strengthening grassroots institutional capacities by establishing the Highland Farmers' Association provided farmers with a formal structure to organize, advocate for their interests, and access resources collectively. The Tonga Rural Innovation Project (TRIPI) stands out as a particularly successful example of embedding grassroots institutional development into national frameworks, by institutionalizing its community planning approach as a national policy.[147]

120. In São Tomé and Príncipe, the COMPRAN project established farmer platforms and supported the national extension system. However, these platforms remain weak.

[146] An additional positive example is found in Belize, where IFAD with other partners enhanced technical assistance to enable the participation of communities and grassroots organizations in local territorial development, and to improving family income. See https://procasur.org/en/learning-route-belize-2022/

[147] TRIP I ensured that grassroots needs and priorities were systematically integrated into the governance structure. The endorsement of CDPs by the Tongan Cabinet and their incorporation into the national development framework marked a significant achievement. This integration resulted in the allocation of government budgets and development partner funds aligned with community-driven priorities, empowering grassroots institutions to influence policy and budgetary decisions. The training provided for Town and District Officers under TRIP I further enhanced local institutional capacity, enabling effective leadership in planning processes and ensuring the sustainability of these approaches.

In Guinea-Bissau, project interventions did not explicitly target grassroots institutions, reflecting a missed opportunity. In Cabo Verde, the regional partner commissions supported in the POSER project influenced local development processes. In LAC and ESA, the evaluation found no evidence of significant interventions that enhanced the role of grassroots institutions in local development. This highlights a regional gap in leveraging local organizations as agents of change within the development process.

121. **Results of capacity development support for government actors remained output-related, not translated in effective institutional change.** There were capacity-building efforts directed at government actors in many SIDS, but these were not sufficiently strategic or integrated. The Comoros PREFER in was instrumental in building the capacity of key government institutions, [such as the Centre Rural de Développement Économique (CRDE), Institut National de Recherche pour l'Agriculture, la Pêche et l'Environnement (INRAPE), and the Family Health Directorate)] but these are not sufficient to fill large institutional gaps that undermine sustaining development projects by government. In Samoa government officials and local leaders received training on climate-smart agriculture and disaster risk management, improving institutional effectiveness despite limited resources for implementation. In Kiribati, tracking systems for climate adaptation projects were supported, strengthening technical knowledge among ministry staff. The Solomon Islands' DRP II focused on training local institutions to better manage climate adaptation projects. However, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock continued to face capacity gaps, particularly in extension services, community engagement, and sector coordination. In the Maldives and Kiribati, collaborative efforts embedded resilience into policy frameworks, though capacity gaps remain critical.

Key findings by region

In **WCA** IFAD interventions showed mixed success in strengthening human and social capital. The PAPAC project empowered cocoa, pepper, and coffee cooperatives, while PADES improved women's financial management and literacy. In Cabo Verde, community organizations remained weak, with limited autonomy. Institutional strengthening efforts were limited, except for Cabo Verde, where the POSER project influenced policy by prompting creation of a water irrigation agency.

In **ESA**, social capital development was supported through PREFER in Comoros, though the cooperatives were still in early development. In Comoros institutional capacity in key government agencies was built, while in Seychelles, CLISSA successfully enhanced institutional services, market linkages, and private sector engagement, including partnerships with Hilton Hotels. There was little evidence of strengthening grassroots institutions in the region.

In **LAC**, social capital development was inconsistent. Grenada's farmer cooperatives lacked sufficient support, while Haiti's MUSO groups effectively pooled resources and strengthened social cohesion. Cuba's PRODECOR project empowered cooperatives. Institutional capacity-building efforts were strong in Belize, Grenada, Cuba, and Haiti, improving governance structures despite the lack of a systemic approach.

In **APR**, IFAD achieved notable successes in social capital development, such as TRIP I in Tonga, which institutionalized community planning into national policy and inclusive governance approaches were strengthened in Kiribati. However, social cohesion challenges were evident in the Solomon Islands under RDP II. Institutional capacity-building efforts were strong, particularly in the Maldives and the Solomon Islands, but poor outreach to remote communities hindered progress.

C. Sustainability of benefits

122. This section assesses the sustainability of benefits in terms of how results achieved could be sustained in the SIDS contexts, and what factors have enabled or prevented sustaining the results.[148]

Social sustainability

123. **Strengthened social capital in many SIDS contributed to sustaining results.** All projects engaged and supported the growth of community-based organisations (CBOs), with MAREP in Grenada focusing on over 100 groups, PPI-3 in Haiti creating new local structures like Irrigators' Associations, and PRODECOR in Cuba promoting cooperative development plans.[149] These initiatives fostered increased participation, decision-making, and increased the ownership of projects' benefits. The CLISSA project in Seychelles helped strength communication and collaboration between small-scale farmers, backyard gardeners, artisanal fishers, and public service providers, enhancing their ability to work collectively to ensure the continuity of some actions. PREFER showed positive social sustainability prospects with cooperatives that fostered resource-sharing and knowledge exchange. In Sao Tomé and Príncipe, strengthened cooperatives or groups and local institutions enabled better access to niche markets. Supporting marginalized groups, was key for sustainability, although inconsistent participation was observed.

124. In the APR, completed projects demonstrated community development and empowerment, inclusivity and engagement, which fostered social cohesion essential for enhanced ownership of projects' benefits. In Kiribati, the OIFWP strengthened capacity of community members in resource management, particularly Water User Groups supporting local decision-making responsibilities on RWHS for effectively maintenance. School gardens persist where gardening was integrated into the school activities. TRIPI's (Tonga) community development planning process enabled communities to prioritize investments collectively, reducing conflicts and fostering cooperation. Additionally, FAPP (Fiji) revitalized traditional systems like the "solesolevaki" approach, where farmers worked together to support each other's agricultural needs, strengthening community bonds.

125. **Challenges such as disengagement and financial instability hinder long-term sustainability prospects of CBOs.** For instance, limited ownership by CBOs in Belize (e.g. the business plans and vulnerability assessments) raise concerns about sustainability. Efforts to connect local cooperatives to broader institutional networks sustained benefits for smallholders but efforts were insufficient. Projects like MAREP in Grenada helped cooperatives gaining access to markets, financial services, and technical support. FAPP in Fiji facilitated better market access for farmers through improved relationships with agricultural markets and local government entities. Similarly, CLISSA in Seychelles in the ESA region and PAPAC in Sao Tome in the WCA region bridged gaps by establishing linkages between smallholder farmers, artisanal fishers, and larger market players, encouraging knowledge-sharing and collaboration across socio-economic divides. However, these examples did not reflect consistent trends across all projects and these issues require continuous effort to maintain the momentum of community empowerment.

[148] The criterion is assessed for completed projects in general.

[149] MAREP in Grenada saw 80 per cent of CBOs improve their strategic alliances, facilitating greater collaboration with external organizations. PPI-3 in Haiti helped establish new community structures like Mutuelles de Solidarité, which fostered local cohesion and resource pooling. PRODECOR in Cuba promoted collaboration between cooperatives and state agencies, leading to improvements in socioeconomic conditions such as better housing and increased income for members.

Economic and/or financial sustainability

126. **Economic and/or financial sustainability prospects are moderately positive with some level of fragility.** The creation of market opportunities improved long-term market access and created sustainable economic opportunities for rural communities in the LAC region, MAREP in Grenada facilitated negotiations between beneficiaries and buyers.[150] This enhances the financial sustainability by enabling better connections to market for smallholders. PRODECOR beneficiaries in Cuba benefited from improved access to credit, improved market access, and strong government commitment, which helped cooperatives and producers increase profitability. However, the economic sustainability remained vulnerable due to dependence on external inputs, lack of input security, and uncertain long-term financing options.

127. In the APR region, the case study field mission in Kiribati found that backyard gardeners that participated in the OIFAWP continued to grow crops and generate income post-project, while enterprises supported by the project (such as charcoal briquette and VCO factories) became self-sustaining and created new employment opportunities. In Tonga, TRIPI has sustainably supported beneficiaries in income-generating activities such as the production of woven mats at halls, which has been viable. Conversely in the Maldives, the field mission found no evidence of sustained of MEDEP results at the household and community levels as Farmers have largely abandoned sea cucumber cultivation, reverting to traditional agriculture.

128. In São Tomé and Príncipe (WCA region) cocoa cooperatives supported have achieved significant financial independence, with agreements in place with international buyers, and developed certifications, making them a model of sustainability, similary for the coffee cooperatives.[151] The same cannot be said for the pepper cooperatives, where challenges persist.[152] A key issue has been the exit strategy of the project, which left cooperatives not well unprepared for self-sufficiency. With CLISA in Seychelles (ESA region), partnerships with entities like Hilton Hotels and the Seychelles Trading Company have provided farmers with stable market access, fostering economic sustainability.[153]

129. **Weak leadership dynamics and governance, insularity, and high transaction costs undermine sustainability prospects.** These issues make it difficult for some cooperatives to maintain the long-term benefits, particularly in terms of input availability and market access. Limited access to inputs, and investment options (high transaction costs and supply chain disruptions threatening business viability) restrict ability of households to expand and sustain their activities economically in SIDS contexts. The heavy dependence on external inputs like high-quality seeds and fertilizers, and without local alternatives, was also a challenge for sustainability.[154]

Technical and institutional sustainability

130. **Institutional sustainability was undermined by limited financial and technical capacities in institutions.** The evaluation found that the Maldives Maniyafushi marine research institute is still running with equipment supplied by the MEDEP project between 2017 and 2019, used for research and training, conversely the National Quarantine Facility that was also equipped by the project was disused, at the time of the evaluation, due to limited financial resources and

[150] Similarly, the PPI-3 project (Haiti) played a significant role in integrating rural farmers into larger economic systems by improving access to markets and financial services.
[151] Actions identified include to strengthening the coffee cooperative to become the leader in distribution on the national market, thus, to address challenges on international market.
[152] Cooperatives were unprepared to cover the salary cost of the cooperative staff, risking their financial independency.
[153] As presented in the effectiveness section.
[154] In the APR region, the Kiribati field mission found that a lack of access to key inputs (seeds and repair materials for rainwater harvesting tanks) was an issue. Projects in other regions, including COMPRAN (São Tomé and Principe), and RDP (Guinea-Bissau) also were heavily reliant on external inputs like improved seeds and fertilizers.

technical capacities of the new Ministry in charge of Agriculture. In Tonga, climate-resilient infrastructure was a key strength, with community halls and agricultural systems built to withstand extreme weather events. Capacity building and technical training enhanced community skills in infrastructure maintenance and agricultural practices. However, challenges persist due to inconsistent application of technical skills, limited maintenance capacity for complex infrastructure, and dependence on external technical support.

131. The RDPII in the Solomon Islands showed positive efforts with decentralized community development, by attempting to integrate the local governance structures through Ward Development Committees and Provincial Government planning. The formation of operations maintenance committees provided a framework for sustaining infrastructure. However, there was weak government integration and limited institutional commitment, as provincial ministries did not assume responsibility for maintaining projects. In Fiji (FAPP), institutional sustainability was supported by strong government commitment, particularly from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), to ensure policy alignment and integration into national agricultural programs. This was undermined by insufficient availability of financial and human resources.

132. In Cuba (LAC), institutional support from research institutions strengthened long-term sustainability, through the introduction of diverse seed varieties to enhance climate resilience. However, technical sustainability was undermined by dependence on imported inputs and spare parts, limited availability of technical services across cooperatives, and challenges in maintaining project-provided equipment. The lack of integration of digital agricultural solutions limited modernization potential, and continuous training updates were needed to keep pace with evolving technologies. In Haiti, barriers to sustainability included high initial investment costs, complex maintenance requirements, and dependence on external support for technical expertise and imported technology.

133. In São Tomé and Príncipe (WCA), cooperatives took responsibility for maintaining supported infrastructure (for processing), but this was hindered by the insufficient technical expertise, limiting their ability for technical sustainability, exacerbated by weak follow-up support services by government structures, which reduced their access to long-term technical assistance. In Seychelles (ESA) key infrastructure supported benefited of government subsidies for maintenance, the availability of technical expertise was a gap that limited technical sustainability prospects, especially for maintenance of irrigation schemes and storage facilities.

134. **Weak exit strategies hindered institutional sustainability.** Across regions, projects often lacked defined exit strategies and relied on exit strategies developed during the project implementation phase. In the LAC region, the Belize RRB project has a comprehensive exit strategy, relying on ongoing government support, without clear definitions of transition plans for continuity after the project's completion. In the APR region, the lack of an exit strategy for MEDeP (Maldives) has resulted in market challenges, leaving the initiative at risk after support ended. Similarly, in Fiji, the lack of exit strategy and hand-over plan was a source of disappointment for beneficiaries and eroded the sustainability of results. Lack of integration of project management into local government systems affected sustainability prospects, for instance in Belize and Grenada. Furthermore, poor infrastructure, high transport costs, and gaps in disaster preparedness further weakened the sustainability prospects, leaving communities vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks. Additionally, the lack of integration between project activities into national programme budgets limits the sustainability of interventions.

135. **Strong engagement of stakeholders was a critical success factor.** Institutional support and government buy-in has played a critical role in ensuring sustainability. In the Seychelles integration of project results into national

programs was essential for maintaining the benefits achieved by the CLISSA project. Strong community engagement and institutional support in terms of policies were crucial for maintaining the sustainability of agricultural projects. In São Tomé and Guinea Bissau, projects focused on land rehabilitation, irrigation, and food production achieved sustainability through active community involvement and ownership. Projects like PAPAC (São Tomé and Principe) and PADES (Guinea Bissau) saw continued success in part due to the direct involvement of local stakeholders, which helped ensure the continuity of activities after the conclusion of the projects. The collaboration between local communities and government institutions also provided a foundation for long-term success, particularly in the areas of agricultural development and environmental management.

Key findings by region

WCA Guinea Bissau's PADES project focused on land rehabilitation and irrigation, achieving sustainability through strong community ownership. In São Tomé and Príncipe, cooperatives took responsibility for maintaining infrastructure, but weak government follow-up and technical expertise limited long-term sustainability. Some farmers benefited from cooperative agreements, but high transaction costs created barriers to sustainability.

ESA Seychelles' CLISSA project received government subsidies for infrastructure maintenance, but inadequate technical expertise, particularly in irrigation and storage, posed risks. Smallholder cooperatives and backyard gardening initiatives contributed to resilience where implemented. Some Seychelles farmers benefited from cooperative agreements, but high transport costs, isolation, and reliance on external inputs restricted broader market access. Weak governance structures and lack of detailed exit strategies integrated into national development plans and poor disaster preparedness further undermined sustainability.

LAC projects showed strong economic and institutional sustainability where market integration and financial access were prioritized. Cuba's research institutions promoted climate resilience through diverse seed varieties, but reliance on imports and limited technical services hindered long-term sustainability. In Haiti, high investment costs and dependence on external expertise posed barriers to self-sufficiency. Social capital development was achieved, with projects like MAREP in Grenada and PPI-3 in Haiti empowering marginalized groups through inclusive governance and financial safety nets. Economically, these projects integrated rural farmers into larger markets, increasing financial resilience, but climate vulnerability and weak infrastructure posed ongoing risks.

APR achieved sustainability where projects were embedded into national frameworks. Tonga's TRIPI project institutionalized climate resilience and agricultural strategies, ensuring continued impact, though technical reliance and maintenance challenges persisted. In the Maldives, the marine research institute remained operational with IFAD-funded equipment, but the National Quarantine Facility was abandoned due to financial constraints. Social capital development was strong, with Tonga and Kiribati fostering inclusive governance and leadership for women and youth. Fiji's FAPP project had strong government backing, but resource shortages threatened its continuity. Despite institutional successes, weak exit strategies and reliance on external support remained major risks.

D. Scaling up

136. **Scaling up was achieved in few cases, when engagement with partners was effective.** In LAC, the adoption of Cooperative Development Plans in the PRODECOR in Cuba showed how cooperative involvement can scale project results (from practices to policy). The projects demonstrated strong evidence of governmental and stakeholder commitment as Cuba's government actively supported projects, particularly through financial contributions and integrating results into national policies, as seen with the East Central Region Livestock Cooperative Development Project in Cuba project. In the Maldives, despite the unsuccessful outcomes of MEDEP, the government has directed the World Bank's support to implement a refined version of a similar project, called "Maldives Sustainable Fisheries," on other islands. As a result, the valuable insights gained

from MEDEP have influenced the implementation of the World Bank project and served as a foundation for studies and experiments at the Manyafushi Centre.

137. In São Tomé and Príncipe, PAPAC activities in support of the pepper and cacao value chains have been scaled up by a project funded by the European Union, contributing to strengthening cocoa, coffee, pepper, and coconut cooperatives. The TRIP I in Tonga successfully institutionalized community planning methodologies into national policy, leading to the endorsement of 136 Community Development Plans and their integration into the national development framework, demonstrating upscaling evidence from practices to policy. In the ESA region, the CLISSA project's success in hydroponic farming, in partnership with Hilton Hotels, led to its expansion to Sri Lanka and Argentina. Ongoing consultations are now considering further replication in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Cameroon, reflecting the project's ability to integrate results into larger private sector initiatives.

138. **Common hindering factors for scaling up included lack of prioritization, coordination and weak KM system.** One critical factor is the lack of prioritization of scaling during the planning stages of projects. Second, projects did not focus on scaling aspects during the implementation, limiting the potential to expand or replicate successful initiatives with other partners. This oversight often left opportunities for scaling underdeveloped or unaddressed during the implementation. Other key factors such as the lack of coordination (in SIDS between IFAD and other organizations) along with the absence of IFAD staff locally, misalignment with national frameworks and the absence of linkages with national budgeted programmes. Finally, a critical gap is related to ineffective KM systems, which further limits the potential for scaling at a broader level.

139. **Community participation supported scaling in all regions.** Projects that involved local communities through participatory approaches - like those in Cuba, Comoros, Haiti, Kiribati, Seychelles and Tonga – were more successful in ensuring the sustainability of their results. By involving communities in planning and decision-making, these projects ensured that their activities were closely aligned with local needs, fostering a sense of ownership and long-term commitment to the project's outcomes.

Key findings by region

WCA In São Tomé and Príncipe the PAPAC project's support for the pepper and cacao value chains was scaled up by an EU-financed NGO, strengthening cooperatives in cocoa, coffee, pepper, and coconut production.

ESA In Seychelles (CLISSA), success in hydroponic farming led to expansion into Sri Lanka and Argentina, with ongoing discussions for replication in Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Cameroon, highlighting private-sector integration.

LAC In Cuba the PRODECOR project successfully influenced cooperative development policies, and government financial support facilitated scaling-up. The East Central Region Livestock Cooperative Development Project in Cuba further demonstrated integration into national programs.

APR In the Maldives insights gained from MEDEP's challenges influenced the World Bank's "Maldives Sustainable Fisheries" project and provided research opportunities at the Manyafushi Centre. In Tonga, the TRIPI project institutionalized community planning, leading to the formal adoption of Community Development Plans into national policy.

140. **In conclusion, the evaluation findings suggest a moderately satisfactory performance for contributions to impacts overall, while this is moderately unsatisfactory for sustainability and scaling up results.**[155] Modest evidence was found that corroborates contributions to income increase and food security improvement, while fewer evidence suggests nutrition improvements. Supported operations contributed to enhanced human and social capital through capacity development of farmers, their groups and communities. Capacity development of government stakeholders did not translate in effective institutional change. Except on social aspects, sustainability prospects are hampered across SIDS of the four regions by weak institutional governance and resource constraints, poor exit strategies, and broader logistical and market integration issues. Scaling up results occurred in some cases through effective stakeholder engagement, but results were limited by lack of coordination with partners, and the absence of linkages with national budgeted programmes.

[155] The comparison of ratings for the impact criteria shows a higher average rate for non-SIDS projects (4.06) compared to SIDS (3.54), so a difference of 0.52, which is statistically significant as presented in Annex V. Sustainability, 3.71 versus 3.38 and scaling up, 4.04 versus 3.69 respectively in non-SIDS and SIDS, statistically significant.

V. Inclusiveness

141. This chapter assesses the inclusivity in SIDS strategies and projects in relation to: (i) gender equality, women's empowerment, (ii) youth economic empowerment, and (iii) indigenous peoples (IPs) and persons with disabilities (PWDs). It responds to the key evaluation question: To what extent did IFAD-financed operations in SIDS effectively target rural women, youth, indigenous people, and other marginalized groups? How have these operations contributed to improving their resilience and enabling better livelihoods?

A. Gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE)

142. **Gender analyses were conducted consistently across supported SIDS. In-depth analysis of context and intersectional factors varied across SIDS.** All country strategies and projects of the 18 evaluated SIDS except one (Seychelles) included an analysis of the specific vulnerability issues faced by women and explicitly included women as a target group.[156] Gender analyses were conducted across all evaluated SIDS projects except for Seychelles. While most country strategies and projects acknowledged women's vulnerabilities, the level of detail varied. Key gender-related vulnerabilities included unequal workloads (12 cases), labor market inequalities (12 cases), exclusion from decision-making (9 cases), financial and resource limitations, and heightened exposure to climate risks (9 cases).[157] However, no explicit analysis was undertaken on how remoteness influences women's vulnerabilities, such as access to reproductive healthcare and economic opportunities. Intersectional factors were incorporated into country strategy papers (COSOPs/CSNs), as for instance: women-headed households (7 countries), gender-based violence (6 countries), and low political participation (4 countries). Age, urban-rural disparities, disability, gender identity, ethnicity, and sexual identity were rarely considered. Only three projects in the Asia-Pacific Region (APR) considered women with disabilities, indicating regional disparities in the extent of intersectional analysis.

143. **Projects mainstreamed GEWE approaches through explicit targeting of women and activities tailored to them, especially trainings.**[158] Gender targeting was widely implemented, with most projects setting participation targets for women, except in Cabo Verde, Seychelles, and Tonga, where the focus was more broadly on households or communities. Women's participation targets ranged from 10 per cent to 60 per cent, with nearly half (14 out of 30) aiming for 50 per cent participation.[159] Considering the data of projects' log frames, the total outreach of women is 207,321 which is 97 per cent of the total targeted, showing an effective outreach. Approaches included trainings (in all regions), and tailored activities such as childcare provision to enhance their participation in projects' activities (e.g. Grenada, Cabo Verde), promotion of women's leadership in grassroots organizations (e.g. Belize, Grenada, Kiribati, Tonga), strengthening women's groups (e.g. Comoros, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, Solomon Islands. The LAC region performed well, with Grenada exceeding female training targets and Cuba surpassing female participation goals.[160] In APR, the RDP in the Solomon Islands did achieve significant successes, including an increase in women's

[156] Country strategy documents cited barriers and vulnerabilities faced by women as the lack of employment opportunities, (15 out of 17 documents), and high and inequitable workloads (11 out of 17 documents). Other barriers included limited access to finance (6), restricted roles in decision-making and leadership (9), and gender-based violence (7).
[157] Challenges faced by women-headed households (Belize, Grenada, Haiti, Kiribati, PNG, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe), gender-based violence (Comoros Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, PNG, Solomon Islands), and low political participation and representation of women (Comoros. Haiti, PNG, Solomon Islands)
[158] The e-survey results show that 80% of respondents are in agreement or strongly in agreement with that.
[159] Five other projects set a target of 40 per cent women's participation. The average project target for women's participation was highest in APR (49 per cent), followed by ESA (47 per cent), WCA (45 per cent) and LAC (40 per cent). However, the achieved average rate of women's participation was highest in the WCA region (50 per cent), followed by the APR region (48 per cent), ESA region (39 per cent), and LAC region (38 per cent).
[160] There were challenges in projects in Haiti, where the lack of a gender officer at initial phases hindered progress.

decision-making power but MEDEP in the Maldives, struggled to implement their plans fully, while MAP (still on-going) is doing well on gender results. The ESA region struggled due to delays in gender strategy implementation, particularly in Comoros and Seychelles. The WCA region also faced difficulties in fully developing and executing gender strategies. [161]

144. **The formulation of gender strategies was inconsistent across regions, with varying levels of operationalization.** In the LAC region, most projects (7 of 13) developed gender strategies or action plans. These projects generally focused on gender equality, with some achieving or surpassing their gender-related targets.[162] In contrast, in the APR, 6 of 10 projects developed gender strategies, but only five implemented gender action plans. In the ESA region, PREFER in Comoros developed a gender strategy at early stage, but implemented a gender action plan only in 2023, so its impact remained unclear. CLISSA in Seychelles did not develop any gender strategy or action plan. In the WCA region, only two projects, PAPAC (São Tomé and Príncipe) and (POSER) Cabo Verde, developed gender strategies but neither project fully operationalized its gender strategy (see

[161] Further examples: The RDP in Solomon Islands saw a 400 per cent increase in women's sole decision-making power in coconut production. However, challenges remained, especially in overcoming cultural norms that restricted women's full participation. Projects such as those in the Maldives and Kiribati succeeded in improving women's access to training and resources but continued to face barriers related to social and cultural norms, which hindered full gender equality within project activities.

[162] For example, the Grenada project trained over 500 women, exceeding mid-term targets, while the East Central Region Livestock Cooperative Development Project in Cuba project exceeded its target of 20 per cent female representation. On the other hand, some projects like PITAG in Haiti and Grenada lacked gender strategies or action plans at mid-term reviews, affecting the scope of gender-related achievements.

145. Box Annex VI for challenges in implementing gender strategies).

146. **Gender disaggregated outputs' data were captured, while there were very little or no data on outcomes.** All projects collected gender-disaggregated data on project indicators, except in Samoa. But no projects in the APR, ESA, and WCA regions provided gender- and age-disaggregated data at the outcome level. Half of the projects in the LAC portfolio included some outcome data disaggregated by gender. For example, SAEP in Grenada provided gender-disaggregated date on the number of men and women that achieved certification through Assessment of Prior Learning, and project documentation for the MAREP reported that vocational training led to 132 women securing permanent employment (exceeding employment rates for male participants). The RCD project in Cuba reported on increases in women and men's incomes through involvement in cooperatives. Without disaggregation of project results, it is hard to assess the extent to which disparities in project results have occurred, and to recognise systemic inequalities experienced by men and women.

147. **Results in women's economic empowerment were moderately insufficient.** In Grenada, the MAREP project created jobs for 132 women out of 191 reached. The ACD project in Cuba reported 86 new job opportunities for women. However, projects in Belize, Haiti, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba did not report any results in terms of economic empowerment for women.[163] In Kiribati, the OIFAWP increased women's involvement in economic activities, which in turn enhanced their participation in household decision-making. Virgin coconut oil processing facilities, in particular, empowered women to have greater control over household income expenditure. In Tonga, the TRIPI contributed to women's economic empowerment by building community halls that facilitated mat-weaving activities, generating substantial monthly income. Pigsties provided by the project also led to significant annual income increases per household, benefiting women in particular. In Fiji, FAPP helped women increase their income through the sale of vegetables and fruits, which they used for home improvements and purchasing household utilities, further advancing their economic independence. Those projects that showed economic results for women in the APR region shared several key characteristics, as presented in Box 6.

Box 6

Example of women economic empowerment and factors that enabled this in SIDS contexts

In the APR, the supplementary funds JP RWEE Phase II started in 2023 and so far, successfully implemented training initiatives and convening of Market Vendors Forums to empower market vendors in Fiji and the Solomon Islands. Work was also started to develop a toolkit to support analysis of gender sensitive Climate Smart Agriculture, Gender Sensitive value chains, and Gender Land Rights profiling.

Evidence suggests that successful initiatives in women's economic empowerment led directly to increasing their income through various activities such as mat-weaving, fruit and vegetable sales, or local enterprises like pig farming and coconut oil processing. They also supported household needs, allowing women to contribute to expenses like food, healthcare, and education, which enhances their economic independence. Many of the projects adopt community-based approaches, improving local infrastructure and strengthening women's roles in community decision-making. A common theme is the improvement in household decision-making, enabling them to have a more significant voice in family matters.

[163] In Belize, findings of the case study mission reveal that the RRB project engaged women in agriculture, but the increased workloads limited their ability to absorb shocks effectively. Similarly, in Grenada, the MAREP and SAEP projects provided agricultural training and resources, but inequities in resource distribution and decision-making roles prevented full benefits. In Haiti, PPI-3 supported women in managing farming activities, although resource scarcity hindered effectiveness. In Cuba, small agricultural tools and climate-smart farming training improved resilience, but inconsistent implementation and resource limitations reduced their impact.

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team based on desk review

148. In Comoros (ESA), crop yields from RWHS in the PREFER project improved significantly, with increases ranging from 34 per cent for bananas to 175 per cent for onions. Projects in the WCA region have shown limited evidence of contributions to women's economic empowerment. Guinea-Bissau's PADES project aimed to improve women's participation in management bodies but did not show substantial economic results, with the ongoing challenge of women's heavy workload. The São Tomé and Príncipe's COMPRAN project engaged women by distributing agricultural inputs, yet issues like land ownership remain as barriers for women. The POSER project in Cabo Verde, reported lower participation of women in agricultural projects due to land constraints, highlighting the need for strategies addressing gender roles, land access, and workload reduction through mechanization and technology adoption.

149. **Low performance achieved in reducing women's workloads.** Projects in the LAC and ESA regions showed no evidence of successfully easing women's workloads or promoting equitable work distribution, even though some included positive discrimination efforts.[164] In few instances, interventions inadvertently contributed to increasing women's workloads. For instance, during field missions to Belize and Kiribati, it was found that women involved in backyard gardening activities reported an increase in workload due to the demands of their gardening responsibilities. Moreover, in Cabo Verde, reports indicate that the construction of livestock shelters may have increased women's workload, as they now have to round up the animals every evening. Only four projects showed tangible results in this area, including RDP in Solomon Islands, TRIP-I in Tonga, OIWFP in Kiribati, and PRODECOR in Cuba, in SIDS of the APR and LAC regions. These projects contributed to reducing women's workloads through the improvement of technology and the reduction of time spent on labour-intensive activities. In the Solomon Islands, the introduction of cocoa solar dryers and improved water supply infrastructure significantly reduced women's workload, particularly in labour-intensive activities. Improvements of water supply helped to reduce the amount of time women spent collecting water in Tonga. However, some projects that had the goal of reducing women's workloads in their design stages failed to report on results or only at the completion stage.[165]

150. **Moderate results were achieved in increasing women's influence in decision making.** Desk review analysis shows that slightly more than a third of the projects in the portfolio (11 out of 30) demonstrated evidence of increasing women's influence in decision-making. Projects in the LAC and APR regions were the most likely to report results related to women's influence in decision-making (5 out of 13 projects in LAC; 6 out of 10 projects in APR)[166], while none of the projects in the ESA and WCA regions demonstrated these results. Details of these results are presented in Box 7.

Box 7
Examples of enhancing women influence in decision making in SIDS contexts

Strengthening of women's influence in decision-making was primarily achieved through the promotion of women into leadership roles within various organizations. For example, in Kiribati, the Outer Islands Food and Water Project trained 1,106 women in leadership roles for Water User Group executive committees, significantly surpassing the project's initial targets. Women's involvement in leadership positions facilitated active participation

[164] In WCA, the COMPRAN Project aimed to reduce women's workload with technologies like gas cookers, but there was no demonstrated impact. The PAPAC Project supported women's economic empowerment but did not focus enough on reducing their workload in agriculture. The POSER Project in Cape Verde worked on gender equality and women's involvement in leadership but faced challenges in fully addressing workload reduction, particularly for women in agriculture.
[165] These include the Kiribati OIFAWP, Tonga TRIPII, and the Fiji FAPP in APR.
[166] LAC: PPI-3 (Haiti), PRORURAL (Dominican Republic), PRODECOR (Cuba), PRODEGAN (Cuba), and MAREP (Grenada).
APR: OIFAWP (Kiribati), MAP (Maldives), TRIPI and TRIPII (Tonga), MVF (PNG) and RDP (Solomon Islands)

in community decision-making processes, including the prioritization of Community Development Plans. In Samoa, the Agricultural and Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project transformed traditional village meetings into inclusive bodies, where women's groups actively participated. This marked a significant shift from the previously male-dominated decision-making structure. Similarly, in Tonga, women played an active role in decision-making regarding agricultural harvest distribution, ensuring inclusive benefits for all community households.

In Cuba, the PRODEGAN project created spaces for women in decision-making roles, with 31 per cent of cooperatives having female members in leadership positions, exceeding the target of 17 per cent. Additionally, the PPI-3 in Haiti project ensured that women were represented on all management committees, surpassing the 80 per cent target and achieving 100 per cent participation.

In the Maldives MAP project, introduction of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) empowered women to gain confidence in household decision-making and pursue opportunities in high-tech horticulture. This empowerment allowed them to negotiate their roles within the family and participate more actively in decision-making processes. The MTR discussions revealed that women, particularly those trained in GALS, felt more confident in influencing household income decisions, such as consulting on income use.

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team based on desk review

151. **Project efforts to influence policies related to gender equality were rare and are nascent in terms of addressing root causes of gender inequalities.** Efforts primarily focused on combating discriminatory social norms and reducing the disproportionate amount of time spent on domestic and care work. Only two projects in the LAC region demonstrated results on favourable gender policies. The Grenada project stands out for its engagement with the Ministry of Social Affairs to mainstream gender equality into rural development initiatives. Additionally, the East Central Region Livestock Cooperative Development Project in Cuba successfully influenced public policy by having 20 recommendations incorporated into the country's newly approved Livestock Law. While such examples are noteworthy, they remain exceptions in the broader SIDS portfolio. No other projects in the LAC, ESA and WCA regions have demonstrated evidence in this area to date. In relation to addressing the root causes, out of 30 projects, only three are considered gender transformative, including MAP in Maldives, AIMN in Solomon Islands (APR), and COMPRAN in São Tomé and Príncipe (WCA). These on-going projects either currently implement or will implement the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), a participatory methodology aimed at promoting gender justice and empowering communities.

152. **Hindering factors that have constrained achievement in GEWE are multiple including insufficient female staff and cultural factors**. The delayed development of gender strategies (PPI-3 in Haiti, MEDEP in the Maldives, and RDP in Solomon) led to insufficient time for these strategies to be fully utilized or integrated into project activities. In TRIPI in Tonga, traditional male dominance in community decision-making hindered efforts to include women in processes of decision making. In Fiji (FAPP project) women were included in leadership bodies or training sessions, but active participation was constrained by mixed groups of farmers, limiting their influence. Additionally, the lack of gender-specialized staff and insufficient female staff in project teams were highlighted as challenges (Fiji, the Maldives, and Solomon Islands). Other factors include the lack of disaggregated outcome related data, the use of inappropriate metrics, and the difficulty in capturing meaningful outcomes tied to GEWE. Lastly, entrenched social and cultural norms have posed significant challenges in many projects, and while several projects within the SIDS portfolio have made efforts to advance gender equality, very few have embraced addressing changes in social norms, attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs.

Key findings by region

In WCA gender analyses addressed key vulnerabilities faced by women but often lacked depth. Despite achieving the highest women's participation rate among the regions (50 per cent), projects had limited success in implementing gender strategies effectively. Economic empowerment outcomes for women were low, hindered by challenges such as heavy workloads and limited land access. There was no clear evidence of increasing women's influence in decision-making, underscoring persistent structural and cultural barriers.

ESA projects inconsistently developed and implemented gender strategies, resulting in delayed or limited impacts, as seen in Comoros and Seychelles. Women's participation was moderate (39 per cent), and few projects translated this into tangible economic empowerment. Efforts to reduce women's workloads or to enhance their influence in decision-making processes were largely absent.

LAC projects like MAREP in Grenada exceeded female training targets, while initiatives in Cuba significantly increased women's leadership roles in cooperatives. Economic empowerment outcomes were modest, with promising job creation for women in Grenada and Cuba. LAC also demonstrated unique instances of influencing gender-related policies, particularly in Grenada and Cuba.

APR achieved good women's participation rates (48 per cent). Projects in Tonga, Kiribati, and Fiji provided women with income-generating opportunities directly enhancing their economic independence and household decision-making. Efforts to reduce women's workloads through improved infrastructure and technology were successful in the Solomon Islands and Tonga. Kiribati achieved substantial increase in women's roles in community organizations. Full implementation of gender strategies faced delays in the Maldives.

B. Youth economic empowerment

153. **SIDS COSOPs/CSNs included an analysis of the needs and vulnerabilities faced by youth.** Nearly all country strategy documents (16 out of 17, excluding Seychelles) contain some analysis of the vulnerabilities and key challenges faced by youth and included youth as an explicit target group. The most commonly identified challenges included high unemployment (16 out of 17 documents), migration (11 out of 17 documents), access to land and financing (14 out of 17 documents), and access to education and vocational training (16 out of 17 documents). These challenges reflect the pressing needs facing young populations across the countries. Most country strategy documents (14 out of 18 countries, excluding Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Seychelles) provided a definition of the age group of youth in alignment with government definitions consistent with IFAD guidance. The youth age groups within the IFAD SIDS portfolio vary widely, ranging from 12 to 30 years of age in PNG to 25 to 35 years of age in Comoros. This broad range of ages considered in the definitions of youth across the portfolio poses challenges for reporting and highlights the diverse nature of the youth demographic in the portfolio. See Box A22, Annex VI for detailed factors that affect youth in each region.

154. **Project design documents included at least one key SIDS vulnerability dimensions that affected youth,** predominantly by addressing economic resilience with a focus on the issue of youth unemployment and skills development (25 out of 30 projects). There was little consideration of intersectionality such as youth with disability or age and sexual orientation differentials. Less than half of projects (12/30) also incorporated activities specifically designed to meet the needs of youth, particularly in the areas of training and capacity building. For example, the OIFAWP in Kiribati offered youth training in plumbing, while the SAEP in Grenada provided vocational training. Projects in LAC and WCA were the most

likely to include activities intended for youth (7 projects in LAC, 4 projects in WCA), compared to the APR and ESA region (1 project in APR and none in ESA).[167]

155. **Specific targets for youth participation were set,[168] and achieved targets were moderately satisfactory overall.** Out of 30 projects in the SIDS portfolio, 26 included youth as part of the target group, including all projects in the LAC and WCA projects, and nearly all projects in the APR (9 out of 10 projects), and ESA (1 out of 2 projects). Slightly less than half of the projects (14 projects) set specific targets for youth participation. The average target for youth participation varied by region from 20.0 per cent in APR and 21.1 per cent in ESA, to 32.2 per cent in LAC and 40.7 per cent in WCA. Using the log frames of projects, 9 projects did not include any quantitative data on youth outreach. Considering the remaining projects, the total outreach of youth is 56,000, which is 80 per cent of the total target, reflecting a moderately satisfactory performance overall.

156. **Reporting was more on achieved youth' output results than on outcomes.** Out of 30 projects, 25 had plans to disaggregate data by age (excluding MAREP in Grenada, PPI-3 in Haiti, SAFPROM in Samoa, CLISSA in Seychelles, and POSER in Cabo Verde). Of the ten completed projects, only six provided age-disaggregated data (excluding PPI-3 (Haiti), CLISSA (Seychelles), MEDeP (Maldives), and TRIPI (Tonga)). Despite these efforts, age-disaggregated results for project outcomes were sparse, like the challenges with gender data. As a result, it often remains unclear how, or if, youth have benefited equitably from IFAD interventions, with many outcomes being inferred from non-disaggregated data and qualitative insights found in project reports.

157. **There was limited evidence of contributions to changes in youth economic empowerment, and out-migration.** Five projects in the LAC and APR regions have demonstrated evidence of economic empowerment and employment opportunities for youth, primarily through training and employment opportunities. In LAC, projects empowered youth through vocational skills training and facilitating their transition into the workforce. Both initiatives provide youth with the necessary skills to either secure employment or pursue self-employment opportunities. The SAEP project (Grenada) conducted a broad range of vocational training and support, while the PRODECOR in Cuba specifically integrated young people into jobs within the drying and processing sectors. In APR, the TRIPII project in Tonga and FAPP in Fiji provided valuable skills for youth. TRIPII helped youth develop skills in handicraft production through community halls, while FAPP in Fuji supported youth farmers by promoting "solesolevaki," or collaborative work, which boosts their productivity. Both initiatives equip young people with practical, marketable skills. In one case, TRIPI in Tonga - APR, reducing of youth outmigration was anecdotally reported.

[167] IFAD (2019) IFAD Action Plan – Rural Youth. https://www.ifad.org/en/w/corporate-documents/policies/ifad-action-plan-rural-youth. Project design documents published after IFAD's Action Plan on Rural Youth in 2019 showed a higher likelihood of including youth as a target group. Nine out of ten of these projects included youth as a target group, compared to 17 out of 21 projects published prior to the Action Plan. Furthermore, these projects were more likely to have specific targets for youth participation (nine out of ten projects compared to 5 out of 21 projects) and to incorporate specific activities for youth (seven out of ten projects compared to seven out of twenty-one projects), indicating that the policy had a significant impact on youth targeting.

[168] The e-survey results show that 72% of respondents are in agreement or strongly in agreement with that.

Key findings by region

WCA projects consistently targeted youth, establishing the highest average participation targets among regions (40.7 per cent). Activities addressing youth vulnerabilities, especially unemployment and skills development, were common, but implementation of youth-specific interventions was limited. Although youth were prominently featured in strategies, tangible economic empowerment outcomes or impact on migration were limited.

ESA projects had minimal focus on youth-specific activities, with only CLISSA directly targeting youth needs. While youth vulnerabilities such as unemployment were acknowledged in strategies, the insufficient targeted interventions and non-capturing of outcome (if induced) meant minimal evidence of youth benefiting economically or socially.

LAC achieved youth participation targets of 32.2 per cent. Projects like SAEP in Grenada provided vocational training, and PRODECOR in Cuba integrated youth into specific sectors, showcasing successful examples of economic empowerment. Despite these positive examples, limited age-disaggregated outcome data prevented a comprehensive assessment of broader youth outcomes.

APR projects prominently identified youth vulnerabilities and achieved moderate youth participation (20 per cent). Although youth-specific interventions were limited, key projects like TRIPII in Tonga and FAPP in Fiji successfully delivered practical skills, such as handicraft production and collaborative farming, enhancing youth's economic opportunities. Anecdotal evidence suggested reduced youth out-migration in Tonga, although robust data was lacking. Despite notable successes, targeted interventions were not consistently implemented, limiting overall youth empowerment results.

C. Other marginalised groups

158. **Targeting strategies defined in the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2022) not uniformly applied.** Indigenous peoples are present in SIDS of LAC and APR, as elaborated in the context section. Nearly all countries in the APR SIDS portfolio have significant, often homogenous, indigenous peoples, with the exception of the Maldives. The IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2022) emphasizes the importance of applying Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes to enhance development effectiveness, and to enable Indigenous Peoples' communities to have a role in determining their development priorities. Only one country strategy document (Guyana) directly references FPIC. Five out of seven country strategy documents of countries with Indigenous Peoples included references to the promotion and use of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and practices. For instance, the Tonga CSN highlights the role of Indigenous knowledge in empowering outer island communities and encourages the use of innovative solutions to address local challenges. Similarly, the Solomon Islands CSN emphasizes the critical role of Indigenous knowledge and practices in advancing agroforestry initiatives.

159. **Targeting approaches for indigenous peoples were inconsistent.** Indigenous people are present in eight out of the eighteen countries of IFAD SIDS covered by the evaluation, including two countries in the LAC region (Belize and Guyana) and six in the APR region. Only two country strategy documents, Belize and Guyana in the LAC region, explicitly mention indigenous people concerns and referenced them as a target group (see Box 8).

Box 8

Specific challenges faced by IPs in Belize and Guyana

Indigenous peoples in both Belize and Guyana face similar challenges, particularly in securing land rights. In Guyana, many Amerindian communities still seek formal recognition of their customary land titles, while in Belize, Indigenous groups like the Maya deal with issues related to land management, especially in areas near protected forests. Both countries also experience high levels of economic exclusion among Indigenous peoples. In Guyana, poverty rates in hinterland regions, where most Indigenous communities live, are among the highest in the country. Belize's Indigenous

groups, particularly the Maya, also experience significant poverty and have limited access to agricultural markets, technology, and services.

In Belize, the Maya face environmental degradation and climate-related disasters, while in Guyana, Indigenous peoples are impacted by flooding, deforestation, and the effects of mining activities. Living in rural and remote areas makes it difficult to access essential services like education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Political and social exclusion remains a common issue. Indigenous communities in both countries are underrepresented in national decision-making processes, leading to marginalization. These challenges highlight the urgent need for more inclusive policies and targeted support for Indigenous communities in both Belize and Guyana.

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team based on desk review

160. **Persons with disabilities (PWDs) were considered in few country strategies.** Only a third of country strategy documents (6 out of 17) explicitly included PWDs as a target group, including two out of six strategies in LAC, one out of two in ESA, and two out of three strategies in WCA. None of the country strategy documents for APR SIDS included PWDs as a target group. Additionally, only the country strategy documents that included PWDs as a target group included an analysis of the needs and vulnerabilities faced by PWDs. Where such analyses were present, they were minimal, often focusing primarily on physical challenges to accessibility. Country strategy documents produced after 2021 (following the publication of IFAD's Disability and Inclusion Strategy) were more those that include PWDs in the target group. Specifically, 4 out of 9 documents (44 per cent) published after 2021 included PWDs, compared to only 2 out of 8 documents (25 per cent) published before 2021. None of the country strategy reviewed by the evaluation were produced after the release of IFAD's Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027.[169]

161. **Few project designs included PWDs in targeting and analysis.** Only five projects included PWDs as a target group (one in LAC, two in APR, and two in WCA. Only one project (PURRACO in Haiti) included an analysis of the needs of PWDs, focusing on provisions for PWDs among the vulnerable groups targeted for small livestock distribution. Only one project (FFD in Guinea-Bissau) included a specific target for the participation of PWDs, set at 3 per cent.

162. **No reported evidence of results in improving the livelihoods of IPs or PWDs.** No projects with mid-term or end-term reporting included results that were disaggregated by IP or disability status. Of the projects under implementation, only one (REDE in Guinea-Bissau) intended to disaggregate results by disability status. This reflects the lack of reporting results disaggregated to identify these groups and the level of results achieved in therefore unclear.

[169] This strategy outlines principles of engagement that include non-discrimination, full and effective participation and inclusion, accessibility, and equal opportunities. Its goal is to achieve equality of outcomes and foster an inclusive culture within IFAD. The implementation of this policy is expected to significantly impact the inclusion of PWDs in future country strategies. https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/137/docs/EB-2022-137-R-7.pdf?attach=1

Key findings by region

In **WCA**, inclusion of marginalized groups was limited. IPs were not noted as present in the projects. Guinea-Bissau set a clear participation target for PWDs (3 per cent), but no outcome data was disaggregated by disability.

ESA gave minimal attention to marginalized groups, with limited presence of IPs. Only one country strategies explicitly mentioned PWDs. Project designs did not include targeted activities or data disaggregation for marginalized groups.

In **LAC** Belize and Guyana explicitly targeted IPs and addressed their unique challenges, including land rights and economic exclusion. Only two out of six country strategies included consideration of PWDs needs. One project (Haiti) conducted a specific PWD analysis but no disaggregated results for IPs or PWDs were available.

In **APR**, IPs form the demographic majority and were implicitly targeted, though explicit IP-focused strategies were lacking. No APR country strategies or projects targeted PWDs.

163. **In conclusion, the evaluation findings suggest a moderately satisfactory performance overall for GEWE,[170] while this is moderately unsatisfactory for economic empowerment of youth.** Country strategies and project designs in SIDS incorporate approaches for GEWE, and in targeting youth and marginalized groups. Most SIDS' projects achieved their targets for women participation, but evidence suggests modest progress for their contribution to women economic empowerment, their participation in decision-making within households and communities, and in easing women workload. Youth-targeted activities in SIDS were supported in numerous SIDS of all regions, especially in relation to skills development, but evidence was lacking on contributions to youth employment. Indigenous peoples were targeted, where present, particularly in APR and LAC SIDS but projects did not sufficiently include tailored cultural approaches. Recent project designs included PWDs issues.

[170] The comparison of ratings for the GEWE criteria shows a higher average rate for non-SIDS projects (4.14) compared to SIDS (3.48), with a difference which is statistically significant as presented in Annex V.

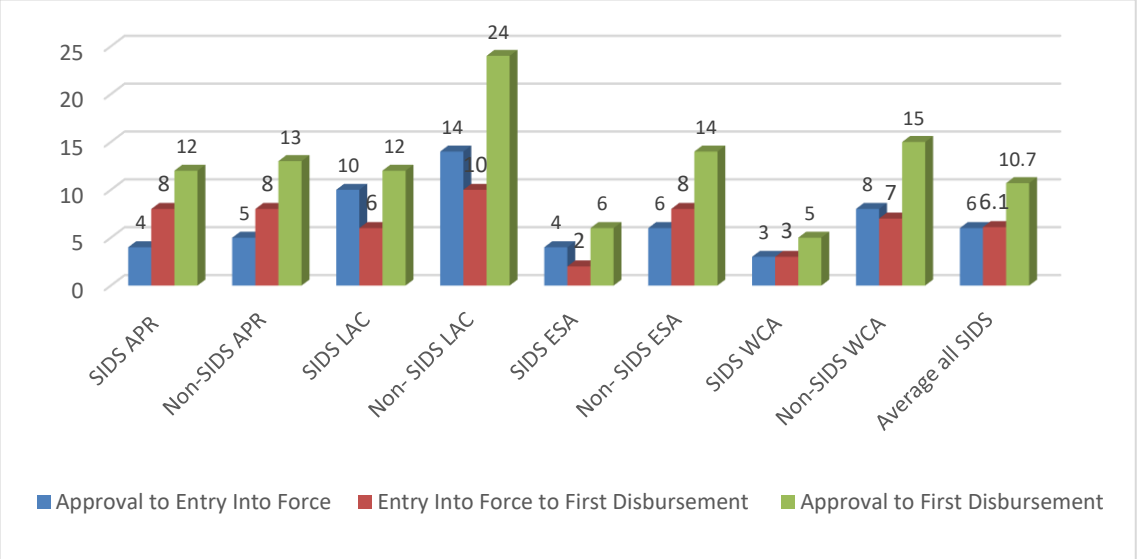
VI. Efficiency and operational oversight

164. This chapter answers the main evaluation questions: How adequate were IFAD's investments in supporting rural transformation in SIDS, considering their specific challenges; to what extent were financed operations adequately managed (from design to completion) for efficient results? Which were factors that affected efficiency results? The chapter assesses results of evaluated SIDS in terms of performance of loan operations, including capacity challenges, external and contextual factors, efficiency gains and IFAD's support for project implementation. The chapter discusses co financing arrangements and its effect on SIDS portfolio performance.

A. Operational efficiency

165. **SIDS show faster project startup and disbursement processes than non-SIDS.** On average, from approval to entry into force, SIDS in ESA, WCA and APR take about 3–4 months—compared to 8 months for non-SIDS—while in LAC SIDS average 10 months versus 14 months for non-SIDS. However, individual performances vary widely, with some countries (e.g., Grenada, Seychelles, and São Tomé and Príncipe) moving almost immediately, whereas others (e.g., the Dominican Republic, Fiji, and PNG) face delays up to 21 months. In terms of disbursement, SIDS also outperform non-SIDS, taking an average of 6 months from entry into force to first disbursement compared to 8.3 months for non-SIDS, with the greatest discrepancies observed in ESA and WCA, while APR shows similar timelines for both groups. Figure 5 shows details per each region.

Figure 5
Time between key milestones (months) – All regions



Source: IFAD Operational Results Management System (ORMS)

166. **SIDS's projects are more likely to require project extensions.** In APR, projects required a substantial 17.1 months of extension, while non-SIDS projects average 8.6 months. Similarly, in WCA, SIDS projects average an 18.0-month extension, in stark contrast to the 5.4 months for non-SIDS. Conversely, ESA shows more uniform extension durations, with both non-SIDS and SIDS projects of around 7.1 and 6.0 months respectively. The LAC SIDS projects average extension by 9.6 months compared to 6.3 months for non-SIDS. Overall, across the 18 SIDS, the average project extension was 10.9 months compared to 7.0 in non-SIDS. Some of the main reasons for extension of projects include poor performance of implementing agencies (for example, the PITAG project extension owing to delays and poor performance of the agency in charge of delivering technical packages),

additional financing (PADES project in WCA), uneven AWPBs execution (MEDEP in Maldives) and

167. **SIDS exhibit high management costs, reflecting structural challenges of remoteness.** All regions significantly exceeded IFAD's suggested threshold of 15 per cent of the total project costs at completion by averaging 32 per cent for all regions (Table 3). SIDS of ESA and LAC showed the highest management costs with an average of 35 per cent at completion; WCA has an average of 24.6 per cent. With a lower increase of 8.9 percentage points from costs at completion versus design. In the Maldives (APR), the MEDEP project faced high management costs affecting the APR average 32.80. In Solomon Islands, for RDP II, actual final expenditure was 90 per cent of the design amount, but management expenditures significantly exceeded the design budget, mainly due to challenges of isolated provinces. In WCA, São Tomé and Principe COMPRAN project had high implementation costs relative to project size, influenced by conversion from local currency to euro and high inflation rates.

Table 3
Average management costs, at design versus at completion

Region	% Management Costs at design/appraisal	% Management Costs at completion	% points difference from design to completion
Average APR Region	17.70%	32.80%	15.10%
Average ESA Region	18.30%	35.50%	17.20%
Average LAC Region	17.80%	35.10%	17.30%
Average WCA Region	15.70%	24.60%	8.90%
Average SIDS	**17.38%**	**32.00%**	**15%**

Source: Desk review analysis of evaluation team, based on project data.

168. **Procurement arrangements led to delays of planned activities in most cases.** For most SIDS in the LAC region, procurement challenges were significant bottlenecks, owing to difficulties in applying IFAD procurement procedures, administrative inefficiencies, technical capacity gaps, and low compliance issues, resulting in implementation delays.[171] ESA faced delays in contract delivery and management, as for instance, in Seychelles, where contractors and consultants were slow in delivering works and services.[172] In APR, procurement delays were persistent due to limited staff. The Maldives MAP project faced difficulties in sourcing construction materials, limited availability of suitable suppliers and delays in international shipping to outer islands.[173] In WCA, procurement deadlines and procedures were time consuming and did not consider local context constraints. In Guinea Bissau, PADES faced planning and procedural shortcomings and issues with contract management, leading to a low implementation rate. In São Tomé and Príncipe, procurement processes and mechanisms failed to consider existing financial services structures and their requirements to support project implementation as well as insularity and remoteness, which reduced available suppliers and increased costs.

169. **Technical capacity gaps and high staff turnover within PMUs hindered efficient delivery.** In APR, the Maldives' MAP project faced staffing challenges for vacancies in the areas of gender, nutrition, and social inclusion coordinator, and lack of KM expertise. Tonga's TRIP II project reported high turnover, with 11 of 40

[171] In Grenada, the SAEP project faced challenges with limited updates to the procurement plan, issues with contract management, including expired agreements without proper extensions and several procurement files lacking IFAD's No Objection, affecting procurement procedures.
[172] Often operating on expired contracts to avoid lengthy termination procedure, and retendering processes, highlighting inefficiencies in contract management
[173] in Kiribati where the PMU indicated that while procurement procedures were manageable, there was a critical need for additional staff resources to meet IFAD's financial reporting timelines.

staff resigning. Fiji's FAPP project faced recruitment delays affecting progress of planned activities. In WCA, the São Tomé and Príncipe's COMPRAN project was challenged by staff turnover and a limited local consultancy market, leading to high rate of vacancies and unmet skill needs, particularly for VCD activities. In LAC, both Belize and Grenada struggled with maintaining skilled staff within PMUs, impacting project start-up and execution. During case study missions, PMUs met reported technical capacity issues, leading to outsourcing expertise, international consultants in some cases, to fill staffing gaps. IFAD's staff remunerations are generally lower than those offered by other international organizations, so the Maldives' and Sao Tome and Principe staff turnover has been influenced by better-paid other job opportunities, outmigration, and unmet job expectations. In the Maldives, the Hanimaadhoo Agricultural Centre supported by the MAP project had to recruit international expertise to advance its research agenda. In ESA, performance of the Seychelles project was affected by PMU staff instability and delays in establishing effective processes.

170. **There were few examples of positive efficiency results.** The main lessons that enabled success are identified from positive results in efficiency as: effective engagement with and contribution from various stakeholders (beyond governmental institutions), strong and effective government commitment, swiftness in taking appropriate action when facing challenges, as per details presented in Box 9.

Box 9
Factors of efficiency gains in SIDS

Some projects show efficiency gains, with notable examples from APR and ESA. In APR, the TRIP project in Tonga was notably efficient, with most activities implemented on schedule and within budget, leveraging resources from multiple partners, and exceeding beneficiary targets. The project's success was due to community empowerment, integrated risk management, and strategic partnerships. In PNG, the strong commitment from the Government and project team led to the conditional lifting of a temporary disbursement suspension, with the project significantly improving its partnership numbers and covering a substantial portion of target farmer groups by the MTR.

In ESA, aspects such as strong cohesion within the project implementation team, effective and timely remedial actions to address project management constraints, and cost savings through strategic decisions have contributed to overall efficiency. In Comoros, it was noted the high motivation and strong cohesion within the PREFER implementation team and strategic partners. In Seychelles, remedial actions were undertaken to address project management constraints, and cost savings were realized by opting not to procure a vehicle and customizing existing Visual Accounting Mate (VAM) software instead of purchasing TOMPRO accounting software.

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team based on desk review

171. **The COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected projects' delivery.** All regions report delays of implementation during the COVID-19 global emergency. In ESA and APR, COVID-19 restrictions on travel, shipping and visits to intervention zones, caused delays for the AWPB implementation. In LAC, the pandemic of COVID-19 disrupted supply chains, causing delays of project activities and increase of prices, requiring adaptations of project costs. The COVID-19 pandemic also had had a notable impact on projects in the WCA region, leading to delays and disruption of activities. Cabo Verde POSER project in WCA faced implementation delays and increased costs due to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, necessitating potential contract revisions and scale reductions.

B. Economic efficiency

172. **Investments in SIDS demonstrated positive internal rate of return (IRR).** The overall economic value added by these projects is significant, as evidenced IRRs calculated at completion across regions. (see Table 4) In the LAC region,

evaluated SIDS have high IRRs at design stage, averaging 21.1 per cent[174] and 13 per cent at completion. In APR region, IRR average at design was 24.27 per cent and 26.17 per cent at completion. Fiji maintained a 23 per cent IRR and Solomon Islands achieved a 33 per cent IRR at completion. PNG showed a high Net Present Value of US$85,173,808, indicating significant economic benefits. In the WCA region, IRRs averaged 16 per cent at design and 13.9 per cent at completion (versus a discount rate of 8.20 per cent), indicating high expected returns. In ESA, high IRRs at design are observed with 36.0 per cent at design versus 18.3 per cent at completion, still above the 8 per cent cost of capital. Projects in the APR region are often more expensive at the design stage, while the ESA region presents lower estimated costs. The LAC region, notably the Dominican Republic, shows very high NPVs.

Table 4
Regional IRRs at design versus completion

Regions	Regional Averages IRRs at Design (%)	Regional Averages IRRs at Completion (%)
LAC	21.07%	13.24%
APR	24.27%	26.17%
WCA	16.05%	13.90%
ESA	36.90%	18.30%

Source. Evaluation project documents

173. **Value for money in terms of unit cost and outreach was below target.** The number of beneficiaries reached across the 18 SIDS fell short of targets, despite revisions during implementation, affecting overall estimated costs per beneficiary household (HH) (See table 5). By region, APR shows the highest actual cost per HH at US$19,568, followed by LAC with 2,716. WCA and ESA show similar results, with US$1,215 and 1,285 respectively.[175] The estimated reach for the 18 SIDS is 7,868 HHs,[176] which represents 59 per cent of HHs estimated at the design stage. This average is driven by the LAC (9,307) and WCA (10,645) regions. The APR region comes out with an average of 5,779 HHs, which is 85 per cent of the target (6,812 HHs). The ESA region has the least HH reached at 45 per cent of households due to them low reach of the Seychelles CLISSA project (41 per cent of HHs targeted).[177] The combined higher actual costs per beneficiaries and lower outreach rate suggest that value for money of IFAD's support is lower than expected in the SIDS, due to challenging contexts of operations.

[174] With notable examples in Belize (18.97 per cent) exceeding by 6 per cent the discount rate (13 per cent). The discount rate represents the cost of capital. When the IRR of a project exceeds the discount rate, the project is considered profitable. If the IRR is less than the discount rate, the project is not worth pursuing. In other words, the IRR represents the minimum return required to justify an investment.
[175] In LAC, the actual cost per beneficiary varies between US$1,281 (Dominican Republic) and US$5,950 (Belize), indicating most SIDS projects experienced an increase in the actual cost per beneficiary compared to the design estimates. In APR, the actual number of beneficiary households in Fiji is significantly higher than estimated (1,607 actual vs. 920 estimated), and the actual cost per beneficiary is lower than at design (US$3,317 actual vs. US$5,793 designed). In Tonga, the TRIP II project also shows an actual cost per beneficiary (US$605) being much less than designed ($1,121). Conversely, the initial TRIP project in Tonga had a significant increase in the actual cost per beneficiary (US$129,478 actual vs. US$31,209 designed), which might be due to the significantly fewer beneficiary households served than estimated (31 actual vs. 151 estimated).
[176] Aggregation of logical framework data done by the evaluation team.
[177] It is important to highlight that except for the ESA region, the LAC and WCA regions have a success rate averaging 57 per cent, and the APR region remains the most effective with a targeting success rate of 85 per cent.

Table 5
Average costs per beneficiary household

Average Regions	Design Cost Per Household (US$/HH)	Actual Cost per Household (US$/HH)	Estimated Number of Beneficiary Household (HH)	Actual Number of Beneficiary Households (HH)
APR	6,494	19,568	5,979	5,061
ESA	1,022	1,285	5,467	2,434
LAC	185,124*	2,716	15,701	9,307
WCA	1,523	1,215	19,550	10,645

Source: Evaluation project documents *Very high due to an overestimation in Grenada

C. Contribution of operational oversights

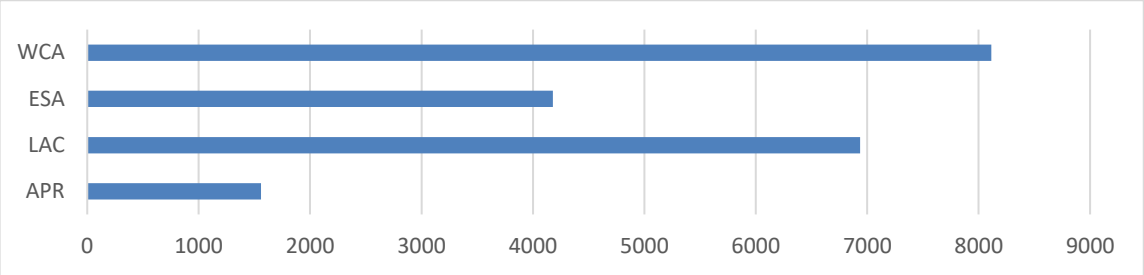
IFAD's oversight

174. **IFAD provided appropriate operational implementation support with variable average costs by region.** In all SIDS evaluated, IFAD deployed an average of two missions per year, technical oversight and supervision missions, which is similar for non-SIDS countries. Experts deployed for missions included key mainstreaming areas, such as youth, gender, and climate change as well as programme management, procurement and financial management support. Feedback from PMUs was that the missions were useful to help overcome operational challenges. Aggregated costs of design and supervision mission (see Table A12, Annex VI) shows that SIDS in WCA have the highest average cost per mission, followed by ESA,[178] APR and LAC.[179] The highest difference of cost in SIS missions, SIDS versus non-SIDS is observed in WCA, driven by the high cost of the only mission implemented by REDE in Guinea Bissau (captured by the database available), followed by LAC, ESA and APR. Except of the case of WCA, biased by one project, the data reflect more or less the reality of costs, in line with the differences in the average management costs, design versus completion (see Figure 6).

[178] Projects in WCA SIDS countries averaged 6 supervisions missions, with an average total cost of US$215,640 and a notably high average cost per mission of US$35,940, while projects in non-SIDS countries in this region also conducted 6 missions on average but with much lower costs per mission at US$27,862. Guinea Bissau REDE project had a single mission costing US$100,904, one of the highest per-mission costs. As of June 2024, REDE has had one MTR and two supervision missions. São Tomé and Principe had 8 missions (for both PAPAC and COMPRAN) averaging US$21,534 per mission for PAPAC. In ESA, there was an average of 7.5 missions, with an average total cost of US$ 276,571 and an average cost per mission at US$34,571, compared to non-SIDS countries (6 on average), with an average cost of US$30.392. Project PREFER in Comoros had 8 missions, with an average cost per mission of US$47,596. The Seychelles (CLISSA) had 5 missions, average US$34,196 per mission, al above the overall SIDS average.

[179] In APR, SIDS projects countries conducted an average of 8 supervisions missions, with an average total cost of US$235,354 and an average cost per mission of US$33,268. Projects in non-SIDS countries averaged 6 missions with slightly lower average costs per mission at US$32,386. The regional average was 6 supervisions missions per project, with costs of US$171,770 and US$23,479 per mission. In LAC, SIDS conducted on average 7 supervision missions, with an average total cost of US$193,592 and an average cost per mission of US$36,809. Projects in non-SIDS countries, on the other hand, conducted an average of 9 supervisions missions, with average costs per mission at US$20,720. The regional average, combining both SIDS and non-SIDS, indicates 9 missions per project, costing approximately US$187,311 in total and US$25,010 per mission.

Figure 6
Average cost of SIS Mission in SIDS vs. non-SIDS (US$)



Source: Evaluation documents

175. **IFAD provided technical and operational capacity building support, which was not sufficiently adapted to SIDS contexts.** Following supervision missions and requests by PMU teams, IFAD's experts provided various technical supports (e.g. trainings on gender methodologies, financial management, development of gender strategies, M&E guidelines, and other technical areas. For instance, in APR, training on gender and youth contributed to enhance inclusion strategies in Kiribati. In Maldives, training on M&E systems supported accurate data generation for the MAP project. Comoros PREFER (ESA) highlights improvements in fiduciary management due to IFAD training, while the PAPAC project in WCA states that training socio-technicians to support communities in capacity-building and producer monitoring was well-received. In Cuba's PRODECOR (LAC), training was provided in procurement contributing to enhanced capabilities of the National Statistics and Information Office and the Bank of Credit and Commerce to financially manage IFAD's and other international organizations projects. While extensive trainings have been provided on procurement in all SIDS, interviewed stakeholders (Belize, Grenada, Kiribati and Maldives) highlighted the lack of flexibility of IFAD's procedures, which do not sufficiently consider SIDS context, including logistical challenges, as for instance, the non-availability of locally of suppliers and challenges of delivery in outer islands.

Government oversight

176. **National oversight through projects' steering committees varied based on the level of stakeholder engagement.** Levels of engagement, collaboration, and coordination among project stakeholders, as well as changes in government appointed focal persons were the main factors that affected the oversight through the steering committees set up by governments. In LAC, Haiti's PPI-3 project steering committee actively provided oversight and monitored project progress, enabling coordination across different ministries and national institutions. However, in Grenada, insufficient support from the Government to the steering committee led to delays in approvals and inadequate oversight of project activities. In APR, the Fiji project steering committee met less frequently than planned and failed to address effectively implementation issues. In PNG, the project's steering committee was active and effective, overseeing AWPB approvals, monitoring progress, and making decisions based on supervision missions. In Kiribati, Steering Committee members reported that there was limited communication and engagement with KM products. In ESA, the Comoros steering committee for the MAPE project met regularly to validate AWPBs and formulate major guidelines, with a strong link between the project and its supervisory bodies. The Seychelles steering committee did not meet regularly, potentially leading to financial compliance issues. In WCA, project steering committees proved to be functional and widely engaged in project activities, in compliance with their monitoring and advisory roles.

D. Co-financing of IFAD supported operations in SIDS

177. **Funding sources are well diversified, reflecting effective resource mobilization approaches.** As mentioned earlier (overview of IFAD portfolio in SIDS), IFAD contribution to the total cost of the evaluated portfolio reaches 37 per cent, while international co-financing (multi and bi lateral donors) reaches 38 per cent), and government contributions reaches 20 per cent of the total cost.[180] The data by region corroborate a greater co-financing from multi and bi lateral donors in SIDS of the LAC and APR regions (see Table 6 below). In ESA, funding from co-financers has been scarce in SIDS countries, with Comoros and Seychelles having difficulties to ensure external funding to address resource limitations in areas such as climate change and policy engagement. Conversely, Kiribati OIFWP project in APR successfully continued to a community-based approach that utilized local skills, despite a shortfall of US$3.0 million due to a co-financier's withdrawal. In Fiji, the Agricultural Partnerships Project (2015-2022) established a co-financing partnership with the European Union, which has provided additional funding for climate-resilient agriculture and rural development.

178. **IFAD's financing was largely coherent and complementary with other development partners' funding.**[181] Positive examples are with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) that co-financed infrastructure and value chain projects in Grenada SAEP project, allowing for expanded rural infrastructure development. IFAD collaborated with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and also CDB to expand the activities of RRB project of Belize. In the APR, IFAD cofinanced KOIFAWP in Kiribati with the Korea Supplementary Funds, and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), to address climate adaptation needs, integrating water security measures into agricultural interventions. IFAD secured co-financing from AfDB and other donors to strengthen value chain development for cocoa in São Tomé and cashews in Guinea-Bissau, enabling collaborative funding for investments in agroforestry and storage infrastructure. In Comoros, IFAD leveraged climate funds to co-finance drought-resistant crops and soil conservation initiatives and collaborated with AfDB investments in watershed management.

Table 6
Source of funding for SIDS countries, average percentage of total.

Type of funding	APR	ESA	LAC	WCA	Global
IFAD	33%	76%	31%	56%	49%
Governments	16%	3%	15%	13%	12%
Multilateral and bilateral organizations	30%	0%	42%	19%	23%
Beneficiaries and domestic institutions	11%	14%	9%	11%	11%
Private sector organizations	7%	1%	0%	0%	2%
Others	3%	6%	3%	1%	3%

Source: Operational Business Intelligence databases. Total funds from 2010 to 2024

179. **Disbursement schedules of co-financing were not always well aligned.** In São Tomé and Príncipe's (WCA), the delayed funding from GEF and AF to COMPRAN project hindered implementation of NRM and climate change and adaptation activities,[182] while NORAD's timely funding contributed to implementing time

[180] The international co-financiers have more than doubled their financing since 2014, increasing from 123 million in the period 2001-2014 to 263 million from 2015 to 2023, considering all projects (completed and on-going).
[181] The e-survey results show that 78 per cent of respondents are in agreement or strongly in agreement with that.
[182] At mid-term, the overall physical implementation rate is 39 per cent (19 per cent in financial terms), a lower percentage that the estimated at mid-term. Delays are attributed to the unavailability of AF and GEF funding.

sensitive nutritional and social inclusion activities.[183] In Guinea Bissau, the lack of availability of the complementary funds from the Adaptation Fund, the Kuwait Fund, or the Abu Dhabi Fund significantly affected REDE project performance.[184] In LAC, co-financing with the CDB, and the IDB in Grenada, Belize and Haiti, timely contributing to implementation of climate change and adaptation activities and promoting sustainable practices in alignment with existing SIDS regional frameworks and international strategies. (see Annex VI).

Key findings by region

In **WCA**, SIDS projects often faced significant delays requiring long extensions (18 months on average). Management costs exceeded thresholds due to local capacity limitations. Procurement challenges and high PMU staff turnover further hindered efficiency. Co-financing supported key activities in São Tomé but delays in disbursement affected implementation, reflecting mixed efficiency results.

ESA achieved fast project startups but persistent implementation delays with management costs averaging 35 per cent. Procurement inefficiencies, contract delays, and high staff turnover within PMUs limited project effectiveness. Seychelles faced difficulties due to limited external co-financing. Nevertheless, efficiency gains were observed in Comoros through strong PMU cohesion, effective corrective actions, and cost-saving measures.

LAC SIDS projects started faster than non-SIDS counterparts, but extensions averaged 9.6 months. High management costs (35 per cent) were driven by administrative and procurement complexities. Timely co-financing from CDB and IDB widened project results, particularly in climate adaptation and infrastructure, demonstrating positive economic returns.

APR projects exhibited rapid startup but faced substantial extensions (17.1 months) and high management costs (33 per cent) due to remoteness and staffing issues. Procurement delays were significant, exacerbated by logistical complexities and limited local suppliers. TRIPI in Tonga showed strong efficiency through community engagement and strategic partnerships. Effective co-financing in Fiji and Kiribati enhanced outcomes, while the Maldives struggled with delays and staffing gaps.

180. **In conclusion, the evaluation findings suggest a moderately unsatisfactory efficiency performance overall.[185]** Projects' efficiency indicators were negatively affected by SIDS-specific issues such as remoteness, high costs and limited technical capacities. While economic internal rates of returns were positive, high transaction costs and logistical complexity triggered high management costs across SIDS of all regions. The lack of adequate expertise in PMUs (e.g. for procurement and financial management) and high staff turnover created delays and implementation inefficiencies. Oversight was weakened by IFAD's limited physical presence in SIDS, which must rely on international consultants that have often sufficient SIDS-context expertise. Co-financing rates by partners were strong across regions, as well Government contributions, but private sector mobilization lagged in all regions.

[183] NORAD funds were timely disbursed and utilized to establish an inter-ministerial committee on nutrition, school gardens, culinary demonstrations, and the distribution of gas stoves to reduce women's drudgery.
[184] In particular, the Adaptation Fund cannot be mobilized until the Government signs the letter of endorsement authorizing IFAD to propose the activities outlined under the Adaptation Fund's regional project, to be implemented through REDE.
[185] The comparison of ratings for the relevance criteria shows a higher average rate for non-SIDS projects (3.65) compared to SIDS (2.96), so a difference of 0.69, which is statistically significant as presented in Annex V.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

181. This evaluation covered 18 SIDS spread out four of the five IFAD regions (seven in APR, two in ESA, six in LAC and three in WCA) and the period of 2015-2024. Prevalence of rural poverty is still critical in many SIDS, where multidimensional vulnerabilities – social, economic and environmental (including climate change) – are prominent challenges, exacerbated by fragility situations in six SIDS. **In such contexts, building resilience is a critical goal to be pursued.**

182. **IFAD's strategies and operations in SIDS align with global SIDS' framework, and IFAD's niche of focus is relevant.** Across the four regions, exerted strategies and operations were aligned with international and regional SIDS frameworks, namely the SAMOA Pathway 2014, the ABAS 2024 and the IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025 and IFAD's SIDS Strategy (2022). They were aligned with smallholders' needs by covering thematic areas such as (i) economic empowerment; (ii) access by islanders to basic infrastructure, to production inputs and markets; (iii) enabling social equality and inclusion and (iv) protection of natural resources and climate-resilient practices. IFAD's focus on inclusive smallholder agriculture, community-based approaches, and targeting remote islands that are underserved or not targeted by other partners provides a relevant niche for IFAD in SIDS.

183. **Explicit considerations of multidimensional vulnerability versus resilience issues were insufficient in IFAD's strategies and supported operations in SIDS.** In about 70 per cent of COSOPs and CSNs, the three resilience dimensions (social, economic and environment) were explicitly embedded in objectives, but evidenced in less than 30 per cent of projects' objectives. This demonstrates a non-systemic, or insufficiently comprehensive approach to address SIDS challenges, which are complex due to their nature and scale. This gap is further underscored by the incompleteness of ToCs developed for those projects. Climate resilience with operational themes such as environment and NRM, and climate smart practices were most prominent in the objectives, followed by economic resilience (with operational themes such as agricultural production, access to markets, and diversification of economic opportunities). Social resilience is the dimension that is least addressed. Operational themes linked to fishery, marine ecosystem and nutrition were largely absent, even though these topics are of great interest in SIDS's contexts, given the significant marine resources available and high dependence of SIDS on low quality imported foods.

184. **Knowledge creation and dissemination as well as policy influence were also insufficient.** Knowledge products in each region were relevant by focusing on SIDS' vulnerability issues such as climate change adaptation, water resource management, and sustainable agricultural practices. The products derived from projects' activities and results, but their dissemination was restricted to the projects' sphere of influence. Knowledge created was not systematically translated into lessons to fed into decision making and/or policy development processes. Moreover, enabling cross SIDS exchange for peer learning among smallholders were very scant within the regions, especially on successful solutions applied in similar situations to overcome vulnerability challenges. Overall, knowledge management approaches applied were ineffective to harness lessons learnt to be used for policy and/or institutional change. Among factors that prevented having this were the poor monitoring and evaluation systems, the lack of appropriate expertise in projects' team, unclear and insufficient strategic orientation on the knowledge management and policy influence. Among barriers to effective policy engagement, there is the weak capacity of governmental and other national partners, and the weak coordination of rural development interventions at country

level, exacerbated by the absence of IFAD offices in the majority (16/18) of evaluated SIDS.

185. **Co-financing was effective to complement IFAD's support for resilience building in SIDS.** Cofinancing sources in the evaluated SIDS is well diversified, coming substantially from IFAD, multilateral and bilateral organizations and Governments. This allowed an expanded scope of operations and to increase technical supports; even if in several instances, timely disbursement was an issue which affected the efficiency of deliverables. There was also strong engagement of governments with counterpart funding disbursement.

186. **Effective strategic and/or operational partnerships were rare, with other development actors,** including of the UN system, at national and regional levels. Two key assumptions identified in strategic documents for IFAD success in SIDS contexts were (i) strengthened partnerships for supports; and (ii) effective collaboration with national and regional institutions in addressing SIDS-specific challenges. Evidence found by the evaluation suggest that the first assumption was positively verified in terms of co-financing, while the second failed to be confirmed, underscoring further efforts needed to enable this to happen.

187. **Contributions to enhancing economic resilience were modest; Insufficient consideration of SIDS contexts was a key challenge.** Strengthening farmers' groups and cooperatives, linking them with private actors (including through PPP) and road tracks constructed were key success factors, while inadequate infrastructure, and remoteness or isolation of islands were critical bottlenecks. Agricultural productivity increased significantly through interventions in WCA and LAC, while lesser in the other two regions. Evidence (including from robust impact studies) confirmed the effectiveness of land rehabilitation, small irrigation schemes (with rainwater harvesting systems), farmers' trainings, and the promotion of improved agricultural practices. Yet, diversification of income sources across the four regions achieved limited success, as crops diversification benefited of more support, than animal production and off-farm activities. For the blue economy, only six out of 18 SIDS received support and results were moderate. Overall, supported operations contributed to moderate changes in terms of improved households' food security and nutrition, and increased households' incomes and assets.

188. **Significant progress was made in mitigating environmental and climate change vulnerabilities, while challenges remain on the integration of results into broader plans.** In APR, SIDS operations made effective progress in reducing environmental stress and enhancing ecosystem health through targeted interventions and sustainable practices. In ESA, projects contributed to enhancing the sustainability of production systems through reforestation, soil conservation, water management, and organic farming. In LAC, there were positive efforts in promoting small scale irrigation, agroforestry and soil conservation techniques, to enhance soil health and promote biodiversity. In WCA, substantial investments in irrigation, reforestation and the rehabilitation of lowland areas have brought land into production, including promotion of sustainable practices such as organic and shade-grown production. In many SIDS, climate-smart practices were promoted such as drought-resistant or saline-tolerant crops, greenhouses, hydroponic systems, renewable energy systems, organic fertilisers, etc. Despite significant efforts the evaluation assessed the overall performance on these aspects as slightly less than moderate, as only intervention areas were reached, and a minimal or no focus on marine ecosystems and disasters risks. This underscores the lack of linkage between projects and broader national plans or programmes in many SIDS, thus, insufficient upscaling of results.

189. **Results in enabling effective and inclusive social resilience in supported SIDS were modest as well.** There were consistent and effective efforts for smallholders' capacity development across the four regions, and good results

achieved in strengthening farmers' groups and organisations in most SIDS (in APR, WCA and ESA). The evaluation found that efforts to enhancing social resilience through human and social strengthening yielded moderately satisfactory results. Positive examples were found on contributions to nutrition improvement, but food insecurity remains an issue. Moderate results were achieved for women economic and social resilience, since only few projects were effective in increasing women's influence in decision making and reducing women's workload. Moreover, there was limited evidence of contribution to youth economic empowerment, and to reducing out-migration; and reporting of results specifically related to indigenous people were lacking, despite being targeted in many SIDS.

190. **IFAD supported operations in SIDS fell short in considering institutional gaps as critical for effectiveness.** SIDS institutional gaps (manifested in terms of limited availability of technical expertise and insufficient manpower due to brain drain and outmigration) were consistently acknowledged in design documents. Likewise, interviews by the evaluation team highlighted this point as a critical challenge that affects the delivery performance in SIDS. Indeed, findings confirmed that technical capacity gaps and high staff turnover affected negatively the projects' efficiency, in addition to context-inappropriate operational procedures. The evaluation found no evidence on how IFAD's support had effectively contributed to institutional capacity enhancement, at least within the agriculture sector of supported SIDS. Additionally, implementation arrangements of IFAD supported projects were not tailored to SIDS unique contexts, for example, procurement challenges (in applying the same IFAD procedures as in non-SIDS) triggered significant projects' delays. Yet, institutional capacity was not considered in projects' strategic, nor operational themes, but rather treated among risks to be mitigated. Hence, opportunities were missed for applying a systematic approach to strengthen institutional frameworks, as far as the agricultural sector is concerned in the evaluated SIDS.

B. Recommendations

191. Considering previous main findings, the evaluation made recommendations that leverage on strengths identified and address shortfalls, with the overarching goal of better tailor and adapt strategies and operations to SIDS contextual features.

192. **Recommendation 1. IFAD to pursue the strategic support to resilience building in SIDS, by adopting a multidimensional and comprehensive approach.** The design of CSNs, COSOPs and projects in recipient SIDS should be improved by embracing a multidimensional approach of vulnerability analysis, to identify comprehensive resilience interventions. Guidance should be provided on how to conduct contextual analysis of SIDS' projects, by applying a holistic vulnerability-analytical framework, to be made available to project design teams.

    The framework, among others, will orient on how to use inputs of SECAP background studies, fragility assessments and additional information, to define a comprehensive resilience building support, in identifying critical operational themes, including those that fall directly under IFAD's mandate and those that must be addressed through collaborations with others. Possible approaches to address SIDS' institutional capacity challenges should also be suggested in the framework, considering all IFAD instruments (loans, non-lending activities, technical assistance.

193. **Recommendation 2. Further leverage strategic and operational partnerships to enhance IFAD's performance in SIDS context.** Considering specificities of SIDS of each IFAD region, SIDS partnership frameworks should be developed, aligned with the SIDS Strategy 2022-2027, to facilitate strategic engagement with relevant regional SIDS' organisations, and to identify collaborations' areas / themes.

The SIDS partnership frameworks should also include strategies for resource mobilisation, leveraging on positive efforts of co-financing that are already on-going. At SIDS country level, IFAD's teams to conduct an explicit mapping of potential partners (government, private sector, non-governmental and grassroots' organisations, and international partners), that can support resilience building efforts, discuss and develop partnerships with the most relevant.

Continuous consultations and concerted efforts should be in place with other international partners in the recipient SIDS, to address critical themes such as SIDS' institutional capacity gap, remoteness, sustainable fishery development, protection of marine ecosystems, and disaster preparedness.

194. **Recommendation 3. Tailor operational approaches to SIDS contexts, for increased effectiveness of resilience building supports.** Some operational themes deserve improvements in the contextualisation of approaches applied, namely: access to market, diversification of income sources, nutrition and inclusiveness.

Effective access to markets by smallholders in SIDS' contexts is challenged by insularity and remoteness, therefore the need to invest in physical infrastructures (as per examples presented in the report) and digital solutions and/or innovations to improve connectivity with markets, which require co-financing (as per recommendation-2).

Income source diversification approaches should align with existing economic opportunities on targeted islands, such as fisheries, poultry farming, organic agriculture, off-farm activities (e.g. ecotourism), etc.

On the nutrition theme, the promotion of backyard gardens (supported in numerous SIDS) should be explicitly considered among interventions to improving households' dietary diversity, aligned with the challenge of access to nutritious food in SIDS contexts and the food system approach.

Related to inclusiveness, efforts should be pursued by adapting and improving supports for effective gender equality, women empowerment, and youth economic empowerment, by better focusing on key factors that heighten the vulnerability of the different social groups in each SIDS country context. Reporting mechanisms must be strengthened to better capture the outcomes of interventions on various groups, including women, youth, and indigenous communities.

Finally, some operational procedures should be adapted to better account for SIDS contextual challenges for efficient and effective delivery.

195. **Recommendation 4. Improve the focus and effectiveness of knowledge management (KM) systems in recipient SIDS in line with vulnerability versus resilience topics, and to leverage policy and scaling up outcomes.** KM should be subject of strategic orientations and/or activities that clearly relate to SIDS' vulnerability versus resilience themes. Within each region, there is a need to promote cross learning among projects' stakeholders of SIDS, namely: staff, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

Sound and sufficient technical supports should be provided to projects' teams and government stakeholders on effective KM approaches, including results-oriented M&E systems, to enabling a continuous learning that feed in policy decision and/or change processes for enhanced and sustained smallholders' resilience.

Definition of the evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria
Relevance The extent to which: (i) the objectives of the /country strategy and programme are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies; (ii) the design of the strategy, the targeting strategies adopted are consistent with the objectives; and (iii) the adaptation of the strategy to address changes in the context.
Coherence This comprises two notions (internal and external coherence). Internal coherence is the synergy of the intervention/country strategy with other IFAD-supported interventions in a country, sector or institution. The external coherence is the consistency of the intervention/strategy with other actors' interventions in the same context. Non-lending activities are specific domains to assess coherence. **Knowledge management** The extent to which the IFAD-funded country programme is capturing, creating, distilling, sharing and using knowledge. **Partnership building** The extent to which IFAD is building timely, effective and sustainable partnerships with government institutions, private sector, organizations representing marginalized groups and other development partners to cooperate, avoid duplication of efforts and leverage the scaling up of recognized good practices and innovations in support of small-holder agriculture. **Policy engagement** The extent to which IFAD and its country-level stakeholders engage to support dialogue on policy priorities or the design, implementation and assessment of formal institutions, policies and programmes that shape the economic opportunities for large numbers of rural people to move out of poverty.
Effectiveness The extent to which the country strategy achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results at the time of the evaluation, including any differential results across groups. A specific sub-domain of effectiveness relates to: Innovation, the extent to which interventions brought a solution (practice, approach/method, process, product, or rule) that is novel, with respect to the specific context, time frame and stakeholders (intended users of the solution), with the purpose of improving performance and/or addressing challenge(s) in relation to rural poverty reduction.[1]
Efficiency The extent to which the intervention or strategy delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. "Economic" is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).
Impact The extent to which the country strategy has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. The criterion includes the following domains: • changes in incomes, assets and productive capacities • changes in social / human capital • changes in household food security and nutrition • changes in institution and policies The analysis of impact will seek to determine whether changes have been transformational, generating changes that can lead societies onto fundamentally different development pathways (e.g., due to the size or distributional effects of changes to poor and marginalized groups).
Sustainability and scaling up The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention or strategy continue and are scaled-up (or are likely to continue and scaled-up) by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.

[1] Conditions that qualify an innovation: newness to the context, to the intended users and the intended purpose of improving performance. Furthermore, the 2020 Corporate-level Evaluation on IFAD's support to Innovation defined transformational innovations as "those that are able to lift poor farmers above a threshold, where they cannot easily fall back after a shock". Those innovations tackle simultaneously multiple challenges faced by smallholder farmers. In IFAD operation contexts, this happens by packaging / bundling together several small innovations. They are most of the time holistic solutions or approaches applied of implemented by IFAD supported operations.

Evaluation criteria
Note: This entails an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. It involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs. Specific domain of sustainability: Environment and natural resources management and climate change adaptation. The extent to which the development interventions/strategy contribute to enhancing the environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change in small-scale agriculture. Scaling-up* takes place when: (i) other bi- and multi laterals partners, private sector, etc.) adopted and generalized the solution tested / implemented by IFAD; (ii) other stakeholders invested resources to bring the solution at scale; and (iii) the government applies a policy framework to generalize the solution tested / implemented by IFAD (from practice to a policy). *Note that scaling up does not only relate to innovations.
Gender equality and women's empowerment The extent to which IFAD interventions have contributed to better gender equality and women's empowerment. For example, in terms of women's access to and ownership of assets, resources and services; participation in decision making; work load balance and impact on women's incomes, nutrition and livelihoods; and in promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching changes in social norms, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs underpinning gender inequality. Evaluations will assess to what extent interventions and strategies have been gender transformational, relative to the context, by: (i) addressing root causes of gender inequality and discrimination; (ii) acting upon gender roles, norms and power relations; (iii) promoting broader processes of social change (beyond the immediate intervention). Evaluators will consider differential impacts by gender and the way they interact with other forms of discrimination (such as age, race, ethnicity, social status and disability), also known as gender intersectionality.2
Partner performance (assessed separately for IFAD and the Government) The extent to which IFAD and the Government (including central and local authorities and executing agencies) ensured good design, smooth implementation and the achievement of results and impact and the sustainability of the country programme. The adequacy of the Borrower's assumption of ownership and responsibility during all project phases, including government, implementing agency, and project company performance in ensuring quality preparation and implementation, compliance with covenants and agreements, establishing the basis for sustainability, and fostering participation by the project's stakeholders.

[2] Evaluation Cooperation Group (2017) Gender. Main messages and findings from the ECG Gender practitioners' workshops. Washington, DC. https://www.ecgnet.org/document/main-messages-and-findings-ieg-gender-practitioners-workshop

Evaluation framework

Evaluation criteria/Key questions	Specific evaluation questions	Source of information & methods
How and why did IFAD's engagement in SIDS perform, over the period 2015-2023, in contributing to mitigating vulnerability challenges within rural communities, and contributing to sustainable rural transformation?		
Relevance 1- *How relevant were/are IFAD's engagement (through supported strategies and operations) in terms of (i) global or regional SIDS strategic initiatives and frameworks, (ii) SIDS contextual challenges (of high vulnerability to climate change and to other socio-economic challenges) and smallholders' needs?*	• To what extent are IFAD's strategies (global, regional, and national) and programmes aligned with international strategies and existing regional frameworks on SIDS? • How are IFAD's strategies and framework within the regions and countries aligned with IFAD's commitments on SIDS? • To what extent have IFAD's strategies (global, regional, and national) and programmes been relevant to address issues of the three vulnerability pillars? • How did the design of IFAD's projects in SIDS use prior vulnerability assessment results including the relevant SIDS characteristics? • How relevant and adaptive were the grant-financed projects and other initiatives, considering the challenges and opportunities of SIDS? • To what extent did IFAD's strategies and programmes (loan and grant financed) meet the needs of targeted smallholder farmers and communities, and aligned with local vulnerability issues? • To what extent did approaches and tools deployed for the delivery of IFAD's support meet the standards and knowledge for the delivery in such countries? • To what extent do the implementation arrangements take into consideration the institutional capacities and challenges?	International strategies and frameworks on SIDS. IFAD corporate documents on SIDS IFAD Regional strategies/frameworks National strategic documents COSOP and programme/project documents: design reports, PCRVs, PPEs, and impact evaluation/assessment reports In-depth desk review of national policies, IFAD design reports, and other reports. Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders Interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries during field visits
Coherence 2- *To what extent did IFAD's strategies and operations in the SIDS add value to other initiatives within the regions and countries, and how were these complementary to other operations in contributing to mitigating the vulnerability of rural dwellers; and which contribution of IFAD's non-lending activities (NLA)?*	• To what extent were IFAD loan-financed operations coherent and complementary within the country programme and within the SIDS regional portfolio in addressing vulnerability issues? • To what extent were grant-financed projects coherent with loan-financed operations of SIDS, and effective to contribute addressing issues of the three vulnerability pillars? • How were lessons from past IFAD interventions and from other partners used in designing and implementing IFAD's operations? • Is there a comparative advantage of IFAD, compared to other partners, in supporting rural development in SIDS, considering their specificities? What is the additionality? • How complementary was IFAD's support in focus, funding, and space at country and regional levels? • How do SIDS priorities as reflected in the interventions assessed, align with other regional priorities?" • Was there any role or initiative of IFAD (within a country or in the region) to leverage financing or to streamline interventions in the SIDS? If yes or no, why? • To what extent were NLAs (knowledge management, partnership building and policy engagement) relevant and useful in contributing to mitigating the vulnerabilities in rural areas? • To what extent has IFAD SSTC played a role in advancing development in SIDS ?	International strategies and frameworks on SIDS. IFAD corporate documents on SIDS and IFAD Regional strategies/frameworks National strategic documents COSOP and programme/project documents: design reports, PCRVs, PPEs, and impact evaluation/assessment reports In-depth desk review of strategies documentation, and reports of projects of IFAD and other development partners Interviews with representatives of IFAD, Governments, Multilateral and Bilateral partners. Discussions with private sector actors and other partners in the countries

Evaluation criteria/Key questions	Specific evaluation questions	Source of information & methods
Efficiency *3- How adequate were IFAD's investments in supporting rural transformation in SIDS, considering their specific challenges; to what extent were financed operations adequately managed (from design to completion) for efficient results? Which were factors that affected efficiency results?*	• How have issues of vulnerability (pillars) affected the efficiency of IFAD's operations in SIDS? • How have IFAD's operating approaches taken into account the SIDS vulnerabilities to deliver efficiently? • How is the value for money of IFAD's delivery in SIDS, globally and regionally? • How did the implementation model and approach adopted by the recipient governments affect the efficiency of deliveries in the SIDS? • What are the explanatory factors of positive or negative efficiency performance in SIDS? • Which were sources of additional/specific funding in SIDS and to what extent were these efficient and effective in supporting IFAD operations? • To what extent lessons from other partners have or could have been useful for better efficiency in those contexts?	In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation and database (e.g. Oracle Business Intelligence), including historical project status reports, project financial statements, disbursement data, project financing data, economic and financial analyses, information on project timeline, etc. Analysis of cost tabs and financial data on support costs. Interviews with IFAD staff, and international and national stakeholders.
Effectiveness and Impact *4- To what extent did IFAD's operations in beneficiary SIDS countries achieve output results that contributed to medium to long-term changes (intended and/or unintended), taking into account contextual challenges? Which lessons can be drawn from these for on-going and future operations?*	• To what extent have the intended output results (presented in Annex III) of IFAD's engagement in SIDS been achieved over the evaluated period? What are explanatory factors? What IFAD interventions in SIDS have demonstrated (i) the most positive results (ii) the least positive results and for what reasons? How does this compare with other development partners in terms of approaches, challenges, and successes? • How have issues of the three vulnerability pillars affected the achievements of output results? What were approaches deployed to overcome these issues? • To what extent did achievement of output results contribute to short and medium-term outcomes (as presented in Annex III), as well as contributing to mitigating the three vulnerability pillars? What are explanatory factors? • How has IFAD's support contributed to long-term changes and/or impacts in line with rural transformation objectives and challenges in SIDS? • How has the continuum of absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capabilities been enabled through IFAD's support, for the effective and sustained resilience of rural people? • How widely and equitably have the outcomes of IFAD's operations in SIDS been distributed across different levels (local, national, regional) and locations (mainland, outer islands)? • What are enabling and preventing factors for achieving results? • Which innovations (e.g., institutional, technical, climate-smart, digital etc.), were promoted and did they effect or contribute to intervention effectiveness?	COSOP and programme/project documents: design reports, PCRVs, PPEs, and impact evaluation/assessment reports; previous CSPE reports; COSOPs review reports. M&E data and information review In-depth desk review of documents. Discussion with private sector actors and other partners in the countries. Key informant interviews with IFAD staff, international and national stakeholders Focus groups with beneficiaries during field visits Key informant interview of beneficiaries for gathering testimonies Direct observations during field visits.
Empowerment of Women; Youth and other specific groups. *5- To what extent did IFAD-supported operations in SIDS countries target rural women; and how have these operations been effective in creating employment and/or economic opportunities for them?*	• How appropriate are the targeting approaches for the inclusion of women, youth, and other marginalised groups in SIDS projects? How were the targeting approaches adapted to women's vulnerability issues? • How relevant was the focus on (i) gender (ii) youth and (iii) other marginalised groups in the strategies and project design documents, in line with the vulnerability issues for SIDS? • To what extent have projects developed and implemented gender strategies and/or action plans, and for which results? How have these contributed to mitigating specific issues related to women's vulnerabilities?	SECA review reports, COSOP and programme/project documents: design reports, PCRVs, PPEs, and impact evaluation/assessment reports; previous CSPE reports; COSOPs review reports. Analysis of GIS data In-depth desk review of strategy and programme documents, etc. Interviews with IFAD staff, and national stakeholders Interviews with other development partners

Evaluation criteria/Key questions	Specific evaluation questions	Source of information & methods
6- The same question for youth and poor groups	• To what extent did gender strategies and approaches take into account the intersectionality between gender inequality factors and vulnerability issues? • How were implementation resources and monitoring data disaggregated with respect to gender, and youth? • What were the contributions of IFAD-supported interventions to changes in terms of (i) women's economic empowerment; (ii) women's influence in decision-making; (iii) easing women's workload and equitable work distribution; (iv) women's health, skills, and nutrition? • How have these changes contributed to mitigating the specific vulnerabilities women face in the specific contexts? • Was there any change in social norms, attitudes, behaviours beliefs and policies/laws relating to gender equality to which the projects contributed? • What were the contributions of IFAD-supported interventions to empower and sustain economic livelihoods for (i) youth and (ii) other marginalised groups?	Interviews with private sector actors Key informant interviews with diverse stakeholders Discussions with direct and indirect beneficiaries during field visits Interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries during field visits.
Sustainability aspects *7- To what extent have achieved results, thanks to IFAD's support, been sustained, upscaled and contributed to enhancing local capacities for better management of natural resources and increased adaptation to climate change?*	• To what extent were the achievements of IFAD supports in SIDS, in terms of results and in mitigating rural vulnerabilities, sustained (social, financial, economic, technical, and institutional)? • What were the explanatory factors of positive and negative sustainability prospects, e.g. in terms of institutional capabilities, mechanisms established for technical supports and follow-up, access to inputs and services, etc.? • To what extent have scaling up results (with government, other partners, and the private sector) been achieved in SIDS? What are the explanatory reasons for success and failure? • How relevant and effective were interventions specifically related to the vulnerability issues related to environment, natural resources, and climate change, by contributing to enhancing the sustainability of production systems and their greater resilience to climate change? • What are the main lessons in terms of positive and less positive results of resilience building?	In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders Interviews and focus groups with direct and indirect beneficiaries during field visits Interviews with other development partners with similar/relevant support

IFAD-financed projects in SIDS

Country	Region	Project Short Name	Project Name	Approval date	Completion date	Mid-term review date	Total cost US$	IFAD financing	Project status
Fiji	APR	FAPP	Fiji Agricultural Partnerships Project	17/04/2015	31/12/2019	05/11/2018	6052814	3520308	Financial Closure
Kiribati	APR	OIFWP	Outer Islands Food and Water Project	03/08/2014	30/09/2023	22/05/2017	10827097	6599832	Project Completed
Maldives	APR	MEDEP	Mariculture Enterprise Development Project	06/09/2012	31/12/2019	28/01/2016	7132170	2486670	Financial Closure
Maldives	APR	MAP	Maldives Agribusiness Programme	30/07/2020	30/09/2025	19/03/2024	12890000	4500000	Available for Disbursement
Papua New Guinea	APR	Market Village Farmers (MVF)	Market for Village Farmers Project - Maket Bilong Vilis Fama	14/09/2017	30/09/2024	Missing	50260000	25500000	Available for Disbursement
Samoa	APR	SAFPROM	Samoa Agriculture & Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project	14/10/2019	30/06/2025	13/06/2022	30270000	3600000	Available for Disbursement
Solomon Islands	APR	RDP II	Rural Development Programme - Phase II	11/03/2015	30/06/2020	28/08/2017	62540000	4540000	Financial Closure
Solomon Islands	APR	AIMN_SLB	Agricultural Investment for Markets and Nutrition - Solomon Islands	28/12/2023	30/06/2030	Missing	19821500	9300000	Board/President Approved
Tonga	APR	TRIP	Tonga Rural Innovation Project	03/04/2012	30/06/2017	18/05/2015	4029221	2999675	Financial Closure
Tonga	APR	TRIP II	Tonga Rural Innovation Project - Phase II	19/08/2017	31/03/2025	16/08/2021	15410720	7495734	Available for Disbursement
Comoros	ESA	PREFER	Family Farming Productivity and Resilience Support Project	11/05/2017	31/12/2025	11/11/2020	20031500	13381500	Available for Disbursement
Seychelles	ESA	CLISSA	Competitive Local Innovations for Small-scale Agriculture Project	07/04/2013	31/12/2018	29/02/2016	3741141	2999574	Project Completed
Belize	LAC	Be- Resilient	Resilient Rural Belize Programme	15/04/2018	31/12/2025	06/06/2022	20000000	8000000	Available for Disbursement
Cuba	LAC	PRODECOR	Cooperative Rural Development Project in the Oriental Region	19/09/2013	30/09/2021	20/11/2017	45297439	10700238	Project Completed
Cuba	LAC	PRODEGAN	Livestock Cooperatives Development Project in the Central-Eastern Region	03/12/2016	31/03/2024	04/12/2022	56780000	11900000	On Hold/Suspended

Country	Region	Project Short Name	Project Name	Approval date	Completion date	Mid-term review date	Total cost US$	IFAD financing	Project status
Cuba	LAC	PRODECAFE	Agroforestry Cooperative Development Project	09/09/2019	31/03/2027	Missing	39150000	15500000	Loan suspended, but grant available
Dominican Republic	LAC	PRORURAL Inclusivo	Rural Families' Productive Inclusion and Resilience Project	07/12/2017	30/09/2025	13/09/2024	21067000	11880000	Available for Disbursement
Dominican Republic	LAC	PRORURAL Joven	Productive Inclusion and Resilience of Poor Rural Youth Project	04/11/2021	29/06/2029	Missing	33378000	12350000	Entry into Force
Grenada	LAC	MAREP	Market Access and Rural Enterprise Development Programme	05/12/2010	31/03/2018	19/02/2015	7499157	2999940	Financial Closure
Grenada	LAC	SAEP	Climate Smart Agriculture and Rural Enterprise Programme	23/12/2017	31/03/2025	19/09/2022	14410000	6400000	Available for Disbursement
Guyana	LAC	Hinterland Project	Hinterland Environmentally Sustainable Agricultural Development Project	26/11/2016	31/03/2024	18/10/2021	11143000	8452000	Available for Disbursement
Haiti	LAC	PPI 3	Small Irrigation and Market Access Development Project in the Nippes and Goavienne Region	08/09/2012	30/06/2019	25/04/2016	16554156	13199902	Financial Closure
Haiti	LAC	PITAG	Agricultural and Agroforestry Technological Innovation Program	15/04/2018	30/09/2024	23/06/2022	77899000	10859000	Project Completed
Haiti	LAC	I-BE	Inclusive Blue Economy Project	30/12/2021	30/06/2028	Missing	26600000	14000000	Available for Disbursement
Haiti	LAC	PURRACO	Project for Strengthening the Resilience of Small Farmers to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic	30/03/2021	31/03/2024	Missing	5800000	5000000	Financial Closure
Cabo Verde	WCA	POSER	Rural Socio-economic Opportunities Programme	21/09/2012	31/12/2023	28/11/2016	41293098	21271531	Available for Disbursement
Guinea-Bissau	WCA	PADES	Economic Development Project for the Southern Regions	17/04/2015	30/09/2026	08/10/2018	33540181	24040181	Available for Disbursement
Guinea-Bissau	WCA	REDE	Family Farming Diversification, Integrated Markets, Nutrition and Climate Resilience Project	11/12/2019	31/03/2026	Missing	65767000	16160000	Entry into Force

Country	Region	Project Short Name	Project Name	Approval date	Completion date	Mid-term review date	Total cost US$	IFAD financing	Project status
São Tomé and Principe	WCA	PAPAC	Smallholder Commercial Agriculture Project	13/09/2014	31/12/2019	09/10/2017	12800000	6000000	Financial Closure
São Tomé and Principe	WCA	COMPRAN	Commercialization, agricultural productivity, and nutrition project	23/01/2020	30/06/2026	05/06/2023	25650000	9830000	Available for Disbursement

Source: OBI

IFAD-funded grants in in SIDS

Project/grant name	Grant number	Grant amount US$	Grant recipient	Approval date	Effective date	Completion date	Focus country/ies
Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific (CBRAP)	2000000150	1 050 750	Secretariat of the Pacific Community	01/12/2014	23/01/2015	30/09/2019	Cook Islands, Niue, Marshall Islands
Vanuatu Post-Cyclone Rapid Recovery in Agricultural Production	2000001104	500 000	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management	11/05/2015	13/05/2015	31/12/2016	Vanuatu
Support for the integration of the regional agricultural markets of the Indian Ocean Commission	2000001791	700 000	Indian Ocean Commission	09/12/2017	07/03/2018	31/03/2022	Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros
Strengthening Decentralized Agriculture Programming and M&E	2000000969	608 000	United Nations Development Programme - Haiti	23/06/2015	23/12/2015	30/06/2019	Haiti
Strengthening of the National M&E System in Cabo Verde	2000001029	800 000	Ministry of Rural Development	30/12/2015	02/01/2017	30/09/2023	Cape Verde
Leveraging the Development of Local Food Crops and Fisheries Value Chains for Improved Nutrition and Sustainable Food Systems in the Pacific Islands	2000001030	4 120 000	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-Operation Acp-Eu	28/11/2015	21/03/2016	30/09/2020	Kiribati
Pacific Islands Rural And Agriculture Stimulus Facility	2000003841	1 530 513	Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development			30/12/2022	Fiji, Solomon Islands
Small Islands Food And Water Project	2000003363	3 027 000	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development		11/05/2022	30/11/2029	Kiribati
Small Islands Food And Water Project	2000004159	2 101 000	Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce		11/05/2022	31/07/2030	Marshall Islands
Small Islands Food And Water Project	2000004158	3 037 000	National Department of Resources and Development		11/05/2022	31/05/2029	Micronesia, Federated States

Project/grant name	Grant number	Grant amount US$	Grant recipient	Approval date	Effective date	Completion date	Focus country/ies
Small Islands Food And Water Project (SifWaP) Tuvalu	2000004160	1 381 000	Ministry of Local Government and Agriculture		01/03/2023	31/03/2029	Tuvalu
The Markets For Village Farmers Covid Response Project	2000003535	437 500	Department of National Planning and Monitoring		05/02/2021	31/12/2022	Papua New Guinea
Melanesia Rural Market & Innovation-Driven Development Programme (MERMAID)	2000002833	2 810 000	World Vision - New Zealand	24/07/2020	23/11/2020	30/06/2024	Solomon Islands
Driving Delivery Of Results In The Agriculture Sector In Solomon Islands	2000003056	600 000	Delivery Associates	30/10/2018	30/10/2018	30/06/2023	Solomon Islands
Alternative Livelihoods for Food and Income Security in Four Indian Ocean Island Nations (Mauritius, Seychelles, Comoros, and Madagascar) and Zanzibar	2000000282	2 834 000	International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology	08/12/2014	27/02/2015	31/03/2018	Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros, Madagascar
Alternative Livelihoods for Food and Income Security in four Indian Ocean Island Nations and Zanzibar - Phase 2	2000001974	1 500 000	International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology	08/09/2018	13/11/2018	31/12/2022	Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros, Madagascar, Tanzania
Young Leaders for Rural Development in SICA Region Programme	2000001615	3 000 000	Corporación Regional de Capacitacion En Desarrollo Rural	27/12/2017	07/03/2018	30/09/2022	Guatemala; Honduras; Belize; Dominican Republic; Costa Rica; Panama; Nicaragua
InnovaTech: Innovative Solutions Agro/Fintech as a Response for COVID19	2000002829	2 543 400	German Sparkassenstiftung for International Cooperation	29/12/2021	1/09/2022	31/08/2023	Bolivia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico
Innovative Crop and Soil-based Technologies in Haiti	2000000800	580 000	International Center for Tropical Agriculture	14/12/2014	16/02/2015	30/04/2018	Haiti
Youth entrepreneurship: rural employment opportunities for young people in the Caribbean	2000000164	1 800 000	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	15/12/2014	08/04/2015	31/12/2019	Dominican Republic; Guyana; Grenada; Jamaica; Belize; Cuba; Trinidad and Tobago

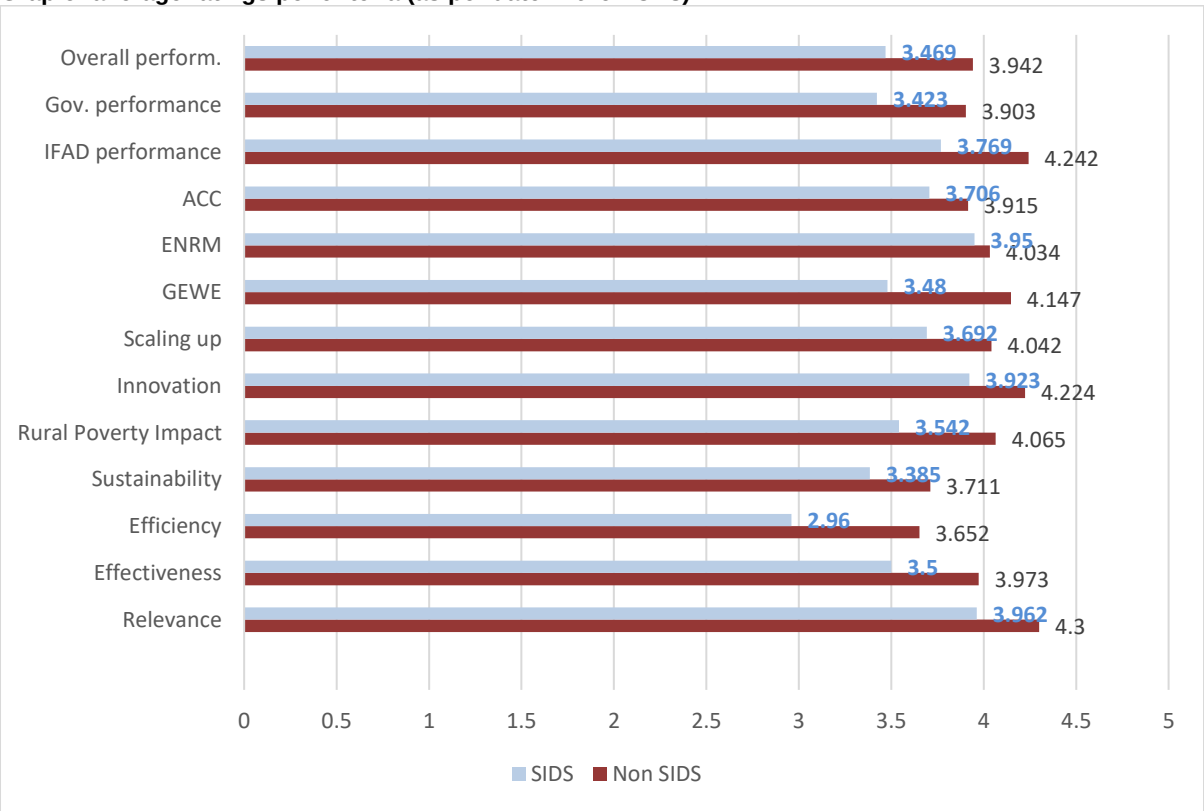
Project/grant name	Grant number	Grant amount US$	Grant recipient	Approval date	Effective date	Completion date	Focus country/ies
Supporting Local Solutions Towards A More Resilient And Sustainable Food System In Cuba	2000003914	610,568	WFP	06/10/2021	21/12/2021	30/06/2024	Cuba
Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility	2000003841	1 204 000	Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development	20-Sep-21	20-Sep-21	31-Dec-21	Fiji and Solomon Islands
Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility	2000003999	320 000	Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development	20-Sep-21	20-Sep-21	28-Feb-24	Fiji and Solomon Islands
Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility	2000004996	200 000	Kastom Gaden Association	30-Aug-24	30-Aug-24	31-Dec-25	Solomon Islands
Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility	2000004276	168 000	Live & Learn Environmental Education	05-Jul-22	05-Jul-22	31-Aug-22	Kiribati
Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility	2000004694	400 000	Live & Learn Environmental Education	10-Oct-24	10-Oct-24	31-Dec-25	Kiribati
Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility	2000003839	710 000	World Vision New Zealand	09-Aug-21	09-Aug-21	31-Aug-22	Vanuatu
Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility	2000004154	94 826	World Vision New Zealand	31-Jan-22	31-Jan-22	31-Dec-23	Vanuatu
MERMAID - Australia	2000004950	500 000	World Vision New Zealand	03-Sep-24	03-Sep-24	30-Jun-25	Vanuatu

Source: OBI

Comparison of PCR ratings SIDS versus non-SIDS

	No SIDS (1)			SIDS (2)			t-test	
Criteria	N	Non-SIDS	Standard Error	N	SIDS	Standard Error	Difference (1)-(2)	p-value
Relevance	330	4.3	0.04	26	3.962	0.13	0.34	0.011**
Effectiveness	330	3.973	0.04	26	3.5	0.17	0.47	0.006***
Efficiency	330	3.652	0.05	25	2.96	0.15	0.69	0.000***
Sustainability	329	3.711	0.04	26	3.385	0.16	0.33	0.043**
Rural Poverty Impact	325	4.065	0.04	24	3.542	0.17	0.52	0.002***
Innovation	330	4.224	0.05	26	3.923	0.14	0.3	0.033**
Scaling up	330	4.042	0.05	26	3.692	0.2	0.35	0.083*
GEWE	326	4.147	0.05	25	3.48	0.14	0.67	0.000***
ENRM	290	4.034	0.04	20	3.95	0.11	0.08	0.481
ACC	272	3.915	0.05	17	3.706	0.19	0.21	0.266
IFAD performance	330	4.242	0.04	26	3.769	0.16	0.47	0.004***
Gov. performance	330	3.903	0.05	26	3.423	0.14	0.48	0.001***
Overall perform.	330	3.942	0.04	26	3.469	0.13	0.47	0.000***

Grap of average ratings per criteria (as per date in the PCRs)



Supporting tables and graphs

Background

Table A1
Methodological building blocks of the evaluation

Building blocks	Details of activities
1) Preliminary review and scoping meetings	The launching of this SIDS evaluation started with preliminary meetings and discussions with key IFAD strategic and operational actors as part of the evaluation scoping process. The aim is to gather their expectations and to allow the evaluation team to have a preliminary understanding of the context.
2) In-depth desk reviews	In-depth desk review of strategic and programme relevant documentation, e.g. (not exclusive): existing guideline/guidance for vulnerability analysis, strategic documents (global, regional and for countries), project/program design documents (including quality at entry and SECAP analysis), mid-term reviews, supervision, and completion reports, grant reports, portfolio review documents. Data on (i) projects' ratings (to see trends and comparison with non-SIDS); (ii) project financing, cost tabs, disbursements, operating/supporting costs, and economic and financial aspects (for analysis of efficiency indicators). Documentation of partners on SIDS (strategies, policies, and evaluation reports) will also be reviewed. Quantitative data on the programme will be extracted from available databases at IFAD (for instance OBI, GRIPS and ORMS) and at the international level e.g. UNDP SIDS data platform (https://sids.data.undp.org/)
3) Virtual interviews for data collection	Virtual interviews with key stakeholders will be carried out at the inception stage to gather information. The specific questions in the evaluation will be used to structure the interviews, whose ultimate purpose is to better understand: the context of interventions (including opportunities and challenges), how and why some choices were made (strategic and operational), enabling and constraining factors of results, as well as consideration for improving things. Key stakeholders for virtual interviews are presented in the stakeholders' analysis table. The team will prioritise semi-structured virtual interviews, of groups and key informants.
4) On-line survey	In parallel with the desk review and virtual interviews, an online survey will be implemented to gather the opinions and perspectives of various stakeholders.
5) Internal interim report and selection of countries for case studies.	The specific evaluation questions (in the evaluation framework in Annex-II) will be used to develop a standard grid for the extraction of qualitative and quantitative data, as well as to perform quantitative and qualitative analysis. This will allow aggregation and comparison.
6) Field visits for direct observations and in-person interviews	Preliminary trends and findings generated in the interim reports will be useful to identify cases for in-countries field missions. The selection of countries will be purposeful in order to deepen key trends that came out from the desk review, taking into account the diversity of issues. The same principle applies to the identification of intervention sites to be visited by the evaluation team. Direct observations of project results and in-person discussions with beneficiaries will be prioritised during the field visits, which will be based on semi-structured interviews (e.g. key informants and focus group discussions).
7) Available IOE evaluative evidence	All evaluations conducted by IOE (including PCRVs) in SIDS from 2015 to date will be relevant sources of information. Also, in 2024, IOE is conducting two evaluations in SIDS countries, Capo Verde (project performance evaluation) and Dominican Republic (Country strategy and programme evaluation). These will feed into the SIDS evaluation through fielding specific questions in their field missions, data collection and analysis process.
8) Geospatial data analysis	The integration of GIS data, where available will be considered to enhance the analysis, particularly for the third pillar of the evaluation's conceptual-analytical framework, in relation to environmental vulnerability.
9) Data analysis and interpretation	The analytical methods will be mainly qualitative entailing content, narrative, and thematic analysis, based on triangulation from various sources of information and evidence. Simple descriptive statistical analysis will complement qualitative analysis, as deemed necessary.

Source: CSPE elaboration

Table A2
List of all SIDS countries

Countries	IFAD SIDS? Y/N	Small States? Y/N	IFAD Division
SIDS-Africa			
Cabo Verde	Y	Y	WCA
Comoros	Y	Y	ESA
Guinea-Bissau	Y	Y	WCA
Mauritius	Y	Y	ESA
São Tomé and Principe	Y	Y	WCA
Seychelles	Y	Y	ESA
SIDS-Caribbean			
Antigua and Barbuda	Y	Y	LAC
Bahamas, The	Y	Y	LAC
Barbados	Y	Y	LAC
Belize	Y	Y	LAC
Cuba	Y	N	LAC
Dominica	Y	Y	LAC
Dominican Republic	Y	N	LAC
Grenada	Y	Y	LAC
Guyana	Y	Y	LAC
Haiti	Y	N	LAC
Jamaica	Y	Y	LAC
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Y	Y	LAC
Saint Lucia	Y	Y	LAC
Saint Vincent and the	Y	Y	LAC
Suriname	Y	Y	LAC
Trinidad and Tobago	Y	Y	LAC
SIDS-APR			
Cook Islands	Y	N	APR
Fiji	Y	Y	APR
Kiribati	Y	Y	APR
Maldives	Y	Y	APR
Marshall Islands	Y	Y	APR
Micronesia	Y	Y	APR
Niue	Y	N	APR
Palau	Y	Y	APR
Papua New Guinea	Y	N	APR
Samoa	Y	Y	APR

Countries	IFAD SIDS? Y/N	Small States? Y/N	IFAD Division
Solomon Islands	Y	Y	APR
Timor-Leste	Y	Y	APR
Tonga	Y	Y	APR
Tuvalu	Y	Y	APR
Vanuatu	Y	Y	APR

Source: Appendix I - IFAD Strategy for Engagement in Small Island Developing States 2022–2027

Table A3
Mapping of Evaluation Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Interest In the evaluation	Engagement modality
IFAD – HQ OPR Director and focal points PMI focal point APR Regional Director and focal points LAC Regional Director and focal points ESA Regional Director and focal points WCA Regional Director and focal points	Usage of evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations for improving SIDS operations and strategy	Engagement discussion Data collection meeting and assessment Key informant interviews Survey
IFAD – Country teams Country Directors in APR, ESA, LAC, WCA Lead portfolio advisers and regional economists Country Programme Officer Partnership Officer Programme Liaison Associate Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility Coordinator (PIRAS)	Usage of evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations for improving SIDS operations and strategy	Engagement discussion Data collection meeting and assessment Key informant interviews Survey
Government representatives (implementing agencies): Ministry of Finance and Economic Management Ministry of Rural Development Ministry of Environment Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce Department of National Planning and Monitoring Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	Usage of evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations for improving SIDS operations and strategy Using of knowledge and lessons on the project results	Data collection meetings; assessment discussions Direct field observations Key informant interviews Questionnaire Survey

Stakeholders	Interest In the evaluation	Engagement modality
Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce		
UN agencies/institutions (co-financiers)	Usage of evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations for improving SIDS operations and strategy Using of knowledge and lessons on the project results	Data collection meetings assessment discussions Key informant interviews Questionnaire Survey
UN Women		
FAO		
WFP		
UNDP		
IADB		
Spanish Fund		
WB		
Adaptation Fund		
AECID		
GCF (Belize)		
GEF (Sao Tome)		
UNICEF (Guyana)		
Regional bodies and other multilateral partners (recipient institutions)	Usage of evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations for improving SIDS operations and strategy Using of knowledge and lessons on the project results	Data collection meetings; assessment discussions Direct field observations Key informant interviews Survey
World Vision		
Delivery Associates (Private Sector)		
Indian Ocean Commission		
Secretariat of the Pacific Community		
Australia (cofinancier)		
MORDI - Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation (implementing agency Tonga)		
Farmers' organizations and others (recipient institutions)	Usage of evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations for improving SIDS operations and strategy Using of knowledge and lessons on the project results	Data collection meetings; assessment discussions Direct field observations Key informant interviews
Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-Operation Acp-Eu (NGO)		
Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development		

Chapter I: Country context

Table A4
Key indicators in SIDS recipient of IFAD investment financing until 2023

Country	GDP per capita (current US$) 2023	Poverty headcount ratio (%) at US$2.15/day	HDI/Rank (193) 2023	Severe food insecurity in the population (%) 2022	Gini index	Gender Inequality Index/Rank 2023
APR SIDS	*Mean: 4 505*				*Mean: 32.7*	
Fiji	5 888.7	1.3	0.729/104	8.5	30.7 (2019)	0.332/78
Kiribati	2 106.8	1.7	0.628/137	8.0	27.8 (2019)	..
Papua New Guinea	2 957.7	39.7	0.568/154	27	41.9 (2009)	0.604/151
Samoa	4 330.2	1.2	0.702/116	3.4	38.7 (2013)	0.406/101
Solomon Islands	2 041.6	26.6	0.562/156	..	37.1 (2012)	..
Timor-Leste	1 502.5	24.4	0.566/155	8.9	28.7 (2014)	0.405/103
Tonga	4 681.68 (2022)	--	0.739/98	2.6	27.1 (2021)	0.462/115
Maldives	12 530.4	0	0.762/87	2.2	29.3 (2019)	0.328/76
Caribbean SIDS	*Mean: 10 250*				*Mean: 44.1*	
Belize	7 460	--	0.700/118	5.9	53.3 (1999)	0.454/113
Cuba	9 605.3 (2020)	--	0.764/85	..	--	0.300/73
Dominican Republic	10 717.6	0.9	0.766/82	19	37.0 (2022)	0.433/107
Grenada	11 246.3	0.3	0.793/73	5.8	43.8 (2018)	
Guyana	20 765.4	--	0.742/95	4.7	45.1 (1998)	0.45/114
Haiti	1 705.8	29.2	0.552/158	42.4	41.1 (2012)	0.621/158
Africa SIDS	*Mean: 5 642*				*Mean: 38.8*	
Comoros	1 590.3	18.6	0.586/152	27.4	45.3 (2014)	..
Seychelles	17 879.2	0.5	0.802/67	3.2	32.1 (2018)	..
Cabo Verde	4 851	4.6	0.661/131	6	42.4 (2015)	0.325/75
Guinea-Bissau	951.2	26	0.483/179	32.0	33.4 (2021)	0.631/159
São Tomé and Principe	2 940.9	15.7	0.613/141	14.1	40.7 (2017)	0.49/124

Source: UNDP (Human Development Report); World Bank Data (2019 and 2022, head counts), and OECD (National Accounts).

Table A5
Remittances and outmigration in SIDS

SIDS	Total Number of emigrants[188]	% Emigrants (/total population, year 2020)	Remittances as share of GDP, year 2020
Belize	52756	13.3 %	5.89%
Cabo Verde	187558	33.7 %	12.85%
Comoros	150823	17.3 %	18.50%
Cuba	1757300	15.5 %	N/A
Dominica	78191	108.6 %	11.61%
Dominican Republic	1608567	14.8 %	10.57%
Fiji	233856	26.1 %	7.16%
Grenada	62204	55.3 %	6.75%
Guinea-Bissau	111790	5.7 %	12.22%
Guyana	438413	55.7 %	7.84%
Haiti	1769671	15.5 %	23.82%
Jamaica	1118931	37.8 %	22.20%
Kiribati	5103	4.3 %	8.40%
Maldives	3715	0.7 %	0.13%
Mauritius	182973	14.4 %	2.50%
Papua New Guinea	4810	0.1 %	0.01%
Samoa	135732	68.4 %	23.50%
Sao Tome and Principe	39608	18.1 %	1.83%
Seychelles	29258	29.8 %	0.84%
Solomon Islands	4270	0.6 %	1.79%
Timor-Leste	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tonga	74550	70.5 %	39.31%
Tuvalu	3670	31.1 %	4.25%
Trinidad and Tobago	330519	23.6 %	0.93%
Vanuatu	7246	2.4 %	15.80%

Source: Our World in Data (https://ourworldindata.org/)

Box A1
Remittances in SIDS

In the APR, Tonga and Samoa stand out due to their exceptionally high remittances as GDP ratios. In 2023, Tonga's remittances constituted a staggering 41 per cent of its GDP, making it not only the most remittance-dependent country in the APR region but also globally (KNOMAD 2024). Samoa similarly has a high reliance, with remittances contributing 28.4 per cent of its GDP, mainly from its diaspora in New Zealand and Australia (WB 2024b; OECD 2023). In the Caribbean region, Haiti has a high remittance-to-GDP ratio, reaching 18.9 per cent in 2023, making remittances a crucial economic resource, especially in times of crisis. The Dominican Republic, is another key recipient, which experienced a significant increase in remittance inflows since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with total remittances rising from US$7.4 billion in 2019 to US$10.7 billion in 2021 (MPI 2024). In Africa, there are great variability of the level of remittances for SIDS. In the ESA region, Comoros and Seychelles exhibit contrasted remittance dynamics that reflect their socioeconomic landscapes: Comoros, remittances reached 20.8 per cent of GDP, while in Seychelles it was only 0.5 per cent in 2023. In WCA, remittances to São Tomé and Príncipe peaked at 9.9 per cent of GDP in 2013 but fell sharply to 1.7 per cent of GDP in 2023. Conversely, in Cabo Verde where the diaspora size is roughly equal to its domestic population, remittances represented 12.2 per cent of GDP in 2023. . Guinea-Bissau, a post-crisis state, relies heavily on remittances, which accounted for 9.4 per cent of GDP in 2023.

[188] Year 2020

Table A6
Snapshot of IFAD operations in SIDS since 1978- Global

Description	Key figures
First IFAD loan	1978
Number of IFAD investment projects approved since 1978	102
Total cost of IFAD investment projects in SIDS (from 1978 to mid-2024)	1 770 470 471
International co-financing in SIDS (from 1978 to date)	602 483 517
Number of IFAD ongoing investment projects (by mid-2024)	16
Number of IFAD investment projects (ongoing and completed) between 2015-2023 covered by the evaluation	30
Total cost - IFAD investment projects (ongoing and completed) between 2015-2023 covered by the evaluation	797 634 194
Cost of IFAD's financing (and %) covered by the evaluation	300 896 085 (37 %)
International co-financing 2015-2023 (and %) covered by the evaluation	310 273 772 (38 %)
Government financing (and %) covered by the evaluation	161 068 934 (20 %)
Lending terms for ongoing projects	DSF Grant, highly concessional, Blend, Ordinary

Source: OBI

Box A.1a
Environment and climate change vulnerability challenges of SIDS

Sea-level rise, marine heatwaves, ocean acidification, and poor waste management are posing significant challenges to SIDS, threatening ecosystems, economies, and livelihoods (Thomas et al., 2020). Rising sea levels lead to habitat loss, reduced biodiversity, and diminished ecosystem services. They also intensify tidal flooding and salinize coastal aquifers, jeopardizing freshwater supplies, especially in low-lying Pacific islands. Marine heatwaves and ocean acidification are causing coral bleaching and reef degradation, disrupting fisheries and complicating governance and fishing regulations. Additionally, oceanic changes are increasing the frequency and extent of harmful algal blooms, which undermine food security, tourism, local economies, and public health. Beach erosion, exacerbated by climate change and coastal tourism development, is another critical issue. Tourism infrastructure often encroaches on mangroves and wetlands, destroying key fish breeding habitats. Finally, inadequate waste management further harms marine and coastal ecosystems, as limited space and poor waste-handling systems result in solid waste being dumped into the sea or mangroves, contaminating beaches and ecosystems.[189]

Environmental vulnerability. The intimate connection between the land and the ocean exacerbates the risks, with coastal erosion threatening both infrastructure and vital ecosystems. Biodiversity loss is another critical concern, as these islands often host unique and fragile ecosystems that are particularly susceptible to habitat destruction and invasive species. SIDS are home to 24 per cent of the world's coral reefs, which support over 50 per cent of the global marine biodiversity and provide ecosystem services worth US$375 billion per year. Water scarcity, compounded by the limited freshwater resources inherent to many SIDS, intensifies the challenges for agriculture and human consumption. For example, in Kiribati, one of the most water-scarce SIDS, groundwater is affected by saltwater intrusion and pollution from human and animal waste, while rainwater harvesting is insufficient and unreliable. Other human activities including deforestation, coastal development, and pollution further exacerbate the environmental challenges faced by SIDS. SIDS have lost 62 per cent of their forest cover between 1990 and 2015, which is higher than the global average of 12 per cent. Coastal development, driven by population growth, tourism, and urbanization, also contributes to the loss of mangroves, wetlands, and beaches, which provide natural protection and habitats for wildlife. Deforestation reduces the natural buffer against storms and erosion, while coastal development increases the risk of flooding and storm damage. For example, in the Maldives, coastal development has resulted in the loss of 64 per cent of the natural shoreline and 25 per cent of the coral reef area. Pollution from industrial activities and agricultural runoff contaminates water resources and damages coral reefs, which are critical for SIDS' economies and food security. For example, in the Maldives, coastal

[189] Batra and Norheim, 2022

development has resulted in the loss of 64 per cent of the natural shoreline and 25 per cent of the coral reef area.

Climate change vulnerability. Climate change presents unique challenges to SIDS. One significant challenge is sea-level rise, which could lead to flooding, salinization, permanent inundation, pressures on agricultural production and ecosystem health erosion (IPCC 2018, Summary for Policy Makers). Climate change is predicted to increase the frequency and intensity of cyclones and hurricanes in the Pacific and the Caribbean. Research indicates that 10 cm to 20 cm of sea-level rise by 2050 will more than double the frequency of extreme water-level events in the tropics, impairing the developing economies of equatorial coastal cities and the habitability of low-lying Pacific Island nations (Vitousek, S., Barnard, P., Fletcher, C. et al, 2017). In the case of Maldives, 80 per cent of the country lies just one meter or less above sea level. Hazards associated with the ocean and cryosphere other than sea-level rise include tropical cyclones, land erosion, increased storm severity, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, habitat loss, climate-induced illnesses, and marine heatwaves (GIZ, 2021). SIDS have large ocean territories meaning that significant marine resources, fisheries, and biodiversity are highly exposed to climate change (UNDP, 2018). SIDS are also particularly vulnerable as a large proportion of their population, assets and infrastructure are located in coastal zones (GIZ, 2021). Impacts on population and infrastructure include loss of lives, homes and livelihoods, food shortages and water insecurity, the spread of illnesses, displacement, negative economic impacts, and disruption to key infrastructure such as transportation and communication (Thomas, A., Baptiste, A., Martyr-Koller, R., Pringle, P., & Rhioney, K. 2020).

Box A.1b
Economic and financial vulnerability challenges of SIDS

Economic vulnerability. The economic vulnerability of SIDS is deeply rooted in their unique structural constraints and external dependencies, exposing them to a multitude of risks. Their economies often narrow and heavily dependent on imports, are particularly susceptible to external shocks. For example, Fiji's reliance on sugar, accounting for 20 per cent of its total exports in 2019, exposed it to global market dynamics and potential diseases affecting the main export crop. Efforts by SIDS to integrate global value chains, as well as increase and upgrade domestic value addition have often fallen short due to a lack of competitiveness, based on high transaction costs, low productivity and low-quality goods and services (Lanz R and Werner H-P, 2016). As a result, among the 143 countries included in the 2021 economic vulnerability index of the United Nations – calculated as one of the three criteria for the identification of the least developed countries – 14 of the 40 most vulnerable countries were small island developing States, including 3 of the 10 most vulnerable. This vulnerability is further exacerbated by the decline of blue economy opportunities due to climate change. SIDS are estimated to be 34 per cent more economically vulnerable than other developing countries, primarily due to their exposure to natural disasters and high level of export concentration. Industries common in SIDS, such as tourism and fisheries, are at significant risk due to climate change and natural disasters. A single large-scale disaster can cause nationally significant damages, highlighting the economic vulnerability of these states to extreme events.

Financial vulnerability. The financial vulnerability of SIDS is primarily due to their heavy reliance on tourism revenues, remittances, and foreign direct investment (FDI). Tourism, a major economic driver for many SIDS, with some like Palau and Maldives, tourism accounts for 58 – 65 per cent of GDP. This heavy reliance on tourism exposes these economies to global events that affect travel, such as pandemics or economic downturns (Bharadwaj, R., Mitchell, T., Karthikeyan, N., & Kumar, B. A.2023). Remittances, another significant portion of GDP in SIDS, flow directly to households, serving as a de facto social safety net in difficult times and offsetting macroeconomic volatility. Some SIDS, such as Tonga and Haiti, are highly reliant on remittances, receiving 34.1 per cent and 18.9 per cent of their GDP in remittances, respectively. Any fluctuations in remittances can affect the stability of the entire economy (Bharadwaj, R., Mitchell, T., Karthikeyan, N., & Kumar, B. A.2023). SIDS are also burdened with higher levels of debt, with the Caribbean SIDS facing particularly elevated debt levels, exceeding 70 per cent of GDP on average in 2016. These financial constraints, coupled with common current account deficits and low reserves, underscore the intricate financial challenges faced by SIDS in sustaining their development efforts.

Table A7
Key indicators on youth SIDS that benefited of IFAD investment financing until 2023

Country	Share of youth not in education, employment, or training (% of youth population) - 2021			Unemployment, youth (% of labour force ages 15-24) (modelled ILO estimate) - 2022	
	Total	Female	Male	Female	Male
Africa SIDS					
Cabo Verde	28	29	27.1	35.7	26.4
Comoros	22.7	24.9	20.7	20	20.5
Guinea-Bissau	24.3	29.9	18.3	4.8	4.4
São Tomé and Principe				33.6	17.7
Seychelles	26	22.2	29.8		
Caribbean SIDS					
Belize	30.2	41.3	19	34.8	14.5
Cuba				3.4	3.5
Dominican Republic	26.6	31.7	21.5	25.1	10.7
Grenada	28.9	27.9	29.9		
Guyana	46.4	53.6	38.9	32.8	20.4
Haiti	21.1	27.9	14.2	43	26.9
APR SIDS					
Fiji	20.1	29.6	10.8	21.7	11.5
Kiribati	46.9	49.8	45.5		
Maldives	26.3	28.5	24.1	9.5	18.7
Papua New Guinea	35.5	38.9	32.3	4.2	6.1
Samoa	28.7	35.6	22.4	30.6	14.6
Solomon Islands	7	8.9	5.1	3.3	2.4
Timor-Leste	31.2	32.6	29.8	16.5	10.8
Tonga	25.3	25.9	24.7	14.4	4.7

Source: ILO

Table A8
IFAD strategies and loan portfolio in SIDS for the evaluated period 2015 to 2024

Region	COSOP/CSN post 2014	#	Projects covered by the evaluation*	SIDS countries evaluated
APR	CSN Kiribati 2019 – 2020 CSN Maldives 2022 – 2023 CSN Samoa 2019 – 2020 CSN Solomon Islands 2022 – 2023 CSN Tonga 2017 – 2021 CSN Tonga 2022 – 2023 CSN Papua New Guinea 2017-2018 CSN Papua New Guinea 2022 – 2024 CSN Vanuatu 2022 - 2023[190]	9 CSNs	10	Kiribati Maldives Samoa Solomon Islands Tonga Papua New Guinea Fiji[191]
LAC	CSN Belize 2017 – 2019 CSN Belize 2022 – 2024 **COSOP** Dominican Republic 2017 - 2020 CSN Grenada 2017 – 2019 CSN Grenada 2022 – 2024 CSN Haití 2022 – 2023 (extended 2025) CSN Guyana 2016 – 2018 CSN Guyana 2021 – 2022 CSN Cuba 2016 – 2018 **COSOP** Cuba 2019 – 2024	2 COSOPs 8 CSNs	13	Belize Dominican Republic Grenada Guyana Haití Cuba
WCA	CSN Cabo Verde 2016 – 2018 **COSOP** Cabo Verde 2019 – 2014 CSN Guinea – Bissau 2019 – 2021 CSN São Tomé and Principe 2019 - 2021 CSN São Tomé and Principe 2022 - 2023	1 COSOP 4 CSNs	5	Cabo Verde Guinea-Bissau São Tomé and Principe
ESA	CSN Comoros 2016 – 2018 **COSOP** Comoros 2020 – 2025 CSN Seychelles 2017 - 2019	1 COSOP 2 CSNs	2	Comoros Seychelles
Total	**27***		**30***	**18 SIDS countries covered by the evaluation**

Source: CSPE team elaboration
* Countries have had two COSOPs/CSNs over the evaluation period. The same applies to projects.

Table A9
Inclusion of ToC in the COSOPs or CSNs and in the project designs

Region	COSOP or CSN with ToC	Projects with ToC
APR	None	- MAP (Maldives). - AIMN (Solomon Islands) - TRIP II (Tonga)
LAC	COSOP Cuba 2018	- PRODECAFE (Cuba) - PRORURAL Inclusivo and PRORURAL Joven (Dominican Republic) - HESAD (Guyana) - I-BE, PITAG and PURRACO (Haiti)
ESA	COSOP Comoros 2020	N/A
WCA	COSOP Cabo Verde 2019	- COMPRAN (São Tomé and Príncipe) - REDE (Guinea-Bissau)

Source: Elaboration of IOE team

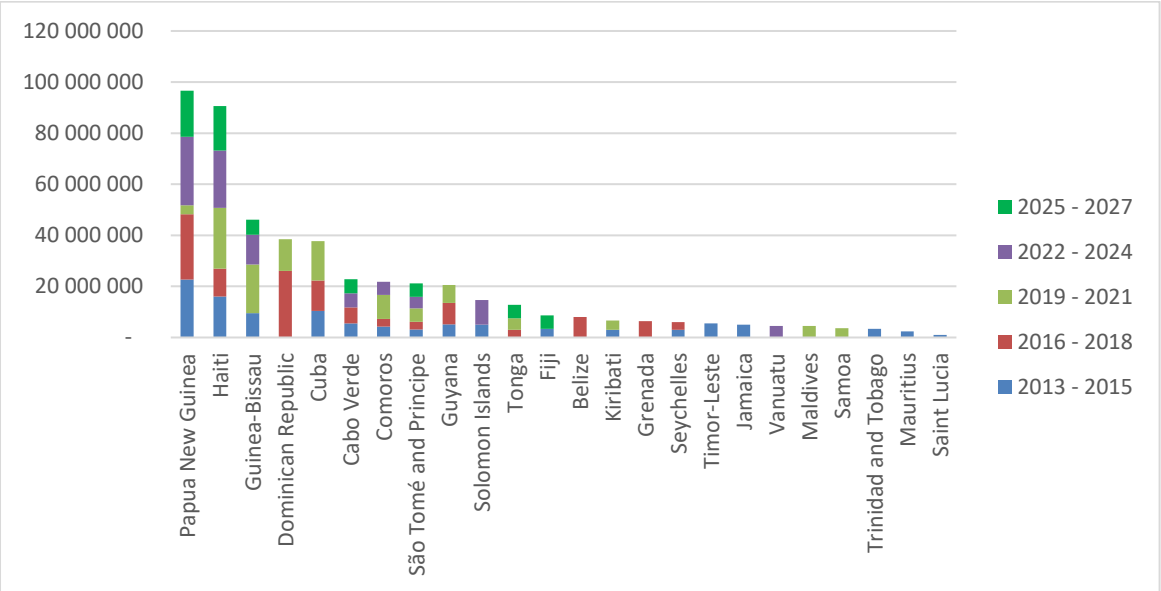
[190] Vanuatu did not have any active loan project during the evaluated period 2015 – 2024
[191] No CSN during the evaluated period

Table A10
Conduct of SECAP in COSOPs/CSNs

Region	SECAP assessment
APR	- CSN Papua New Guinea 2021 - CSN Vanuatu 2021 - CSN Maldives 2022
LAC	- CSN Belize 2022 - CSN Guyana 2022 - CSN Haiti 2022
ESA	- COSOP Comoros 2020
WCA	- COSOP Cabo Verde 2019 - CSN Guinea Bissau 2019 - CSN Sao Tome 2019 - CSN Sao Tome 2022

Source: Elaboration of IOE team

Graph A.1
PBAS allocation in SIDS



Source: OBI

Table A11
IFAD financing conditions in SIDS

Country	Blend	DSF Grant	DSF Grant/Highly Concessional	Highly Concessional	Ordinary
Belize					**1**
Cabo Verde				**1**	
Comoros			**1**		
Cuba					**3**
Dominican Republic					**2**
Fiji					**1**
Grenada				**1**	**1**
Guinea-Bissau			**2**		
Guyana	**1**				
Haiti		**4**			
Kiribati		**1**			
Maldives		**1**	**1**		
Papua New Guinea	**1**				
Samoa		**1**			
São Tomé and Principe		**2**			
Seychelles					**1**

Country	Blend	DSF Grant	DSF Grant/Highly Concessional	Highly Concessional	Ordinary
Solomon Islands			1	1	
Tonga		1	1		
Total	**2**	**10**	**6**	**3**	**9**

Source: OBI

Table A12
Presence of IFAD country offices in SIDS

SIDS countries evaluated	ICO presence	Managed by
Fiji	**Yes**	**Fiji ICO**
Kiribati	No	Fiji ICO
Samoa	No	Fiji ICO
Solomon Islands	No	Fiji ICO
Tonga	No	Fiji ICO
Papua New Guinea	No	Philippines ICO
Maldives	No	India MCO
Comoros	No	Madagascar ICO
Seychelles	No	Madagascar ICO
Cuba	No	Panamá MCO
Dominican Republic	No	Panamá MCO
Guyana	No	Panamá MCO
Grenada	No	Panamá MCO
Belize	No	Panamá MCO
Haiti	**Yes**	**Haiti ICO**
Cabo Verde	No	Senegal ICO
Guinea-Bissau	No	Senegal MCO
São Tomé and Principe	No	Cameroon ICO

Source: CSPE team elaboration

Chapter 2: Relevance and Coherence

Box A2
Main topics identified in the ToCs

In APR, intended change related to improving the resilience and competitiveness of smallholder farmers through sustainable agriculture and climate-smart technologies, addressing food insecurity, reducing reliance on imports, and enhancing market linkages (through ToCs for MAP, AIMN and TRIPII). Also critical was empowering of households, women's groups, and farmers' groups to improve food security, nutrition, and income by increasing production, encouraging the consumption of nutritious food, and expanding market access.

In LAC, the ToC for the Dominican Republic aim to reduce vulnerability and poverty by improving policies for income generation and resilience, with localized interventions addressing family needs and capacities while fostering public-private partnerships. ToCs include promoting productive inclusion and territorial planning in the Dominican Republic, supporting sustainable coffee production in Cuba in the context of climate adaptation, and improving agricultural productivity in Haiti through research and climate risk assessment.

In Comoros, transitioning from subsistence to commercial farming by promoting sustainable production systems, value addition, and market access. It focuses on women and youth to establish competitive agribusinesses.

In Guinea Bissau, efforts focus on agricultural diversification, inclusive rural transformation, improved nutrition, and support for rural micro-businesses, particularly for vulnerable groups. In São Tomé and Príncipe, initiatives aim to enhance agricultural productivity and resilience, empower women and youth, and address institutional weaknesses to achieve food security and reduce climate vulnerability.

Box A3
Rural Poor Stimulus Facility implemented in SIDS

The Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) was launched in 2020 to aid vulnerable rural populations in recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was implemented in SIDS such as São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, and Papua New Guinea, with a mix of successes and challenges.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, the RPSF, through the COMPRAN project, exceeded its goal of reaching 2,000 households by supporting over 4,200. Employing innovative methods like drones for data collection and hatcheries for poultry health, the initiative made significant strides. However, the short implementation period curtailed its ability to sustain and build upon these achievements. Guinea-Bissau's PADES project also showcased promise by distributing 200 tons of rice seeds and encouraging modern farming techniques. Yet, logistical barriers, such as inadequate road infrastructure, and limited gender and youth participation hampered its full potential.

Similarly, the RPSF in Comoros positively impacted over 1,100 households by improving productivity and market access through input provision and infrastructure renovation. Nonetheless, youth engagement remained low, and critical targets like cold storage facilities were unmet.

In Papua New Guinea, while agricultural inputs reached 3,167 households and cold chain logistics improved, the project fell short of its 9,000-household target, with notable gaps in gender and youth inclusion and delays in critical activities like market data collection.

Haiti benefitted from the INNOVATECH grant, funded under RPSF and implemented by the German Sparkassenstiftung. The grant supported two Haitian startups with US$221,000 each to deliver AgriTech and FinTech solutions. Despite insecurity, the project reached nearly 6,000 rural households and 51 producers' organizations, promoting digital financial services and market access innovations. More recently, the Crisis Response Initiative (CRI) was activated to safeguard livelihoods through support in fishing, agriculture, and infrastructure. However, due to ongoing socio-political instability, the initiative remains in its procurement phase and delays in implementation have impeded immediate impacts.

Box A4
Examples of thematic lessons

Community Empowerment: Sustainable development aligns with cultural and social contexts and leverages traditional practices (APR, ESA, LAC).

Inclusivity and targeting: Successful interventions require tailored approaches to the needs of vulnerable groups, ensuring women, youth, and marginalized communities are included (APR, LAC).

Simplified Design: Clear, focused objectives and manageable scopes improve likelihood of projects' success rates (APR).

Sustainability: Strengthening local organizations and ensuring robust management is essential for long-term sustainability; strong grassroots involvement and participatory methods enhance project ownership and sustainability (APR, ESA, LAC, WCA).

Climate Resilience: Climate-smart agricultural practices are critical for climate resilience (APR, ESA, LAC, WCA).

Strong Management Structures: Robust project management, supported by effective M&E frameworks, ensures improved coordination and sustainable outcomes (LAC).

Box A5
Additional grants that address economic resilience in SIDS of APR

PIRAS, launched in 2020 in collaboration with the Australian Government, was designed to mitigate COVID-19 impacts but also addressed additional challenges like the 2022 Tonga volcanic eruption. By its completion, PIRAS exceeded its initial target of 20,000 beneficiaries, reaching over 33,000 individuals across multiple Pacific nations. The program contributed to diversified food production, improved dietary habits, and to a reduction in hospital visits related to non-communicable diseases, according to beneficiaries and health officials. Its efficient and flexible design was widely praised for being responsive to local needs. PIRAS also supported the construction and upgrading of climate-resilient storage infrastructure, including solar-powered cold rooms and community-level storage units, aimed at reducing post-harvest losses in Pacific Island Countries.

The nutrition-sensitive grant "Leveraging the Development of Local Food Crops and Fisheries Value Chains for Improved Nutrition and Sustainable Food Systems" benefited countries such as Vanuatu, Fiji, and Kiribati, between 2016 and 2020. By promoting culturally significant crops like yellow sweet potatoes, cassava, and taro, the project improved dietary diversity for over 40,000 households and revitalized export demand for taro. Despite these successes, the initiative faced challenges, including gaps in sustainability planning and limited engagement with youth. It also fell short of embedding systemic resilience into national frameworks, reducing its long-term impact.

The recently concluded Melanesian Rural Market and Innovation-Driven Development Programme (MERMAID), implemented in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, integrated nutrition-sensitive agriculture with income diversification. It promoted "Island Super-Foods" and raised awareness about the importance of reducing reliance on rice. MERMAID addressed gender dynamics by involving men in nutrition education and cooking activities, challenging traditional norms. Although logistical and economic challenges limited its broader impact, the project adapted to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and established linkages with the Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility (PIRAS).[192]

Box A6
Additional Grants implemented for institutional capacity

A regional initiative in Central America, the "PDRR Regional Rural Dialogue Programme," promoted policy dialogue by supporting the approval of the Regional Policy on Family, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant Agriculture (PAPSIA) by Central America's Ministers of Agriculture. While this policy marked progress, insufficient institutional capacity and weak political commitment have delayed its operationalization. For instance, in Belize, weak social structures and limited organizational infrastructure hampered engagement with family farming organizations and participation in the PAPSIA process.

In West and Central Africa, the "Strengthening of the National M&E System in Cabo Verde" grant, implemented between 2018 and 2023, enhanced the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment's monitoring and evaluation capacity. The integration of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology for spatial data collection and analysis was a notable achievement. However, Cabo Verde's POSER loan project remains the only SIDS initiative utilizing GIS data, reflecting the limited scalability of these innovations across other contexts.

[192] The ongoing Small Islands Food and Water Project (SIFWAP), launched in 2022, represents an integrated approach to food, nutrition, and water security in multiple Pacific nations. Jointly implemented by IFAD and FAO, SIFWAP incorporates community-driven planning and the revival of indigenous knowledge to build resilience. While the project has established operational delivery units and initiated staff recruitment, challenges such as capacity gaps in Tuvalu and delays in selecting target islands in Kiribati highlight the complexities of implementing multi-country programs in resource-constrained settings.

Box A7
Specific IFAD's niche of focus in SIDS of each region

In **APR**, IFAD fills critical gaps by reaching communities that other partners, such as ADB and regional organizations, struggle to serve due to logistical challenges. Its participatory and small-scale enterprise focus ensures that interventions are locally relevant and sustainable. IFAD operates in geographically remote areas, such as the outer islands of Kiribati, where logistical and financial constraints deter other development actors. Example: The Kiribati Outer Islands Food and Water Project (KOIFAWP) delivered water harvesting systems and home gardens to underserved populations. IFAD's use of participatory approaches empowers local communities to identify and prioritize their needs, fostering ownership and sustainability. IFAD introduced income-generating initiatives like virgin coconut oil (VCO) production, which diversified livelihoods in isolated regions.

In **ESA**, IFAD provides direct, smallholder-focused interventions, complementing broader regional climate adaptation efforts led by IOC and AfDB. Its focus on post-harvest infrastructure and capacity building ensures tangible, immediate benefits for smallholders, which other partners may overlook. IFAD integrates sustainable farming practices to enhance resilience to climate change, directly benefiting smallholders. Example: In Comoros, IFAD's projects introduced drought-resistant crops and watershed management systems to address agricultural vulnerabilities.

In **LAC**, IFAD's smallholder-centric approach ensures that rural populations, often excluded from broader development initiatives, benefit directly. Its work in gender inclusion and participatory planning addresses socio-economic vulnerabilities overlooked by infrastructure-heavy programs of other multilateral partners. IFAD's projects specifically target rural smallholders and marginalized groups, addressing gaps left by other partners like the World Bank and IDB, which focus on large-scale infrastructure and macroeconomic reforms. IFAD introduced sustainable agricultural practices that increased resilience to climate change, complementing larger-scale disaster risk reduction efforts by other regional actors.

In **WCA**, IFAD's focus on environmental sustainability and smallholder empowerment complements but does not overlap with the large-scale infrastructure and institutional reform efforts of partners like AfDB and UNDP. By addressing the unique needs of smallholder farmers, IFAD ensures inclusivity and sustainability. In São Tomé and Príncipe, IFAD's PAPAC improved cocoa production by introducing agroforestry practices and linking farmers to global markets.

Box A8
Development of KM strategies in supported operations

In **APR**, KM activities were included in the AWPB in Samoa's SAFPROM project, with no strategy in place and minimum budget allocated. In Fiji, the FAPP project did not develop any KM strategy, and there is a limited capacity in the PMU to develop KM activities. In Maldives, the MEDEP project did not develop a dedicated KM strategy, while the MAP project has established a dedicated KM and Communications strategy but requires additional funding to produce high quality communications products to reach all intended audiences.[193]

In **ESA**, the Comoros PREFER has a has a knowledge management strategy and plan, while the Seychelles' CLISSA project did not develop a clear KM strategy or plan nor had a fully dedicated KM Officer or team.

In **WCA**, the PAPAC project did not develop a knowledge management and communication strategy, while the ongoing COMPRAN project has recently developed a knowledge management and communication strategy and action plan and has allocated funding and staff to implement KM activities. Similarly, the Cabo Verde POSER project has designated a knowledge management plan while in Guinea Bissau, both the PADES and REDE project have not developed any specific KM strategy.

In **LAC**, most projects have a dedicated KM and communications strategy in place, with a few exceptions. Projects of Guyana, Cuba, Haiti have established a KM strategy and, in most cases, allocated funding and resources to carry out its activities. Meanwhile, projects in Grenada, Dominican Republic and Belize have not established a knowledge management strategy.

Box A9
Factors that prevented effective KM

For the CLISSA project in Seychelles, limited financial and technical resources hindered the dissemination and uptake of materials, while inadequate infrastructure and restricted access to digital tools constrained rural communities from fully benefiting from these resources. In Comoros, the absence of a formal system for capturing and disseminating knowledge restricted the systematic use of information generated by the PREFER project.

In APR, differences in internet connectivity and infrastructure influences outreach of knowledge products across SIDS countries. In Kiribati and Salomon Islands poor internet connectivity and countries' insularity has affected the dissemination of digital resources among project beneficiaries, particularly for those located at-risk coastal areas with limited access to essential services, including electricity and roads.

Unavailability of technical expertise among project's teams, insufficient technical missions to support project teams, weak M&E systems and learning mechanisms in LAC SIDS countries hindered the development of a KM system deployment.

In WCA, PAPAC (Sao Tome) did not develop a KM and communication strategy during its implementation. In Guinea-Bissau the absence of a strategy has affected KM activities of REDE. Cabo Verde is an exception, with a KM management strategy, thus satisfactory KM system and activities among WCA projects.

[193] This is the similar case for Papua New Guinea, which has developed a KM strategy and action plan, but the project ahs allocated sufficient budget and resources to ensure its functioning during implementation. Meanwhile, in Tonga, TRIP II developed a communications strategy to support the dissemination of its knowledge management products, with positive results. The KM strategy was developed building from the positive results of the first TRIP project on KM products and approach.

Table A.13
Type and focus of partnerships from COSOPS and CSNs

Type of partner	Main focus of strategic partnership			
	APR	**ESA**	**LAC**	**WCA**
Government	Policy dialogue, co-financing, implementation of activities	Policy dialogue, co-financing, implementation of activities	Policy dialogue, co-financing, implementation of activities	Policy dialogue, co-financing, implementation of activities
Local institutions, community level organizations[194]	Implementation of activities, policy dialogue	Implementation of activities	Implementation of activities	Implementation of activities, policy dialogue, knowledge management
Research institutions	Knowledge management, implementation of activities	Knowledge management	Knowledge management	Knowledge management, implementation of activities
Regional organizations	Policy dialogue, implementation of activities, synergies	Co-financing, synergies	Policy dialogue, knowledge management	Co-financing, policy dialogue, synergies
International cooperation	Co-financing, knowledge management	Co-financing, synergies	Co-financing, policy dialogue, synergies	Co-financing, policy dialogue, synergies
Private sector	Implementation of activities, synergies	Implementation of activities	Implementation of activities, synergies	Implementation of activities, synergies, policy dialogue
UN agencies	Implementation of activities, synergies, knowledge management, policy dialogue	Knowledge management, Implementation of activities	Implementation of activities, synergies	Implementation of activities, synergies

Source: IOE analysis from COSOPS and CSNs

[194] Includes community level organizations, local institutions, farmer organizations and NGOs.

Chapter 3: Effectiveness

Box A10
Example of market access and value chain development interventions

In **ESA**, the CLISSA project in Seychelles successfully established seven public-private partnerships (70 per cent of its target), linking smallholders with key private sector buyers, including Hilton Hotels and the Seychelles Trading Company. These partnerships provided stable markets and better prices for farmers. For example, Hilton regularly purchased fresh produce from 12 farmers, while 100 smallholder farmers were linked to the Seychelles Trading Company (STC). These partnerships marked a significant achievement in value chain development, being the first IFAD-funded project to connect smallholders with high-end hotels. The PREFER initiative has facilitated the creation of market linkages for smallholders, enabling them to sell their produce at competitive prices. Nevertheless, market volatility and inadequate transportation infrastructure have posed significant challenges, affecting the consistency and profitability of market access initiatives.

In **WCA**, the POSER project in Cape Verde established cleaning and storage centres for vegetable-producing associations. Technical support was provided to enable the beneficiary associations to sell produce to the national school feeding program. In São Tomé and Príncipe, the PAPAC and COMPRAN projects made substantial investments in cooperatives' infrastructure, allowing them to process and sell cocoa, coffee, and pepper to the required standards. All supported cooperatives are organic certified by Ecocert. The coffee and cocoa cooperatives were also certified by Fair Trade, while the pepper cooperative was certified by Fair for Life.

Box A10b
IFAD's supported efforts to address challenges of ISDS remoteness and smallness by region

In **WCA**, remoteness was addressed in Guinea-Bissau through investments in roads and boats. Implementation challenges and a lack of co-financing have affected capacity to address identified vulnerabilities in São Tomé and Príncipe, (roads and irrigation). In Cabo Verde, investments in irrigation lacked technical assistance for sustainability. Maintenance capacity of hydro-agricultural infrastructure remains weak.

In **APR** efforts in road infrastructure and improving transportation led to significant improvement in Tonga, while the Solomon Islands, the Maldives, and Kiribati face substantial challenges. In Tonga, six wharves and one community road enhanced landing and loading of goods and improving access to markets, schools, and other essential services. In Kiribati, issues such as poor road quality, limited jetties for boat access, and a lack of WASH facilities remained unaddressed. In the Maldives, infrastructure obstacles—including inadequate logistics and restricted market access undermined economic benefits particularly in remote islands.

In **ESA**, both in Comoros and Seychelles, projects addressed structural vulnerabilities through the construction of Rainwater Harvesting Systems (RWHS) and promotion of moto-tricycles. In Seychelles, irrigation access roads contributed to increased productivity.

In **LAC** small-scale irrigation systems in Grenada, Belize, and Cuba supported agricultural productivity. The MAREP project constructed concrete roads, but challenges remain due to fragmented support systems. In Belize, road construction improved market accessibility and connections, prompting the Government of Belize to introduce a free school bus service. In Haiti, the need for robust and appropriate infrastructure remains a pressing concern, underscoring the ongoing structural vulnerabilities that hinder agricultural growth and rural livelihoods.

Box A11
Critical challenges to address better economic resilience

The most common critical challenges preventing smallholders from achieving better economic resilience include weak institutional capacities at both strategic and operational levels. These weak capacities indeed constrain the effectiveness of interventions, leading to delays in implementation and insufficient uptake of climate-smart agricultural technologies. Limited support from national institutions, implementation delays, and budget constraints have negatively affected project outcomes in various countries, such as São Tomé, Guinea-Bissau, and Grenada.

The isolation of SIDS and the impact of global events, including the pandemic and geopolitical conflicts, have disrupted food supplies and economic activities. Insularity results in particularly high implementation costs due to logistics and supervision expenses, limiting the follow-up that projects can provide to smallholders. Moreover, the limited availability of necessary expertise among local implementing partners and experts presents another significant challenge that constrains project achievements. Insularity also contributes to market issues, restricting market access opportunities on both the supply side (e.g., reducing prices of produce) and the input side (e.g., increasing prices).

Box A12

Examples of project responses to environmental vulnerabilities

In the Fiji Agricultural Partnerships Project (FAPP) has successfully promoted agroforestry systems that integrate trees and crops, improving soil fertility and reducing erosion. In Tonga, the TRIP project has supported community development plans that integrate NRM practices, enhancing environmental sustainability in village economic activities. In the Maldives, greenhouses supported by the MAP project have promoted better soil and water resource management with low or no chemical pesticides.

In Comoros, bocage practices improved soil health and reduced erosion. Additionally, the PREFER project has promoted agro-ecological practices, including biological control methods, which further improved soil health and reduced erosion. Specifically, the construction of irrigation tanks ensured water availability during dry spells and boosted agricultural productivity.

In Seychelles, the CLISSA project promoted terracing and contour farming to prevent erosion and maintain productivity. It has also focused on sustainable fisheries, marine conservation, soil conservation techniques, and improved water harvesting and irrigation systems. Additionally, the project promoted sustainable fisheries by implementing practices that reduce overfishing and support marine ecosystems. I

n Comoros, the PREFER project achieved 99 per cent of its reforestation target by planting 1,085 hectares with species that stabilize soil and enhance water infiltration. The adoption of bocage practices improved soil health and reduced erosion, with farmers reporting increased resilience to climate variability.

In APR, IFAD's interventions have made notable progress in reducing environmental stress and enhancing ecosystem health. Sustainable farming techniques and biodiversity enhancement initiatives have improved agricultural productivity and ecological balance.

Box A13

Critical challenges and gaps in achieving better sustainable environmental results

More than 80 per cent of end-of-project targets for training and support in NRM were exceeded across all regions, despite ongoing inconsistencies in environmental vulnerability mitigation strategies within IFAD-supported operations in SIDS.

In **WCA**, SECAP analyses were completed for all projects, with Cape Verde demonstrating a thorough assessment of climatic vulnerabilities, particularly related to droughts. However, the SECAPs for Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé lacked depth. Investments in irrigation and lowland rehabilitation enhanced agricultural productivity in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, while sustainable practices in São Tomé improved cocoa, coffee, and pepper production, although Cape Verde saw mixed results in sustainable resource management. Organic production methods were effectively promoted in both São Tomé and Cape Verde, and freshwater lowland rice cultivation in Guinea-Bissau aided in ecosystem preservation alongside reforestation and mangrove restoration efforts.

In ESA, SECAP integration varied; Comoros included a detailed SECAP in its CSN, while Seychelles did not. Projects in both Seychelles and Comoros emphasized sustainable agriculture, resource efficiency, and environmental conservation through reforestation, soil conservation, water management, and organic farming. Comoros nearly achieved its reforestation target, which improved soil health and water retention. Bocage practices enhanced soil health and reduced erosion, increasing farmer resilience to climate variability. The Seychelles project successfully restored mangroves and coral reefs, bolstering ecosystem resilience.

In **LAC**, while IFAD interventions addressed environmental vulnerabilities, they lacked sufficient contextualization in project design and implementation. Sustainable practices like reforestation, agroforestry, and water-efficient irrigation were implemented in Haiti, Cuba, and Guyana, but challenges such as soil erosion and water scarcity persisted. Limited access to technical expertise hindered implementation in Grenada, Haiti, and Belize, with Grenada facing environmental degradation due to unregulated agricultural expansion around project-supported water tanks.

In **APR**, SECAP studies in Papua New Guinea and the Maldives informed adaptive measures that strengthened resilience in local farming communities. However, countries such as Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga showed gaps in integrating SECAP studies into strategic planning. Climate-smart agriculture techniques, including drought-resistant crops and improved irrigation, were adopted, leading to progress in reducing environmental pressure and enhancing ecosystem health in Fiji, Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga. Nonetheless, Samoa and PNG lacked sufficient progress in developing sustainable NRM strategies, and the Maldives experienced localized damage due to unsuccessful biodiversity-friendly mariculture efforts.

Box A14
Lessons learned from climate resilience and adaptation strategies

Successful resilient strategies were built on addressing the most pressing needs through a multi-scale approach. An example is provided by the POSER project in Cape Verde. Following a strategic reorientation, the intervention strategy shifted from funding micro-projects to supporting larger irrigation investments. In response to specific requests from the government, studies on water issues were conducted and used to inform decisions regarding water resources and to establish a new water irrigation agency.

The development of a comprehensive integrated approach is also a successful strategy to address climate change vulnerability. For instance, the PREFER project in Comoros includes the implementation of anti-erosion measures and effective water management practices. The use of drought-resistant crop varieties ensures that agricultural activities remain viable despite changing climatic conditions. All this was done alongside interventions aimed at diversifying income sources for vulnerable populations, particularly women and young people, thereby enhancing their ability to cope with climate-related challenges.

Community-led planning and engagement, strengthening local institutions are relevant and useful in addressing climate change vulnerabilities, primarily water scarcity, and investing in relevant infrastructure enables adaptive capacities at both the household and community levels. In Kiribati, the OIFWP project supported the development of community development plans, empowering local communities to identify and prioritize their environmental and ecological needs. Community involvement in the planning process led to the successful implementation of rainwater harvesting systems. The project equipped local communities with the skills and infrastructure necessary for more effective water resource management, thereby reducing their vulnerability to droughts. This strategy not only addressed immediate water scarcity issues but also built long-term resilience by fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members.

Box A.15
Main challenges that limited achieving a broader climate resilience impact

IFAD's efforts to enhance smallholder resilience to climate change have faced several challenges, including insufficient funding, inadequate climate risk assessments, and a lack of scalable strategies. In WCA, interventions in São Tomé e Príncipe and Guinea-Bissau were delayed due to funding shortfalls from the Adaptation Fund and GEF, limiting ecosystem restoration efforts. Scalability issues persisted in the Solomon Islands, while inadequate community participation in Tonga and Samoa hindered effective coastal and marine resource management.

Funding gaps also affected climate adaptation and natural resource management in São Tomé e Príncipe, with high irrigation costs limiting sustainable water management in Guinea-Bissau. Delays in hydraulic infrastructure and weak community mobilization further

constrained adaptation efforts. In Cape Verde and Kiribati, irrigation and water storage projects suffered from poor maintenance and technical limitations.

Weak ownership of self-vulnerability assessments and insufficient sharing of successful experiences among LAC SIDS were notable challenges. Projects in Haiti, Cuba, and Belize, lacked detailed climate risk assessments, leading to a limited understanding of vulnerabilities and inadequate adaptation measures. Outdated data and insufficient stakeholder engagement also undermined resilience-building efforts, particularly in Belize, Guyana, and Cuba. Additionally, logistical and geographical barriers have limited the scalability of successful interventions, as seen in the Solomon Islands.

Box A.16
IFAD's interventions addressing structural vulnerability by region

In **WCA**, remoteness was addressed in only one country, Guinea-Bissau, through investments in roads and boats. Implementation challenges and a lack of co-financing have affected IFAD's capacity to address identified vulnerabilities in São Tomé and Príncipe, particularly concerning road conditions and irrigation needs. In Cape Verde, despite relevant and effective investments in irrigation and efforts to support the establishment of a national water irrigation agency, substantial support is still required to enhance the capabilities of relevant authorities to provide necessary technical assistance for the maintenance and use of irrigation investments. Indeed, the high number of water mobilization projects with technical or operational problems noted by the evaluation team (nine out of 15 projects visited) indicates that the maintenance capacity of hydro-agricultural infrastructure remains weak.

In **APR**, the main interventions aimed at addressing structural vulnerabilities focused on road infrastructure and improving transportation methods. Overall, the results have been mixed. There is evidence of significant improvement in Tonga, while the Solomon Islands, the Maldives, and Kiribati continue to face substantial challenges in overcoming structural vulnerabilities. In Tonga, the project constructed six wharves and one community road. These investments greatly enhanced transportation and market access, facilitating the landing and loading of goods and improving access to markets, schools, and other essential services. However, the situation was different in Kiribati, where the project showed little evidence of mitigating structural vulnerabilities. Issues such as poor road quality, limited jetties for boat access, and a lack of WASH facilities remained unaddressed, and structural barriers to market access posed significant challenges. In the Maldives, infrastructure obstacles—including inadequate logistics and restricted market access—continued to undermine the economic benefits of the projects. These challenges were particularly severe on remote islands, where high transportation costs and difficult-to-reach markets remain significant barriers. The Solomon Islands also faced substantial challenges. Although the program provided some transport assets, it did not comprehensively address market access barriers (see above).

In **ESA**, both in Comoros and Seychelles, projects consistently addressed structural vulnerabilities. Through the construction of Rainwater Harvesting Systems (RWHS), the project improved water availability for gardening and livestock, thus enhancing agricultural production. Additionally, the project facilitated rural markets through the promotion of moto-tricycles. In Seychelles, IFAD addressed structural vulnerabilities by funding irrigation access for a total area of 212 hectares and rehabilitating 1.9 kilometres of roads.

Efforts to address water scarcity and land sustainability challenges have also been central to IFAD's interventions in **LAC**. Small-scale irrigation systems in Grenada, Belize, and Cuba have supported increased agricultural productivity. In Grenada, the MAREP project successfully enhanced farm access by constructing concrete roads, which improved the transportation of agricultural products and supported value chain development. However, challenges remain in supporting value chains due to fragmented support systems and inadequate infrastructure. Similarly, in Belize, the construction of roads in Nago Bank and Valley of Peace under the RRB project had a significant improved market accessibility and connections. Also, the improved road network reduced travel time for children attending school, prompting the Government of Belize to introduce a free school bus service. In Haiti, the need for robust and appropriate infrastructure remains a pressing concern, underscoring the ongoing structural vulnerabilities that hinder agricultural growth and rural livelihoods.

Box A.17
Key factors influencing success and challenges in addressing structural vulnerabilities

Explanatory factors for the most significant results in addressing structural vulnerability include successful collaborations with global partners and a strategic project focus on rare resources. Co-financing with multilateral partners such as the IADB, CDB, and WB was instrumental in developing much-needed infrastructure (roads and small irrigation schemes) in various countries in LAC.

Conversely, delayed co-financing was the main reason why IFAD's support for irrigation in São Tomé and Príncipe fell far behind plan. A strategic development in the management of rare resources was identified in Cape Verde. In this country, the agricultural sector is constrained by limited land availability (only 12 per cent of total land is arable) and adverse climatic conditions. Cabo Verde is significantly exposed to water scarcity due to recurring droughts and irregular rainfall. IFAD has correctly reoriented the project's intervention strategy to facilitate access to arable land and scarce water for agricultural production. As a result, IFAD's project became the main government instrument for implementing agricultural policy in the country. Similarly, in Comoros, the PROFER project supported agricultural activities in areas where water is a critical limitation by constructing 28 irrigation water storage tanks (surpassing the original target of 20), thus improving water availability during dry periods.

Implementation challenges and delays affected negatively the rehabilitation and construction of infrastructure, leading to missed opportunities to enabling better resilience on these issues. A clear example is the previously mentioned cancellation of the construction of communication towers and road rehabilitation in Fiji. These also prevented the projects' contribution to enabling better market access. Indeed, as noted in the section on socio-economic vulnerability, remoteness and insularity were the primary reasons why sales often remained limited to local markets.

Chapter V: Inclusiveness

Box A.18
Key vulnerabilities faced by women in SIDS of the four regions, as highlighted in COSOPs/CSNs

In the **LAC** region, women are significantly affected by gender-based violence, which worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in countries like Grenada and Haiti. Despite educational advancements, women still experience economic disparities, earning less than men and facing barriers such as limited access to land, credit, and decision-making roles. Women in rural areas, especially in Haiti and Grenada, have low participation in higher-paying sectors due to financial and social barriers. High unemployment rates also persist, particularly in rural areas like Belize, Haiti, and Guyana, where women face challenges in securing stable employment, despite their educational qualifications. The adverse impacts of climate change disproportionately affect women, particularly those in agricultural and rural communities. Women in Belize, for instance, face undervaluation in farming roles, while in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, gender-related constraints hinder access to markets, transportation, and healthcare, particularly during disasters.

In the **APR** region, women also confront challenges related to gender inequality and violence. Countries like Kiribati and the Solomon Islands report high rates of physical or sexual violence, especially among young women. Economic disparities are also significant, with women dominating subsistence agriculture and informal sectors but struggling to access higher-paying, formal employment. In Samoa, women are often relegated to less economically rewarding roles, while in the Maldives, they engage in lower-value agricultural activities that offer minimal financial returns.

In the **ESA** region, women face significant barriers to economic participation. They struggle with limited access to land, credit, and modern agricultural technologies, hindering their ability to engage in economic activities. Cultural norms often restrict women's participation in decision-making roles, especially in rural areas, where men dominate leadership positions. Social exclusion and gender-based violence are also prevalent, and entrenched customs limit women's opportunities for empowerment. Youth unemployment remains a pressing issue, with young women encountering additional barriers to accessing jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities. The economic vulnerability of women in this region is heightened by external shocks, such as climate change and food price increases.

In the **WCA** region, women face gender inequality, particularly in terms of land ownership and inheritance rights. In Guinea-Bissau, for example, women are often denied land rights

under customary law despite constitutional guarantees of equality. Women are primarily employed in low-paying sectors like agriculture, where their economic returns are limited. In São Tomé and Príncipe, women are underrepresented in the agriculture and fishing sectors, which remain male-dominated. Health issues, such as malnutrition, particularly affect women, especially in rural areas, and food insecurity is prevalent in women-headed households. Domestic violence is widespread across WCA countries. High unemployment rates among women, particularly in rural areas, further contribute to poverty and lack of opportunities.

Box A.19

Key women vulnerability in SIDS of the four regions, as highlighted in project designs

Women across SIDS face significant challenges, primarily driven by gender inequality and limited access to resources. In the **LAC** region SIDS, many women experience discrimination in land ownership, financial access, and decision-making. For example, in Grenada, women face higher unemployment rates despite higher education levels, while in Haiti, gender-based violence is prevalent, compounded by socio-political instability and the COVID-19 crisis. The economic challenges are exacerbated by women's dual roles in household responsibilities and low-wage jobs, with limited access to formal employment or support systems. In rural areas, women play a crucial role in food security and agriculture but are often denied access to land and markets. In Belize, for instance, systemic barriers limit women's agricultural contributions. Educational opportunities are also restricted, with fewer women completing secondary education than men, particularly in Haiti, where only 26.9 per cent of women finish secondary school. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened these challenges, especially in terms of food insecurity and health, as women bear the brunt of caregiving duties in already fragile systems. These challenges underscore the need for targeted interventions to address women's economic, educational, and social empowerment.

Women in **APR** SIDS face similar challenges. Gender-based violence is widespread, with many women suffering physical or sexual abuse, often worsened by entrenched patriarchal norms and limited decision-making power. In Kiribati, nearly 70 per cent of young women report experiencing violence, while in the Solomon Islands, women's significant role in agriculture is hindered by unequal access to resources, including land, technical services, and support programs. Health issues, such as malnutrition and poor maternal health, also disproportionately affect women, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, the impact of climate change, especially in low-lying islands, further exacerbates these challenges, as women's livelihoods in subsistence farming and fishing are increasingly vulnerable to environmental degradation. The lack of economic opportunities and limited access to education further hampers women's empowerment. Youth unemployment is high, particularly for young women who face cultural barriers and a lack of vocational skills. Despite these obstacles, some nations have introduced policies to improve women's economic independence, education, decision-making, and efforts to combat violence against women.

In **ESA** SIDS, women encounter significant socio-economic challenges. In Comoros, women are excluded from decision-making, particularly in agriculture, and have limited access to resources like land, hindered by discriminatory cultural practices. High rates of malnutrition and anemia, particularly among women of reproductive age, further exacerbate health challenges. In Seychelles, while progress has been made in gender equality, women still face barriers to economic participation, especially in rural areas. Youth unemployment affects both men and women, but young women are disproportionately impacted. Addressing these issues requires stronger access to resources, decision-making, and economic opportunities for women.

In **WCA** SIDS, women are particularly vulnerable in rural and agricultural sectors. They are often engaged in low-paying, subsistence activities with limited access to land and financial resources. Gender inequality persists, with women facing limited decision-making power and barriers to leadership roles. Health issues like malnutrition and anemia are common, particularly in women-headed households. Additionally, women, especially young women, face high unemployment rates due to a lack of vocational training and employment opportunities. These challenges emphasize the need for gender-sensitive policies that focus on economic empowerment, health, and access to education and employment for women.

Box 19b

Example of challenges in implementing gender strategies.

Despite the development of strategies, some projects faced challenges in fully implementing them. In the Maldives, the Mariculture Enterprise Development Project developed a gender action plan but struggled with implementation, hindering the promotion of women's leadership. Implementation delays in the Cuba PREFER project, limited the potential of gender-focused initiatives. In São Tomé and Príncipe, PAPAC targeted specific groups but failed to address the social structures limiting women's empowerment. The POSER project in Cabo Verde lacked a clear operational plan for the gender strategy. This gap in effective implementation underscores the need for comprehensive action plans that ensure gender strategies are not only formulated but also actionable.

Box A.20

Examples of projects' actions that contributed to women economic resilience

In **LAC**, projects also aimed to empower women by challenging traditional gender roles and fostering leadership. In Belize, women had limited involvement in decision-making within agricultural cooperatives, resulting in minimal changes to household or cooperative decision-making. Similarly, in Grenada, the MAREP and SAEP projects faced challenges in transforming gender roles, as women's leadership opportunities remained scarce despite grants and training. In Haiti, PPI-3 worked to increase women's leadership in producer organizations, but outcomes were limited, and no significant shifts in power dynamics occurred. Cuba provided a more positive example, with women playing a prominent role in cooperatives, particularly in beekeeping and home gardening. However, structural inequalities continued to limit women's access to higher-level leadership roles.

In the **APR** In Kiribati, women's production of Virgin Coconut Oil provided a steady income, helping households cope with economic stress. The Maldives' MAP project introduced greenhouse initiatives and climate-smart practices, improving food security and creating new income opportunities. FAPP in Fiji also supported adaptive capacity by training women in drought-resistant crop cultivation, ensuring continued food production and income generation.

In the **ESA** region, projects such as PREFER in Comoros and CLISSA in Seychelles helped enhance resilience by introducing climate-smart techniques, promoting leadership roles within cooperatives, and expanding income-generating activities like poultry farming. However, further support in livestock production is needed to fully empower women in both regions.

In the **WCA** region, the effectiveness of IFAD-funded projects in building women's resilience is mixed. While projects like COMPRAN in São Tomé and Príncipe and PAPAC in Burkina Faso provided opportunities for women to engage in sustainable farming and leadership training, poor implementation and limited resources hindered long-term success. Despite these challenges, some progress was made in reducing women's workload and improving access to resources like land and finance.

Box A21

Challenges with gender-related metrics and to recruiting women staff

Many projects did not report data that clearly differentiated outcomes by gender. As a result, it remains unclear whether positive results were equitably distributed between men and women and obscures the understanding of the impact of these projects on women's empowerment. For example, a field mission in Belize to assess the RRB project found that women's participation often stemmed from project requirements, rather than from a genuine increase in women's decision-making power at the household or cooperative level. This was further exacerbated by a lack of effective indicators to measure women's access to finance and resources, leadership skills, and their contributions to household and organizational decision-making.

Additionally, inappropriate metrics have been used in certain contexts, such as in São Tomé and Príncipe, where indicators measuring women's control over household income were not suitable. In this region, 40 per cent of households are single-parent families headed by women, making household income control an ineffective measure of empowerment. This highlights the importance of contextualizing metrics to better capture the true extent of empowerment.

Projects struggled with recruiting women in the PMUs, as for instance in LAC (Belize and Grenada) and WCA (São Tomé and Príncipe and Cape Verde). Even in cases where women were appointed to leadership positions, there was little evidence that their presence led to genuine changes in organizational dynamics. The Kiribati case study, for instance, found that women in leadership roles were often appointed solely to fulfil project requirements and did not engage in actual leadership activities. This challenge was similarly observed in the PPI-3 in Haiti and FAPP in Fiji projects.

Box A22

Specific challenges faced youth in each region

Youth in the **LAC** region face numerous challenges that impact their well-being and future opportunities, especially in employment, education, and social inclusion. High unemployment and underemployment are common in countries like Belize, Guyana, and Grenada, where many young people struggle to transition from education to employment. In Belize, young men face particularly high unemployment rates, while in Guyana, youth often lack the skills required for available jobs. The challenges extend to youth entrepreneurship, where limited financial resources hinder opportunities. In Grenada, youth unemployment exceeds that of adults, exacerbated by a mismatch of skills in the labor market. Haiti experiences similar difficulties, particularly in rural areas, with young women facing greater challenges. Cuba's youth, despite having access to education, struggle to find economic opportunities that match their skills, especially in rural areas.

Education access is a challenge, particularly for youth from rural or indigenous backgrounds in Belize, Haiti, and Cuba. Social issues like gang involvement, teenage pregnancy, and substance abuse also disproportionately affect youth in the region. Gender inequality remains prevalent, with young women in Grenada and Haiti experiencing higher unemployment rates and limited access to education and economic opportunities.

In the **APR** region, youth face similar challenges, particularly with high unemployment and underemployment. In countries like the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga, youth struggle with job prospects, particularly in rural areas where many rely on subsistence farming. In Tonga, nearly 40 per cent of unemployment is among youth, and a lack of vocational training leaves school leavers unprepared for the job market. Gender disparities affect youth, particularly in Kiribati, where women and youth face compounded challenges due to gender-based violence and financial dependence. Migration from rural to urban areas is rising, especially in Tonga, as youth seek better opportunities. Climate change also exacerbates vulnerability, particularly for youth in rural communities reliant on agriculture, as climate-related disasters disrupt livelihoods and limit job prospects.

In the **ESA** region, countries like Comoros and Seychelles face significant youth employment challenges. In Comoros, youth unemployment exceeds 51 per cent, compounded by political instability, weak institutions, and limited economic opportunities. Agriculture, a key sector, faces low productivity, leaving many young people, especially in rural areas, without employment opportunities. Seychelles has a relatively strong economy but struggles with a 20 per cent youth unemployment rate. Despite its high-income status, the country is vulnerable to external shocks, such as food price hikes and economic downturns. Both countries are focusing on improving youth entrepreneurship, particularly in agriculture and small businesses, to create sustainable livelihoods and boost rural development.

In the **WCA** region, youth face significant challenges due to socioeconomic factors and limited opportunities. High unemployment rates affect youth, particularly in Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe, where youth unemployment is high, and many educated young people face difficulty finding work. Mismatches between education and labor market needs are prevalent, especially in rural areas. Economic hardship and limited prospects push many young people to emigrate, especially in Cape Verde, where gender disparities also affect young women, who face additional barriers like discrimination and restricted access to resources.

Chapter VI: Efficiency

Table A.14
Average costs of SIS missions and costs of project design, in US$

Regions	Total of SIS Missions	Costs for designing the projects, in US$	total costs supervision missions, in US$	Average cost / mission, in US$
Average SIDS, APR	8	204.290	235354	29 419.3
Average Non-SIDS, APR	6	143692	167155	27 859.2
Average SIDS, LAC	7	137 501	193 592	27 656.0
Average Non-SIDS, LAC	9	97 058	186 479	20 719.9
Average SIDS, ESA	8	139720	276 571	34 571.4
Average Non-SIDS, ESA	7	159803	212 745	30 392.1
Average SIDS, WCA	6	106682	215 640	35 940.0
Average Non-SIDS, WCA	6	145534	166 956	27 826.0
Average SIDS all regions	7	150 216	217 742	31 106.0

Source: Operational Business Intelligence databases. From 2013 to 2021. Number of SIS missions also includes remote mission

Box. A.22
Key lessons from other partners in relation to the delivery in SIDS

Capacity building activities, such as training and workshops as well as community engagement activities are recognized as the most economically efficient. Capacity building activities for climate change adaptation and agricultural practices are reported to be cost efficient due to the use of low-cost technologies for information sharing and learning platforms, virtual meetings (and blended courses) and building from existing expertise and knowledge of local stakeholders to develop training content. Similarly, engagement of community representatives and local stakeholders, was also reported as cost efficient, as logistical costs for local meetings are low while also effective to enable wider participation of targeted population, including local government representatives and other stakeholders (UNDP, 2014, 2019; WB, 2016).

Like IFAD, several international organizations highlight delays in project start up, prompted by late disbursement of funds, slow counterpart funding allocation and delays in design studies. For several organizations, disbursement of funds to implementing partners affected project startup, and for others government counterpart mobilization and limitations to recruit qualified project staff resulted in delays of more than 6 months from date initially stipulated and limit (UNDP, 2013; AfDB, 2023; CDB, 2022). For others, delays in design studies also let to poor project performance (ECLAC, 2022). Some organizations highlight that these challenges relate to inadequate mitigation plans and identification of operational risks during design phases, particularly for countries under fragile and conflict status (CDB, 2022). Slow disbursement procedures coupled with burdensome compliance procedures also paid a role in poor efficiency results (CDB, 2023; GCF, 2020).

Availability of technical experts, small size of project management teams and turnover or project staff affected project performance. In the case of climate change related interventions, organizations highlight project activities were constrained by limited availability of specialists and scientists to carry out the studies stipulated in interventions (UNDP, 2013; ECLAC, 2018). For others, sourcing technical experts outside of the country represented an efficient approach for project activities, stressing that building from local expertise would have better contribute to an efficient use of resource and overall sustainability (UNEP, 2019). Meanwhile, other organizations associate issues of performance with small size of programme management units and available human resources, considering the overall requirements and scope of the interventions (UNDP, 2013; UNESCO, 2019). Turnover of project staff also affect implementation of activities, leading in some cases to delays of interventions of up to 3 years (UNEP, 2019). Meanwhile, for other organizations, adequate partnerships, and selection of adequate project staff, including those with technical leadership and experience in the region contributed to efficiency of project performance (FAO, 2024; ECLAC, 2022, UNDP, 2014).

External factors such as countries' political context as well as COVID-19 pandemic affected projects' efficiency. Interventions implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced delays in implementation, leading to extension of project duration and difficulties in project supervision of activities, affecting the performance and expected results of some interventions and in some cases disbursement (AfDB, 2023; CDB, 2022, 2023). Change of government and political priorities also affected start up of projects, continuation of activities and disbursement of funds (UNDP, 2019; CDB, 2019). Additionally, some organizations highlight the relevance of considering accurate costs per beneficiary as well as supervision mission costs in SIDS countries, as costs revisions during implementation also affected project performance, management of funds and leading to project extensions (GCF, 2020; UNDP, 2014; ADB, 2022).

E-Survey report: key points

Introduction

The evaluation team conducted an electronic survey of relevant IFAD staff, government officials, members of the project management unit of an IFAD-funded project, and implementing partners of an IFAD-funded project or other external parties working in small island developing states (SIDS) to obtain feedback on various aspects of IFAD's work with SIDS, including the views of different stakeholders on the effectiveness of IFAD's policies and programs in addressing SIDS priorities. The survey used computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI) in English, Spanish, and French, and lasted from October 21 to December 9, 2024.

The survey began with general information about the respondent, followed by specific questions tailored to each of the four groups based on their affiliation. Out of 524 potential respondents, 156 participated and answered the initial questions, but only 129 eligible respondents provided complete and valid responses, resulting in a 25 per cent response rate. Due to the small number of observations per respondent group evaluated, only descriptive statistical analysis was performed. In most cases, the results are indicative rather than representative of the groups discussed.

General characteristics of the survey participants

More men (58 per cent) than women (40 per cent) participated in the survey, with the rest preferring not to disclose their gender. LAC (42 per cent) dominated the regional distribution of respondents, with other regions—WCA (21 per cent), APR (21 per cent), and ESA (16 per cent)—contributing comparable shares of survey participants.

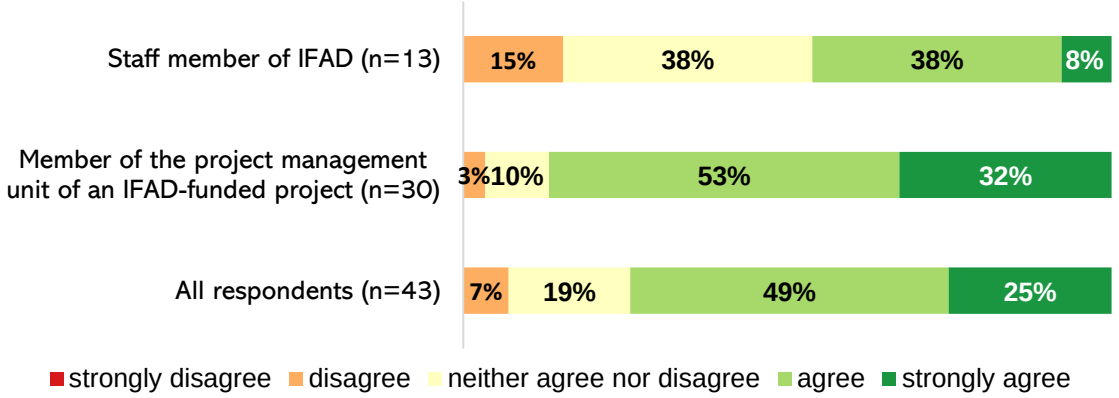
In terms of experience in working or collaborating with IFAD, participants varied, ranging from a quarter (29 per cent) with less than two years of experience to 35 per cent with six or more years of experience. In terms of familiarity with IFAD's activities and operations, almost half (47 per cent) said they were familiar or very familiar with them. This figure was highest among IFAD staff (92 per cent) and lowest among government officials (32 per cent).

Key results: comparison of responses by type of respondent affiliation

While each target group of respondents answered the survey questions separately, several statements with similar wording were repeated across target groups asking about the same issues. These statements are summarized and compared in this section of the report. It is important to note that only statements with exactly the same wording are compared here.

Chart 1

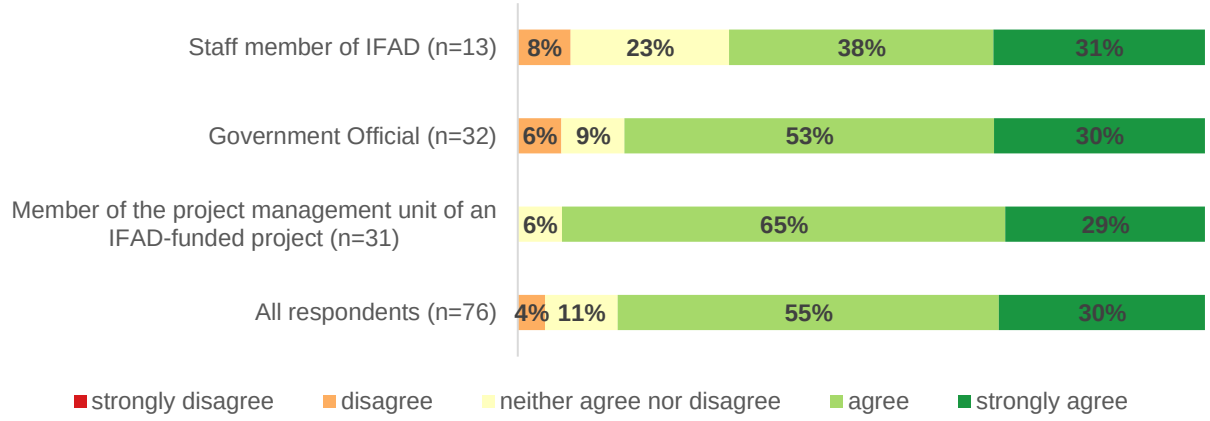
"IFAD operations have produced knowledge that were utilized for improving interventions or decision making in mitigating SIDS vulnerability". – Agreement on the statement by respondent groups



Source: SIDS survey

While there is general consensus that IFAD operations have produced knowledge used for improving interventions or decision-making in mitigating SIDS vulnerability, this view is relatively more common among PMU members (53 per cent agree and 32 per cent strongly agree) compared to IFAD staff members (38 per cent agree and 8 per cent strongly agree).

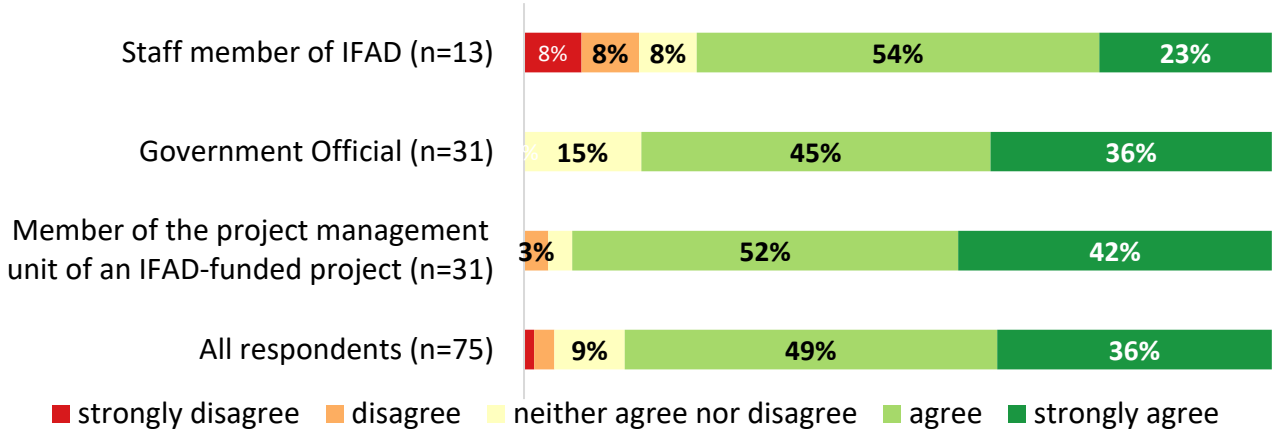
Chart 2
"IFAD operations were complementary to those supported by other partners in the country or region, in addressing SIDS vulnerabilities." – Agreement on the statement by respondent groups



Source: SIDS survey

The statement - *"IFAD operations were complementary to those supported by other partners in the country or region, in addressing SIDS vulnerabilities."* – was positively evaluated by everyone asked, including IFAD and PMU staff, as well as government representatives. However, the level of agreement was relatively high among PMU staff who reported 65 per cent of agreement and 29 per cent of strong agreement.

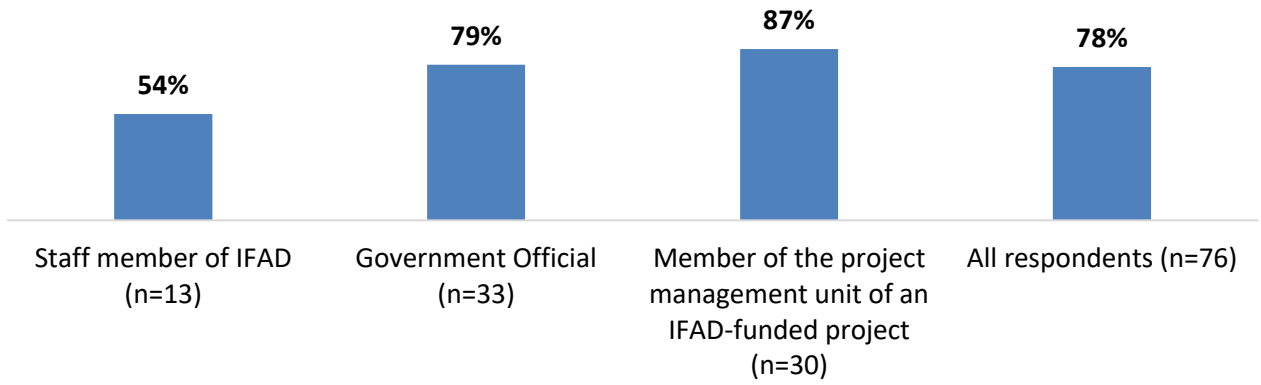
Chart 3
"IFAD grant-funded activities were relevant to complement loan-supported projects in addressing SIDS vulnerabilities". – Agreement on the statement by respondent groups



Source: SIDS survey

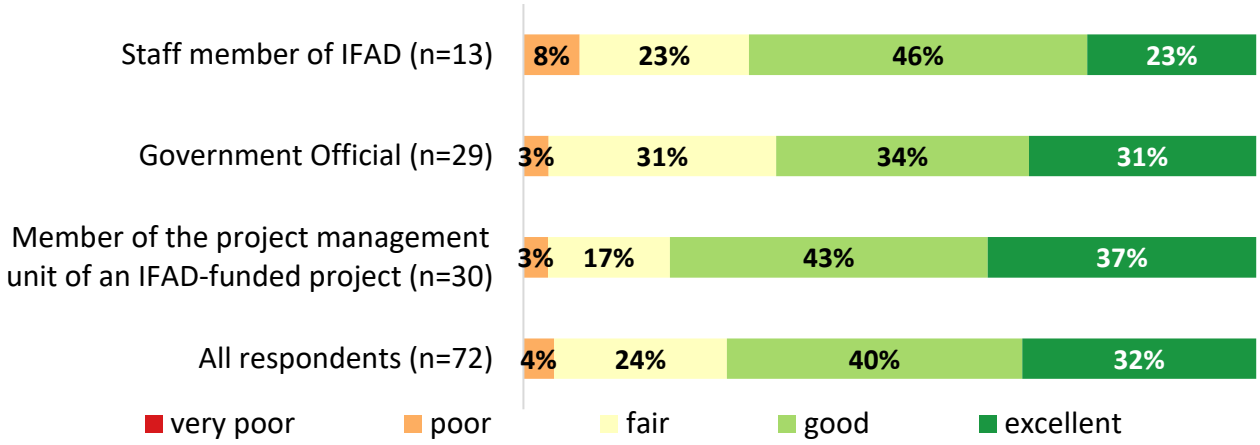
The next statement evaluated by three groups of the survey audience related to the relevance of IFAD grant-funded activities in complementing loan-supported projects to address SIDS vulnerabilities. PMU staff were the most positive, with 52 per cent agreeing and 42 per cent strongly agreeing with this statement. While government officials had a similar stance, IFAD staff were more critical, reporting the highest figures for disagreement (16 per cent) and the lowest for agreement (54 per cent agree and 23 per cent strongly agree) among the groups.

Chart 4
"Have project benefits and overall results from IFAD interventions been equitably distributed among all different targeted beneficiaries?" – "Yes" answers by respondent groups



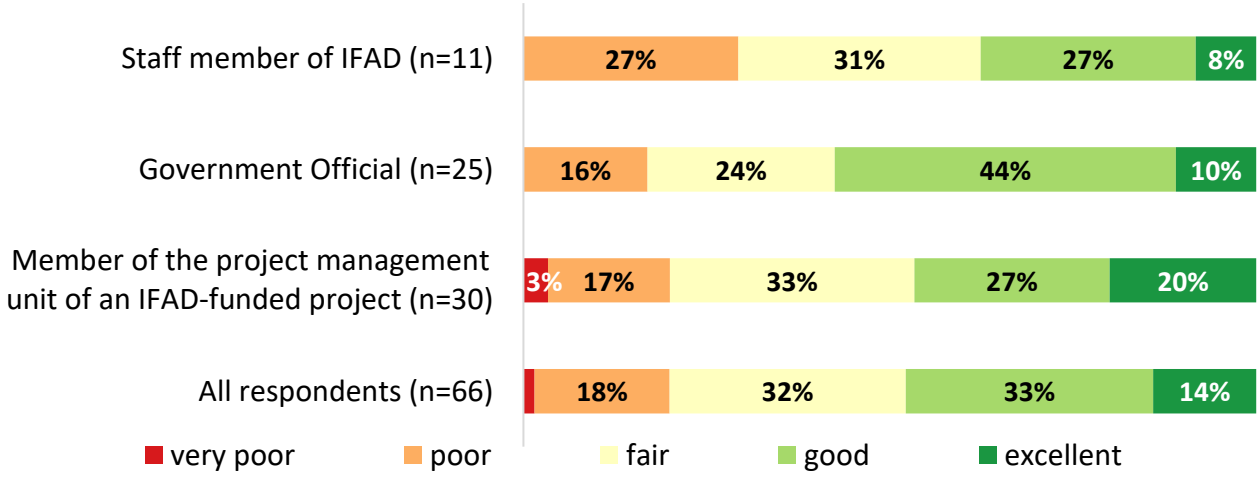
Source: SIDS survey

Chart 4
"The extent to which IFAD has ensured increased participation of youth in IFAD projects in SIDS." – Assessment of the statement by respondent groups



Source: SIDS survey

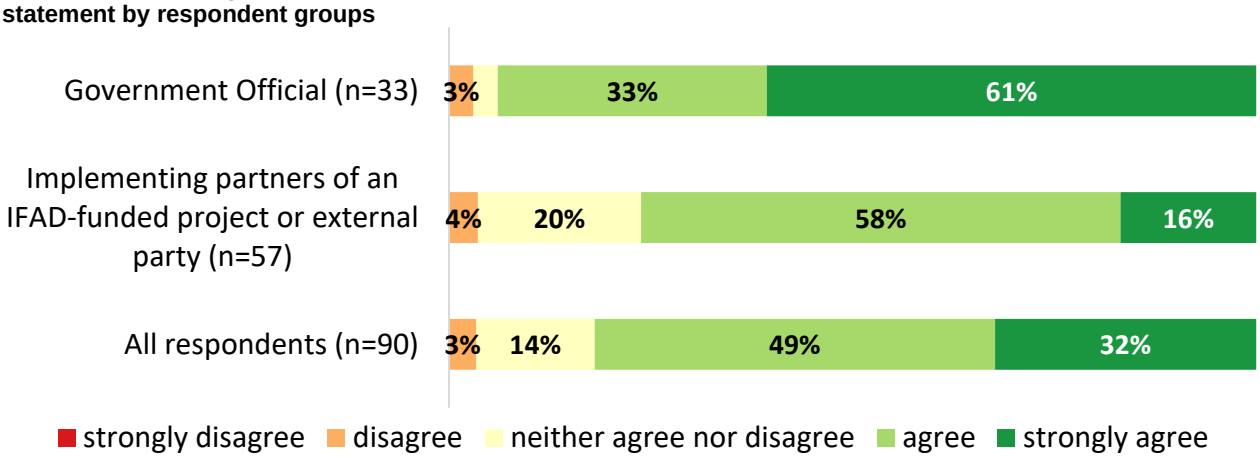
Chart 5
"The extent to which IFAD has ensured increased participation of people with disabilities (PWDs) in IFAD projects in SIDS." – Assessment of the statement by respondent groups



Source: SIDS survey

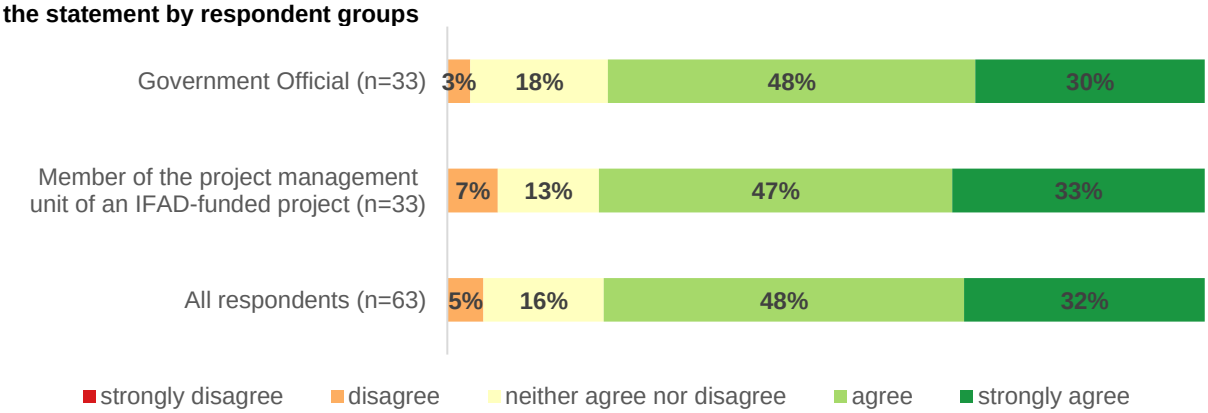
However, when it comes to increased participation rates of people with disabilities, opinions were more moderate, with positive evaluations (good and/or excellent) fluctuating around the 50 per cent threshold for most of the respondent groups, besides the IFAD staff (Chart). The highest portions of those believing that PWD participation has increased in IFAD projects in SIDS were among government officials (44 per cent reporting good and 10 per cent excellent). Meanwhile, the same figures for IFAD staff were around one-third (27 per cent reported good and 8 per cent excellent).

Chart 6
"Partnerships with governments enhance the effectiveness of IFAD's work in SIDS." – Agreement on the statement by respondent groups



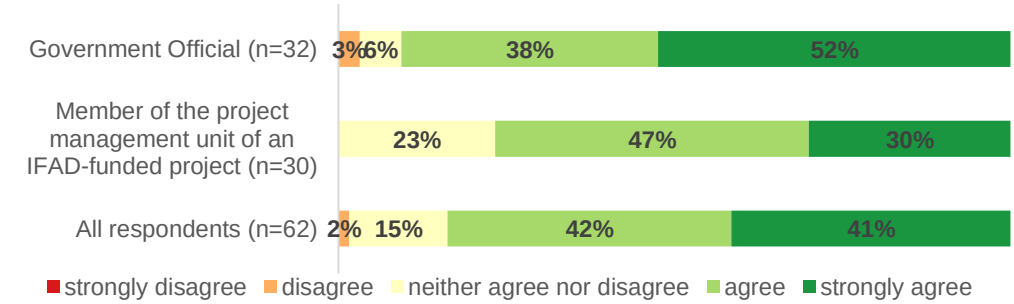
Source: SIDS survey

Chart 7
"IFAD operations were relevant in improving social equality and inclusiveness in SIDS." – Agreement on the statement by respondent groups



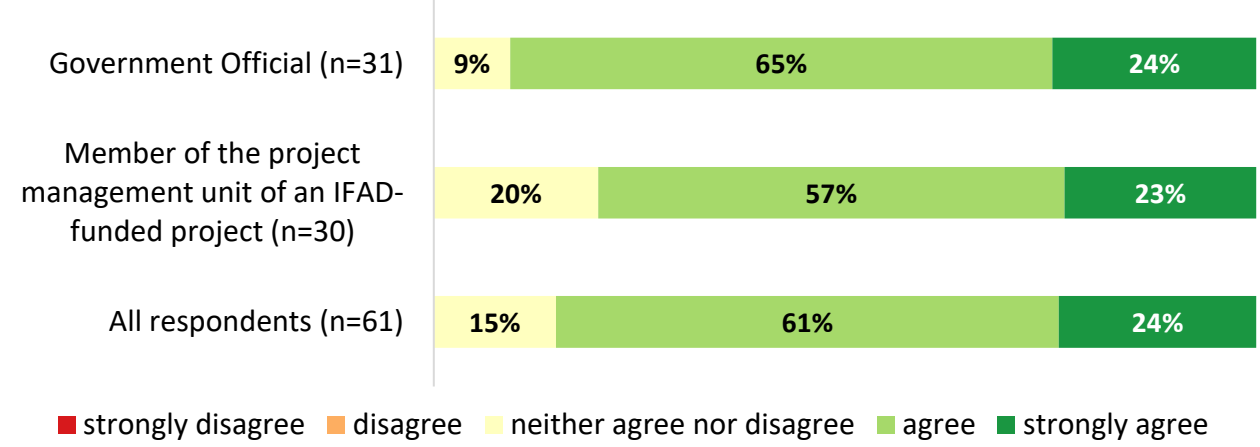
Source: SIDS survey

Chart 8
"IFAD operations in SIDS contributed to the sustainable increase of agricultural productivity in SIDS." – Agreement on the statement by respondent groups



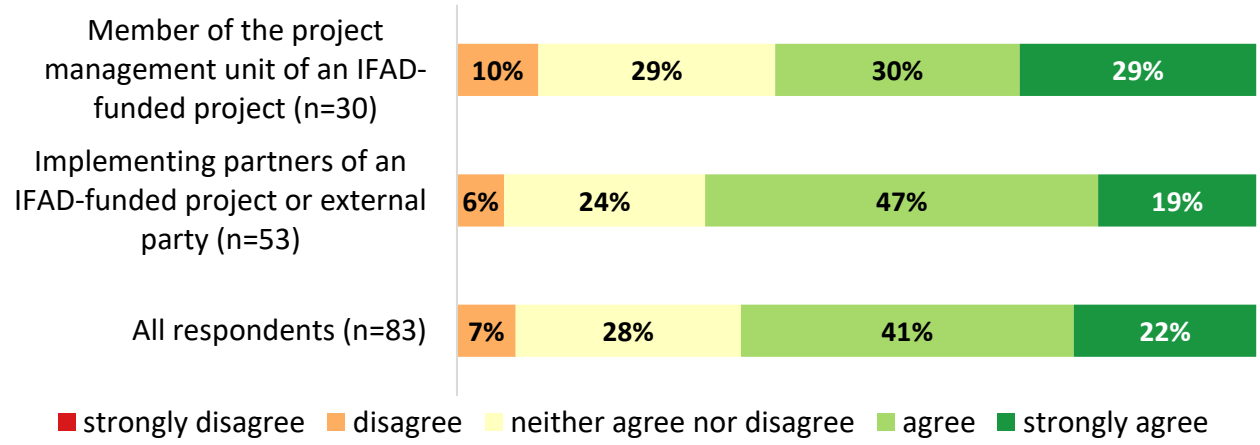
Source: SIDS survey

Chart 9
"IFAD operations were relevant for the sustainable management of natural resources and climate change adaptation in SIDS." – Agreement on the statement by respondent groups



Source: SIDS survey

Chart 10
"Co-financing arrangements with other financiers amplify the success of projects within SIDS." – Agreement on the statement by respondent groups



Source: SIDS survey

Compilation of projects' logical framework data

Introduction: data and methodology

1. **Data analysed**. The analysis was conducted using all logical frameworks available for IFAD's portfolio under consideration for the SIDS evaluation. Regions considered are Asia and Pacific (APR), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), West and Central Africa (WCA) and East and Southern Africa (ESA). The analysis considered a total of 10 closed projects, 17 ongoing projects and 3 newly designed, for all four regions.

2. **Methodology**. An aggregation exercise was conducted for each region, summarizing similar indicators to create a new one that includes all related, considering units of analysis, data availability and expected results (output or outcome). Indicators per region consider available output and outcome data and excludes indicators or data that may lead to potential duplication of results.

3. As part of the exercise, dichotomic indicators were also added, guided by the evaluation's desk review and the overall evaluation areas of analysis. These new indicators count the number of projects within regions that consider key elements for SIDS interventions. Example of these indicators are: *"Promotion of communities' practices that foster improved food production and consumption practices (number of projects) (outreach)"* and *"Practices promoted for coastal resources management among communities, beneficiaries, other stakeholders (number of projects) (outreach)"*. Indicators presented are organized following the evaluation TOC expected outputs and are labelled by outreach and outcome (*understood as the most immediate measurable change withing the analysed TOC output*). A guidance for each region was drafted to conduct the exercise.

Main findings, by regions and theme

Asia and the Pacific Region

4. **Overall quality of data.** For APR, data discrepancies were apparent, with missing information on fisheries and underreporting in areas like agricultural technology adoption, road infrastructure development, and financial access. Lack of attention to some themes, such as fisheries and income diversification was also noticeable.

5. **Nutrition.** Across the APR region, four projects were implemented with nutrition-related objectives. Out of these the Kiribati OIFWP presents detailed and measurable indicators on nutrition, including the Women reporting minimum dietary diversity (MDDW) and people attending nutrition education courses indicators. However, other projects, such as the MEDEP and MAP project in the Maldives reported only a few to almost no measurable indicators related to nutrition. Overall, indicators mostly focused on household nutritional practices, promote nutrition improvement initiatives, and build capacity on nutrition issues.

6. **Fishery.** No available data for analysis. None of the projects analysed for APR included fisheries related indicators.

7. **Agricultural productivity and production:** Most projects focused on output and outreach indicators, delivery of inputs, training and access to infrastructure and technologies. For several ongoing projects, there was limited data on the achievements to date. Despite these challenges, some projects included some relevant indicator central to SIDS key issues, including community development plans, farmers engagement in agribusiness partnerships and rainwater harvesting systems. The projects also included indicators related to training and technical assistance to staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, town and district officers, and Community Facilitators.

8. **Income:** Similar to the agricultural productivity theme, indicators were mostly focused on output level, including training in income generating activities and access to financial services.

9. **VDC & Market:** Indicators mostly focused on data related to constructing or rehabilitating marketing, processing, and storage facilities. Some projects, such as The MAP project in Maldives, included other relevant indicators such as market linkages for smallholder producers through supply contracts or contract farming. However, other relevant indicators related to access to markets, quality of enterprise activities promoted, demonstration plots and others were not considered.

10. **Climate.** The region shows limited information and key indicators on climate related activities. Some of the indicators considered included access to climate information services and land brought under climate resilience practices, without any particular measurement of the type of practices introduced, methods, and others. In addition, the projects do not present any other relevant potential indicators related to project's contributions to community resilience activities, investments for CC and adaptation and promotion of climate-based mechanisms.

11. **NRM:** Projects included indicators focused on community-based initiatives and mechanisms for sustainable natural resource management. Indicators presented focused on persons engagement in natural resource management (NRM) and climate risk management activities as well as management of NRM investments, such as water infrastructure. The region also included indicators to measure its effect at the community level, such as number of community development plans, community nurseries and, community initiatives for sustainable family farming.

Latin America and the Caribbean Region

12. **Overall quality of data.** There were 10 projects included in the LAC region, and several reporting gaps were identified across different themes, including reports on planned activities only and limited information on progress to date. A substantial portion of the data also lacks disaggregated data by including men, women, youth, and indigenous people. Only a few projects specifically focused on indigenous peoples. Although there is no clear evidence of data duplication, some indicators overlap in scope, particularly in areas like training and support for rural enterprises and by unit of measurement, counting groups of people and members within the same indicator results.

13. **Nutrition:** A limited number of indicators were observed in the nutrition theme across the LAC region. The planned outcomes broadly targeted household nutritional practices, focusing on reducing malnutrition and enhancing dietary diversity among women and indigenous people. Out of the 13 observed projects, only 3 projects, two in Haiti and one in Grenada considered nutrition related indicators.

14. **Fisheries:** Indicators related to fisheries were included only in the three Grenada projects, measuring only on training on fisheries. No other key indicators were included.

15. **Agricultural productivity and production:** Indicators included were extensive and, in most projects, provided detailed of the inputs and the expected outcomes. Most indicators focused on strengthening producer organizations by increasing their overall size, supporting key organizations, providing leadership training, and enhancing the strategic alliances and social capital of CBOs, Producers Groups, and Associations/Cooperatives. Projects also measured investments in production equipment primarily, investment in rural infrastructure, focusing on agricultural land with built or rehabilitated water-related infrastructure, supporting groups managing productive infrastructure, expanding irrigated hectares, and rehabilitating dams.

16. A few projects also included other relevant indicators, such as training provided in production and post-harvest practices crop technologies, participation on filed schools, livestock management, and increase of income from modernized farms.

17. In terms of community capacities, projects also considered indicators to measure its efforts in strengthening the capacity of non-public stakeholders, particularly cooperatives and civil society organizations (CSOs), through targeted training and community development plans.

18. **Income:** Projects included indicators related to creation of economic opportunities and enhancing access to income-generating activities. Several indicators focused on training, creation of enterprises in agro-processing and tourism services, develop and finance business plans and overall support to small businesses and micro-enterprises. Projects also included indicators to measure projects effects on youth, such as access to grant and other initiatives and overall availability of data of youth participation.

19. **VDC& Market:** indicators under this theme focused on improved access to markets, construct or rehabilitate marketing, processing, and storage facilities linked to value chains as well as financing for agro-processing and crafts production business plans Despite this, some key indicators were included by a few projects such as the measurement of quality standards applied by producers (Haiti PPI) and the promotion of other value chain activities (Haiti PURRACO). Nonetheless, the number of indicators presented under this theme were scarce.

20. **Climate:** Projects under this theme presented indicators related to training in climate resilience practices, investments that foster resilience and, land managed for resilience and climate change. While some projects did not include specific indicators related to community-based mechanisms for climate resilience, others included key indicators such as Agricultural projects targeting CC adaptation or mitigation (Haiti PITAG) and business plans with technical assistance for climate smart interventions (Guyana Hinterland).

21. **NRM:** Project indicators focused mostly on strengthen community-based initiatives and mechanisms for sustainable natural resource management. Most indicators are presented on Haiti and Cuba projects.

West and Central Africa (WCA)

22. **Overall quality of data:** There were four projects in the WCA region, with several reporting gaps identified, especially in comparing planned targets to achieved outcomes for completed projects. In some cases, only planned data was provided, with no updates on actual results to date. The most commonly used units of measurement were percentages, hectares (for land rehabilitation), kilometres (for road development), and the number of individuals or households (for capacity-building and job creation).

23. **Nutrition:** A limited number of indicators were observed in the nutrition theme across the WCA region, with only two projects (Cabo Verde-POSER and São Tomé and Principe-COMPRAN) reporting nutrition-related objectives. Indicators presented sought to measure contributions to improving household nutritional practices and enhancing dietary diversity among women. Despite having some years of implementation, some indicators not present data or results to date.

24. **Fisheries:** There is no data on fisheries.

25. **Agricultural productivity and production:** Project indicators focused on measuring support provided to smallholder farmers, formation of farmer groups, investments in rural infrastructure, focusing on agricultural land with built or rehabilitated water-related infrastructure and transformer installations built or refurbished. Other indicators also focused on outreach data of training of farmers in production practices and/or technologies, including crop, plant, and animal

production and including key outcome indicators such as adoption of recommended techniques by trained producers (São Tomé and Principe-PAPAC) and Promotion of sustainable livestock animal production practices for diversification (Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Principe projects). Nonetheless, projects did not consider indicators related to postharvest management, farmer field schools and access to rainwater storage.

26. **Income:** Projects presented limited number of indicators related to income, with information focused on training on income income-generating activities or business management and entrepreneurship. Only one project (Cabo Verde-POSER) included indicators related to job creation, with data disaggregated by gender and youth.

27. **VDC& Market:** Indicators presented focused on measuring farmer's access to markets, processing, and storage facilities, as well as construct or rehabilitate marketing and storage facilities. Only one project (São Tomé and Principe-PAPAC) measured outreach data of training of farmers in post-production, processing, and marketing. Indicators related to outcome data, such as number of enterprises linked to value chains, applying required quality standards, farmers engagement in partnerships were not included.

28. **Climate:** Similar to income and nutrition themes, projects included a limited number of indicators on the topic of climate change adaptation and resilience. Most data retrieved from one out of the five projects (Cabo Verde-POSER), which presents both outreach and outcome indicators such as areas cultivated using climate resiliente methods and households strengthening their resilience. POSER is also the only project in all regions that includes indicators to measure its support to national and international climate related dialogues.

29. **NRM:** Indicators under NRM focused on measuring outreach results on community-based initiatives and mechanisms for sustainable natural resource management and engagement of farmers in natural resource and climate risk management activities. Other relevant indicators presented by one project (Guinea-Bissau- PADES) include develop and rehabilitate mangroves and lowlands and number of ha of riverbanks and catchment areas protected.

East and Southern Africa (ESA)

30. **Overall quality of data:** The two projects analyzed in the region presented limited indicators for both outreach and outcome measurement for all themes. Most of the available data comes from one project (Seychelles-CLISSA) and themes such as fisheries, Climate and NRM present little to no indicators or data.

31. **Nutrition:** The projects included outreach indicators related to support to improve nutrition and outcome indicators of minimal dietary diversity among women. No additional indicators were included.

32. **Fisheries:** There is no data on Fisheries.

33. **Agricultural productivity and production:** Indicators focus on adoption of new or improved inputs, technologies, or practices among producers, investments in rural infrastructure such as Agricultural land with built/rehabilitated water infrastructure, building and restoring dams, and developing irrigation schemes to support sustainable farming practices. Other outreach indicators, mostly reported in one project in (Seychelles-CLISSA) focused on training in crop production, fishery, breeding, and other related fields. Other key indicators for outcome such as establishment of partnerships, introduction of new resilient crop varieties, field schools, greenhouses, development of community plans and others were not considered.

34. **Income:** One project (Seychelles-CLISSA) incorporated outreach indicator related to training in income-generating activities or business management and access to

financial services. Other key indicators related to job creation or income from non-agricultural activities were not included in log frames.

35. **VDC& Market:** Only one project (Seychelles-CLISSA) presented a few indicators related to value chain and markets, focusing on measuring access to markets and construction of storage facilities. No other relevant indicators were included.

36. **Climate:** Both projects present almost no indicators related to climate. Only one of the two projects (Comoros PREFER) has included outcome indicators related to climate: land under climate resilient practices and Areas cultivated using climate-resilient methods. No other climate related indicators are presented in project's log frames.

37. **NRM:** Similar to climate theme indicators, for NRM, only one project (Comoros PREFER) included a couple of indicators to measure its effect in terms of climate change: Local groups involved in natural resource and climate risk management activities and restore ecosystem services on protected steep slopes/padzas. There are no other NRM related indicators, both for outreach and outcome, present in project's log frames.

Aggregated indicators: all regions

	Selected TOC outputs	Aggregated output indicators	Planned	Achieved	# youths reach.	# male reached	# female reached	# indig. Pop.
		Persons provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition (outreach)	5294	21352		9816	9971	1453
		Households engaged in agricultural diversification activities (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
		Households receiving targeted support to improve their nutrition (outreach)	8480	8403	876	959	1917	0
	Promoted nutrition improvement initiatives (e.g. backyard garden, school feeding programmes, business for food production, etc.	Households reporting increased production of local foods (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
		Women reporting minimum dietary diversity (number of projects) (outcome)	3	1				
		Improved child health and nutritional status (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
Nutrition		Women increasing cash income from home grown foods (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
		Promotion of communities' practices that foster improved food production and consumption practices (number of projects) (outreach)	0	0				
	Feeding programmes promoted (e.g. with schools)	Promotion of smallholder farmers crop sales for school feeding programmes or related social protection initiatives (number of projects) (outreach)	0	0				
	Capacity building on nutrition issues	People attending nutrition education trainings and cooking classes delivered by the project (number of projects (outreach)	1	1				
	Nutritionally diets introduced	People reporting consumption of other food groups (number of projects) (outcome)	0	0				
		People attending awareness campaigns on nutritional diets (number of projects) (outreach)	0	0				

	Selected TOC outputs	Aggregated output indicators	Planned	Achieved	# youths reach.	# male reached	# female reached	# indig. Pop.
Fishery	Targeted beneficiaries adopted new technologies and practices for sustainable fisheries.	Total persons trained in fishery (outreach)	250	357	84	210	65	140
		Sustainable practices/technologies of marine/fisheries production introduced (number of projects) (outcome)	0	0				
	Enhanced institutional capacities to regulate and manage fishery sub-sector	Practices promoted for coastal resources management among communities, beneficiaries, other stakeholders (number of projects) (outreach)	0	0				
Agricultural productivity and production	Increased access to inputs and technologies by smallholders	Farmers receiving high quality farm inputs (such as seeds and others) and technologies (outreach)	75058	61780	1984	33408	26203	0
		Households reporting adoption of new or improved inputs, technologies, or practices (number of projects) (outcome)	5	0				
		New and resilient crop varieties introduced among farmers (number of projects) (outreach)	0	0				
		Communities reporting adoption of new or improved inputs, technologies, or practices (outcome)	0	0				
		Agriculture crop farms modernized, and production and farmer's income increased (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
		Ploughing of farmland using mechanised traction, in hectares (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
		Promotion of sustainable livestock animal production practices for diversification (number of projects) (outreach)	4	4				
		Promotion of sustainable crop practices that increase productivity/income of farmers (number of projects) (outreach)	0	0				
		Promotion of non-agricultural activities among farmers/communities (number of projects) (outreach)	0	0				
	Strengthened producers' organisations for the	Rural producers' organizations supported and formed/strengthened (outreach)	1326	936	2698	18252	5912	0

Selected TOC outputs	Aggregated output indicators	Planned	Achieved	# youths reach.	# male reached	# female reached	# indig. Pop.
provision of services to members							
	People in groups managing productive infrastructure (outreach)	4500	4123	0	1242	2881	0
Investments in rural infrastructure including small irrigation, water-harvesting infrastructure, storage facilities	People with improved quality of, and/or access to rural infrastructure and services (including from disaster recovery) (outcome)	155000	152574	0	77040	75534	0
	Households with access to rainwater storage facility (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				
	Agricultural land with built/rehabilitated water infrastructure (hectares) (outcome)	19113	17547.47	0	0	0	0
	Trained agricultural producers adopt recommended technologies (outcome)	14240	25186	0	0	0	0
Producers' capacity built on improved farming practices and techniques	Number of male and female partnership members who adopt improved farming practice due to engagement in agribusiness partnerships (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
	Producers trained in production and post-harvest management technologies (number of projects) (outreach)	1	0				
	Number of beneficiary farmers who participate in farmer field schools (number of projects) (outreach)	2	1				
	Persons trained/received technical assistance in production practices and/or technologies including crop technologies, livestock, post-harvest, fisheries, etc. (outreach)	126391	109383	3407	52440	35968	4361
Enhanced institutional capacity of public stakeholders for the provision of extension services and supports	Technical assistance and training provided to public stakeholders (outreach)	19891	391	0	57	2	0
Enhanced institutional capacity of non-public stakeholders for the	Staff of non-public institutions/stakeholders trained (outreach)	11750	7474	0	468	144	0
	Community plans developed (number of projects) (outreach)	4	2				

	Selected TOC outputs	Aggregated output indicators	Planned	Achieved	# youths reach.	# male reached	# female reached	# indig. Pop.
	provision of extension services and supports							
	Built capacity in income generating activities, business management and financial literacy	Persons trained in income-generating activities or business management; community management (outreach)	28446	26913	2178	16342	9384	0
	Small business and micro enterprises supported	Rural enterprises accessing business development services (outreach)	315	251	0	0	0	0
Income	Introduced and promoted new economic activities	People report income from non-agricultural activities promoted by projects (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				
	Jobs and employment opportunities created	New jobs created (agricultural and non agricultural) (outcome)	4283	5082	1449	2679	1052	0
	Access to agricultural financial services (credit and insurance)	Total persons accessing financial services (outreach)	5740	2174	364	122	242	0
	Institutional mechanisms for smallholders' participation in value chain mechanisms	Development of design studies for sustainable and inclusive value chains for smallholder farmers (number or projects) (outreach)	0	0				
		Smallholder farmers engaged in partnerships (number or projects) (outcome)	1	1				
Value Chain Development & Market	Improvement / construction / rehabilitation of rural tracks and routes for access to markets	Kilometres of roads built, rebuilt or upgraded (outcome)	202.5	113.12	0	0	0	0
		Number of HH benefitting from improved public infrastructure (roads) (number or projects) (outcome)	2400	267	0	0	0	0
	Investments in value chain infrastructure including facilities for,	Processing, marketing and storage facilities constructed/rehabilitated (outreach)	462	350	0	0	0	0
		New enterprises linked to the value chains (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				

	Selected TOC outputs	Aggregated output indicators	Planned	Achieved	# youths reach.	# male reached	# female reached	# indig. Pop.
	storage, processing, and packaging agribusiness:	Producers applying the required quality standards (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
		Demonstration plots established (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
		Households reporting improved physical access to markets, storage and processing facilities (outcome) (number of projects)	3	1				
	Established market linkages for smallholder producers	Farmers with contracts and selling to other purchasers (number of projects) (outcome)	2	1				
		Producers benefiting from greater market access (outcome)	5680	4483	0	0	2731	1617
	Capacity building on topics relevant to value chain development	People trained in post-production, processing, and marketing (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				
Climate	Climate information system established and functioning	Persons provided with climate information services (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				
		Number of people trained in innovative technologies, smart agriculture and CC (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				
		Supported international and national climate dialogues (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				
		Number of households engaged in climate vulnerability assessments (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				
		Land brought under climate-resilient practices (hectares) (outcome)	9500	4468.41	0	0	0	0
	Climate resilient crops and practices promoted	Promotion of organic and resilient agricultural practices among farmers/communities (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				
		Agricultural projects targeting CC adaptation or mitigation (number of projects) (outreach)	1	0				
	Community based mechanisms promoted for climate resilience	Number of households with increased resilience to climate change (outcome)	3650	2919	0	0	0	0
		Community based mechanisms/plans promoted for climate resilience (number of projects) (outcome)	0	0				

	Selected TOC outputs	Aggregated output indicators	Planned	Achieved	# youths reach.	# male reached	# female reached	# indig. Pop.
		Business Plans that have integrated and received technical assistance for climate smart interventions (number of projects) (outcome)	1	0				
		Number of greenhouses constructed (number of projects) (outcome)	1	0				
		Investments constructed for CC and adaptative production/farming (number of projects) (outcome)	0	0				
		Beneficiary farmers who received technological packages for CC adaptation and mitigation (number of projects) (outcome)	1	0				
	Supported climate-resilient infrastructure	Smallholder household members supported in coping with the effects of climate change (number of projects) (outreach)	2	1				
		Households reporting adoption of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient technologies and practices (number of projects) (outcome)	1	0				
		People formed/supported/strengthened in natural resource management (including water) and climate change risks (outreach)	34228	27635	58	13654	13673	0
	Strengthen community-based initiatives / mechanisms for sustainable natural resources management	Local groups involved in natural resource and climate risk management activities (number of projects) (outreach)	518	445	0	0	0	0
		Hectares of watersheds (spring/stream recharge zones) protected and developed (number of projects) (outcome)	1	1				
NRM		Irrigated perimeters for which environmental remediation actions have been undertaken (number of projects) (outreach)	1	1				
	Producers' capacity built on efficient and effective approaches / techniques of sustained management of natural resources (community, groups, organisations and households)	Number of communities signing a community contract for sustainable family farming business (number of projects) (outcome)	1	0				
		Community nurseries established and meeting output targets (number of projects) (outcome)	1	0				
		Community development plans established (number of projects) (outcome)	1	0				

	Selected TOC outputs	Aggregated output indicators	Planned	Achieved	# youths reach.	# male reached	# female reached	# indig. Pop.
	Sustainable practices introduced in crop and animal production systems by households	Individuals engaged in NRM and climate risk management activities (outreach)	11082	21441	0	641	1013	0

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