Executive Board

Midterm review of the 2020–2030 IFAD Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) Strategy: building and looking to the future

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Action: The Executive Board is invited to review the midterm review of the IFAD ICT4D Strategy 2020–2030.

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Executive summary

1. IFAD's first Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) Strategy (2020–2030) was approved by the Executive Board in 2019. The strategy focuses on four key action areas: scalable uptake of ICT4D solutions; strengthening ICT4D partnerships; enhancing ICT4D knowledge management and sharing; and building internal ICT4D awareness, capacity, and leadership.

2. A midterm review of the strategy was planned to evaluate the integration of ICT4D into IFAD's programme of work and its performance against the first action plan (2020–2024). The findings will inform the next ICT4D action plan (2025–2030). By midterm, IFAD had surpassed its targets for the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, having integrated ICT4D solutions supporting access to digital advisory services, access to markets, financial services and climate-smart agriculture.

Key findings

3. The ICT4D Strategy conveys IFAD's commitment to leverage and prioritize the scale of digital tools in its programmes. There are many examples where ICT4D solutions have been integrated into IFAD projects, as indicated by both the 2022 corporate portfolio stocktake and the 2023 ICT4D stocktake. The distribution of these solutions by region and thematic area is shown in table 1.

Table 1
ICT4D solutions by region and thematic area

Region	*Total*	*Sustainable farm productivity and resilience*	*Inclusive markets and value chains*	*Inclusive digital finance*	*Integrated data and insights*
APR	74	35	31	20	34
ESA	75	34	26	18	34
LAC	42	12	15	11	20
NEN	36	16	6	5	13
WCA	25	14	10	4	14

APR: Asia and the Pacific; ESA: East and Southern Africa; LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean; NEN: Near East, North Africa and Europe; WCA: West and Central Africa.

4. **ICT4D has also supported the integration of mainstreaming themes such as climate and nutrition,** while enabling women and youth to access digital technologies.

5. IFAD ICT4D team has been successfully established as an organizational technical resource, supporting countries with policy engagement, coordination and technical discussions with stakeholders on **ICT4D.** The team has provided much needed technical assistance and leadership for the design of country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) and projects under the programme of loans and grants.

6. **Emerging technologies and partnerships.** IFAD is using emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled services and remote sensing, and is promoting digital public infrastructure and public-private partnerships to enhance digital service delivery to small producers.

7. **IFAD actively participates in technical and policy dialogue at country level in its Member States as well as with other ICT4D stakeholders** such as UN 2.0, the digital donor agriculture working group, United Nations working groups on digital data and innovation, the ICT4Ag network and OpenAgriNet, fostering collaboration and sharing best practices in promoting digital transformation for the agricultural sector. As the ICT4D Strategy was the first of its kind for IFAD, knowledge has been gathered through knowledge products, events and sharing of best practices with like-minded institutions.

8. **Data Governance Policy.** In 2022, IFAD approved its first Data Governance Policy to leverage data for decision-making, emphasizing its commitment to impactful operations.

9. **Coordination for scaling digital related innovations for increased impact and scale.** IFAD's capacity in **ICT4D and innovation** provides an opportunity to produce a pipeline of promising digital innovations that have been grounded in field needs and have potential for scale.

Midterm review of the 2020–2030 IFAD Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) Strategy: building and looking to the future

I. Background

1. IFAD adopted its first-ever ICT4D Strategy in 2019. The 10-year strategy, which recognizes the great potential of increasing the effective use of digital technologies in programmes, aims to "establish a strategic direction, action areas and guiding principles for leveraging ICT4D to achieve the Fund's strategic objectives and organizational priorities." It contains four action areas:

   (i) Scalable uptake of ICT4D solutions;

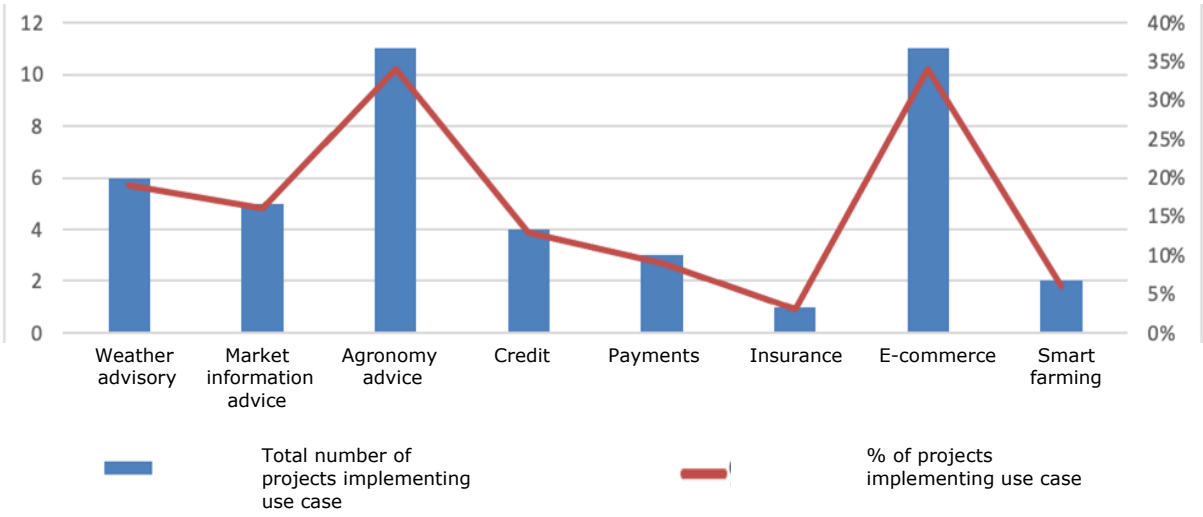
   (ii) Strengthening ICT4D partnerships;

   (iii) Enhancing ICT4D knowledge management and sharing; and

   (iv) Building internal ICT4D awareness, capacity and leadership.

2. In 2023, IFAD conducted a stocktake to identify projects around the globe that contained ICT4D components and examine how ICT4D has been integrated into IFAD's programme of work and supported the mainstreaming themes of gender equality and women's empowerment, youth, climate and nutrition. The stocktake found that of the 134 projects approved between the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD10) and IFAD12 that were identified as integrating ICT4D as per the Grants and Investment Projects System (GRIPS), only 65 (or 50 per cent) had any ICT4D component/activity. The stocktake deep dived into 46 projects (based on available documents). IFAD loan projects have utilized ICT4D tools in a variety of use cases other than for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Agronomy advice (digital extension services) and e-commerce are far more common than other use cases. It is important to note that the eight thematic areas shown in figure 1 below represent a combination of use cases. For example, smart farming includes precision farming, sensors and remote sensing.

Figure 1
Distribution of digital use cases in IFAD projects (ICT4D stocktake, 2023)



II. Methodology

3. To inform the midterm review, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through focus group discussions with IFAD-financed projects, corporate and regional stakeholders as well as 34 key informant interviews. Progress against IFAD12 measurable indicators, the 2022 corporate portfolio review, 2023 ICT4D stocktake, and project reports also supported the triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative analysis.

4. In some cases, it was challenging to identify the specific indicators used by the projects to measure progress, given the absence of corporate-level indicators on ICT4D and disparities across project completion reports.

III. Context

5. IFAD's target group is made up of rural people living in poverty and experiencing food insecurity in developing countries, who continue to face challenges with connectivity, affordability, limited digital skills and unequal access to technology.

6. **The ICT4D Strategy captured diverse opportunities amid organizational constraints.** IFAD's operating model has shaped a distinct approach through which the ICT4D team provides technical assistance in designing projects **that leverage ICT4D with a focus on scale.** However, IFAD has often implemented digital agriculture activities within the sovereign projects and grants that it finances and has limited additional funding to pilot and scale such activities with the private sector.

7. **IFAD has promoted the use of ICT4D in its operations while also supporting staff-led innovations around digitalization**. These innovation champions continue to be important for the inclusion of digital agriculture approaches in IFAD operations.

8. In many instances, **government partners have not prioritized digital tools for inclusion in their loans**, choosing instead to borrow for more concrete investments such as physical infrastructure. This limits opportunities for increasing efficiency in project implementation. However, IFAD-financed projects are becoming less risk-averse regarding digital tools and demand is increasing for digital enablement in sovereign investment projects and for partnerships with digital technology companies.

9. **Constraints at the field level in ICT4D expertise during design continue to define the scope of what the ICT4D Strategy can accomplish.** Capacity constraints within IFAD-financed projects sometimes lead to the duplication of efforts even at country level. The MTR revealed that projects have often opted to integrate a new digital tool into a new programme rather than first assess solutions that have already been used and what lessons may have been learned.

IV. Detailed findings by ICT4D Strategy pillar

A. Action area 1: Scalable uptake of ICT4D solutions

10. **There have been many successful ICT4D projects at IFAD.** For example, the Innovatech project, which ended in December 2023, has been supporting agritech start-ups in Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Mexico with technical assistance specific to the start-ups' needs. In Guatemala, the start-up Imix has supported the distribution of payment points throughout the country, which has facilitated the process for applying for small loans. The project has provided US$1.32 million in small grants that have benefited more than 750 people.

11. **IFAD has focused on some use cases more than others.** Globally, over the last decade, digital agriculture solutions have evolved in complexity. They have also grown significantly in the number of deployments and individual digital services launched and available across lower-middle-income countries for the agricultural sector.[1] The IFAD Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) grants during the COVID-19 pandemic also led to increased use of digital technologies in IFAD projects. Most use cases of digital technologies include a geographic information system (GIS) (particularly for M&E and targeting), digital financial services and agri-advisory services, reflecting their diverse and long-standing use cases in line with global trends. IFAD is moving slowly with precision agriculture, digital public infrastructure and the use of AI for climate change adaptation. However, to achieve scale, IFAD projects need to set more ambitious targets in reaching smallholder farmers, specifically via digital extension, to push the implementing teams to go beyond project pilots towards impact and scale, for example by targeting millions of farmers instead of thousands.

12. **There is an increasing focus on providing digital advisory services, including via chatbots.** Advisory services are by far the most common type of digital agriculture intervention for IFAD projects and are still growing in popularity. However, AI-powered extension advisory services using chatbots are gaining traction. Research[2] indicates that AI-powered farmer chats using large language models to analyse vast amounts of data – weather patterns, soil conditions and market trends for example – provide farmers with timely agronomic advice for decision-making in their local language.

13. **A preference for bundled solutions is emerging in IFAD-financed projects.** According to the ICT4D stocktake and the landscape assessment of agritech and fintech providers in East and Southern Africa,[3] single-product providers face scaling challenges due to their narrow scope of offering and smaller addressable market. Bundled services provide an opportunity to build customer trust, increase and diversify revenues while keeping client acquisition costs low (see case examples below).

Box 1

In Bangladesh, the **Promoting Agricultural Commercialization and Enterprises (PACE) project** has supported 300,000 microenterprises, including 150,000 women-owned businesses, who have increased their combined sales by 50 per cent after receiving credit and technical support. PACE has also connected farmers with online retailers to market high-value crops.

Box 2

Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme – Climate-Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods Window. The programme supported training of 100,000 smallholder farmers in financial literacy and accessing input subsidies through a digitalized voucher scheme, reaching 148,551 households (60 per cent women, 30 per cent men, 10 per cent young people) compared to the overall appraisal target of 140,000. The total value of inputs accessed to date was estimated at US$22 million. Through the programme, other services have been integrated, such as migration to cardless system, integration for financial and insurance services, and use of mobile-based services.

[1] https://www.beanstalkagtech.com/d4aglmic.
[2] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381003040_AI-Powered_Agriculture_Chatbots_for_Farmers.
[3] https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/47719351/agritech-fintech-providers-esa_full.pdf/1766bcf2-8d1e-0325-f632-7ba609340bf8?t=1687788719280.

14. The IFAD ICT4D team has been successfully established as an organizational technical resource, supporting countries in policy engagement, coordination and technical discussions with stakeholders on **ICT4D.** The team supported the delivery of IFAD12 commitments for integrating digital solutions into IFAD's programme of work. **The targets set under the IFAD12 commitments** have all been surpassed. The important technical role of ICT4D in IFAD-supported projects is also recognized within IFAD. In the global development sector, IFAD has become an important stakeholder in digital agriculture through various engagements and partnerships, for example the Joint SDG Fund with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the United Republic of Tanzania; the policy dialogues in Ghana and Nigeria; the Republic of Korea symposium with the Asian Development Bank; and the Egypt AgriTech Meet.

15. **IFAD's ICT4D team has also provided advanced digital technical assistance directly to governments based on demand.** As an example, assistance was provided to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to develop its digital agricultural strategy. Recognizing capacity constraints, this form of technical assistance is distinct from technical assistance provided to IFAD-financed projects. Policy engagement such as the dialogues conducted in Nigeria and Ghana through the ICT4D team are critical for unlocking enabling environment levers to support adoption of ICT4D across countries.

16. **IFAD has been working to simplify digital technologies for greater adoption**. For example, through the use of lead farmers and village agents as well as simplified interfaces such as for data collection and the use of voice responses, farmers were able to access digital advisory services (through projects implemented under the RPSF during the COVID-19 pandemic).

17. **GIS use continues to grow**. GIS data will remain important to support targeting, M&E and impact assessments. There is increased need to systemize the use of GIS under IFAD projects and support capacity-building among staff and in project management units (PMUs). As an example, IFAD and the European Space Agency's Global Development Assistance programme conducted a study on the detection of terraces developed by the Murat River Watershed Rehabilitation Project in Türkiye. The project aimed to improve rural livelihoods by rehabilitating vulnerable steep slopes in upland villages of the Murat River watershed. The terraces were designed to reduce soil erosion and increase vegetation cover. An algorithm trained to detect and delineate terraces using satellite imagery was able to detect over 4,650 hectares of developed terraces. IFAD has also used remote sensing to monitor livestock routes in Sudan, supporting land use mapping and crop maps to promote best practices on land management for livestock and crop production.[4]

18. **IFAD continues to integrate digital aspects through supplementary-funded projects**. Such interventions have included using remittances to build digital financial literacy and promoting access to insurance and credit scoring through the Insurance for Rural Resilience and Economic Development (INSURED) programme. Global Environment Facility (GEF) innovation grants have also been linked to IFAD projects to promote the use of digital technologies. Similarly, supplementary funds from the Republic of Korea have been instrumental in piloting innovative digital solutions across the Asia and the Pacific region.

19. **There is a growing interest in traceability systems for agronomic practices and fair and effective use of natural resources during production.** In China, the Sustaining Poverty Reduction through Agribusiness Development in South Shaanxi (SPRAD-SS) project is supporting target counties in adopting and applying

[4] https://www.ifad.org/en/w/publications/climate-action-report-2024.

trusted systems that allow food products to be followed from the place of production to the table of the consumer and for synchronization with the national agro-products traceability system promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. In addition, European Union Deforestation Regulation is promoting the consumption of "deforestation-free" products and reducing the European Union's impact on global deforestation and forest degradation. EU Regulation 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products[5] is expected to bring down greenhouse gas emissions and reduce biodiversity loss. These guidelines provide an opportunity to deploy traceability systems leveraging digital technologies to track and report on how IFAD-financed projects are applying mechanisms for mitigating deforestation and environmentally sustainable production practices.

20. **South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) can be an enabler for supporting ICT4D integration in IFAD projects. As an example,** through an SSTC grant, online knowledge exchange webinars were organized between the SPRAD-SS project and the Government of Eswatini on digitalized traceability system for pig production.

B. Action area 2: Strengthening ICT4D partnerships

21. **Partnerships remain a critical element for ensuring collaboration in the delivery of ICT4D-enabled projects.** For example, IFAD's innovation team has set up a community of practice focused on digital agriculture innovations that exchanges ideas, technical information, new publications and information on relevant events. Another example is the Moonshots for Development alliance for piloting digital technology solutions that can be scaled. IFAD has also established partnerships with private sector entities, ICT4D-focused NGOs and institutions such as the European Space Agency for collaboration on earth observation data for climate adaptation and with OpenAgriNet for collaboration on digital public infrastructure, among others.

22. **Public-private partnerships with digital technology companies promote opportunities to scale the delivery of digital services to small producers under IFAD's programme of work.** IFAD's competitive advantage as an assembler of finance positions it to promote investment opportunities and access to capital for the private sector through blended finance models. Other approaches, such as cofinancing digital agriculture projects, continue to serve as means for scaling innovative digital solutions. For example, an IFAD-managed and private sector-led innovation grant financed by GEF and being implemented by a private sector entity (Crop-In Technologies) is promoting digital innovations that will enable a data-driven approach for farm decision-making, climate-smart advisory services and market linkages in Rwanda and Ethiopia and reach 130,000 farmers cumulatively in these countries.

C. Action area 3: Enhancing ICT4D knowledge management and sharing

23. **Through IFAD's first ICT4D Strategy, knowledge has been generated through knowledge products, events and sharing of best practices with like-minded institutions.** IFAD staff have improved their understanding of how ICT4D can be integrated in IFAD projects and helped define metrics to measure success of the strategy and its action plan, which was necessary to ensure a common understanding of IFAD's strategic direction on ICT4D.

24. **Operationalize the Data Governance Policy and its action plan for effective data management.** As the ICT4D Strategy noted "there is no existing framework for data-driven interventions to expand IFAD's development impact." To address

[5] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/regulation-deforestation-free-products_en.

this, IFAD's first Data Governance Policy developed under the ICT4D action plan was approved by the Executive Board in December 2022. The policy emphasizes IFAD's commitment to leverage data for decision-making in operations and administrative functions to achieve impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), primarily SDGs 1 and 2, and improve the quality and accuracy of data produced and used by IFAD. The accompanying Data Governance Policy action plan 2024–2028 has been aligned to the ICT4D Strategy in supporting the use of data to promote data quality, transparency, operationalization and management of data. The new ICT4D action plan will pay extra attention to these issues especially around raising awareness among staff and partners.

25. **Greater use of digital tools to support M&E activities is one of the challenges that IFAD is geared to address.** For example, IFAD projects use different modes to gather data, with tools ranging from manual processes to mobile data tools to collect, store and send data from the field. The ICT4D team, in collaboration with the Department for Country Operations and the Operational Policy and Results Division, is planning to support projects in adopting digital tools to improve M&E at project level.

26. **The limited use of numerical and qualitative indicators to measure and report on ICT4D projects limits the gleaning of deeper insights into project implementation and attribution of impact to digital interventions.** This is especially true of ICT4D projects, because assessing the efficacy of digital tools requires evaluating interactions among several layers, including user interfaces, platform performance, cost, timeliness, accuracy, as well as changed perspectives resulting from technical content such as advisory services and the technology itself. Qualitatively, another important aspect to be measured would be farmers' trust in digital systems. The ICT4D stocktake also affirmed that the lack of metrics to match IFAD core indicators and targets for ICT4D-enabled projects at project and corporate levels during design and implementation affects the attribution of impact challenges at evaluation. This is also driven by the absence of established core outcome indicators for ICT4D.

27. **Defining strong exit strategies essential for sustainability.** While IFAD-financed projects have defined various exit strategies for ICT4D-enabled projects, including handing over digital solutions to governments to continue operating the digital services, the strongest exit strategies have been those with a focus on ecosystem approaches and commercial viability, where the solutions continue to operate on the market after the project financing has ended. A critical approach for **sustainability** has been to support farmers in continuing to use the solution provider post-project. Projects focused on enabling private sector solutions and using an ecosystem approach where all partners in the ecosystem utilize a single solution for different services have achieved sustainability. One such example is the IFAD-supported development of the mobile application "Chamka" in Cambodia.

28. **Building knowledge will also require internal coordination on design and implementation of ICT4D projects.** The ICT4D stocktake data analysis revealed that there are instances of duplication of resources. The stocktake found eight separate projects that have supported online marketing platforms for agricultural products. While this situation may reflect diverse digital interventions being spread across the organization, it prevents solutions reaching scale. Conducting broader internal landscaping exercises and sharing more knowledge on lessons and successes of projects will enable scaling best practices to remove redundancies and duplication.

29. **Expanding the use of digital storytelling might enhance the spread of ICT4D expertise.** Short documents that recount the process by which a digital

agriculture solution was identified, conceived and how these solutions are transforming small producers' lives through the projects can be highly effective in conveying impact. Examples include reports emanating from knowledge exchange visits and sharing between the Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme – Climate-Resilience Livelihoods Window, Life – Niger Delta, and value chain development programmes in Nigeria on best practices and successes to scale digital innovations. Similarly, IFAD's Rural Solutions Portal can be useful source for examples of challenges encountered by projects and how the project overcame them.

30. The stocktake revealed that some IFAD-financed projects encounter budget allocation challenges for digital interventions despite having clearly defined activities at design. Appropriate budget allocation ratios can facilitate the utilization of digital agriculture tools by project beneficiaries and enable the assignment of personnel, such as ICT4D technical specialists, to assist in implementation. To leverage the efficiency and effectiveness of digital technologies, IFAD projects should invest in ICT4D, as a critical mainstreaming theme that enhances project outcomes.

D. Action area 4: Building internal ICT4D awareness, capacity and leadership

31. Building a learning agenda around ICT4D has enhanced how effectively IFAD utilizes digital agricultural tools. Constraints at the field level, including ICT4D expertise and time limitations, continue to define the scope of what the ICT4D Strategy can accomplish through IFAD staff, government counterparts, local partners and the farmers themselves. Greater ICT4D expertise is needed in PMUs to implement ICT4D activities. To address these constraints, IFAD has invested in developing ICT4D courses to support **IFAD staff, PMUs and stakeholders** (https://www.ifad.org/en/e-learning) to gain knowledge on how digital technologies can be applied to support rural transformation. These courses have been vital in increasing demand for digital technologies in Member States.

Figure 2
IFAD ICT4D courses (available in English)

32. **ICT4D capacity has been expanded through more online programmes on digital agriculture.** Through the Digital Agriculture Advisory Services grant with Development Gateway, IFAD has developed a learning portal (https://www.digitalagricresources.org/), which has now accumulated at least 35 online courses and diverse knowledge products as public goods. This approach

ensures that these resources are made available to projects and stakeholders to build capacity.

33. **Regional ICT4D action plans have supported contextualization of priorities to support scaling digital transformation in the region.** Examples include the Latin America and the Caribbean Division and the Asia and the Pacific Division, which developed action plans to operationalize the ICT4D Strategy components in their regions. In both cases, these regional action plans were fully aligned with the global strategy. Creating regional plans helps regions align their activities to the global action plan and corporate strategy.

34. **Efforts to spread ICT4D expertise across IFAD have been accelerated.** One approach to expanding ICT4D expertise is assigning an ICT4D focal point, based in each IFAD geographic region, to coordinate ICT4D interventions. Formalizing these focal points will be instrumental in coordinating initiatives around ICT4D, in sharing lessons and knowledge, and avoiding duplication of efforts.

35. Emerging technologies such as AI, which can enable data-driven projects, continue to attract significant attention. To move forward, appropriate capacity-building is needed for IFAD staff and PMUs to ensure effective harnessing of these technologies.

V. Recommendations to inform the new action plan

A. Action area 1: Scalable uptake of ICT4D solutions

36. Overall, the 2025–2030 action plan includes activities that are all achievable within the current capacities of the ICT4D team and other teams engaging in ICT4D in IFAD. Key identified activities under each action area of the strategy are as follows:

- Continue supporting the design of new projects and COSOPs to incorporate ICT4D solutions with ambitious targets, flagship programmes and allocation of adequate resources to drive the needed scale in delivery of digital-enabled solutions;
- Develop IFAD's ICT4D-specific core indicators and measurement modalities to measure performance of ICT4D initiatives;
- Support stronger collaboration across workstreams, such as innovation, SSTC and partnerships to pilot digital-enabled innovations and scale for better impact;
- Align ICT4D Strategy and innovation strategic levers in the Innovation Strategy to ensure scale of digital innovations;
- Spread ICT4D expertise geographically and thematically by formally establishing regional ICT4D focal points;
- Scale opportunities for **private sector investments and financing** to scale delivery of ICT4D projects and delivery of services to smallholder farmers;
- Continue to identify opportunities for scaling support to Member States on delivery of digital public infrastructure to unlock innovative delivery of digital services;
- Expand the use of ICT4D in M&E for IFAD-supported projects; and
- Support the systematic use of GIS in IFAD-supported projects.

B. Action area 2: Strengthening ICT4D partnerships

- Establish or expand ICT4D partnerships with non-profit as well as private sector companies offering digital agricultural services;
- Communicate externally about IFAD's ICT4D work to attract new and

continued collaborations;

- Explore data-sharing modalities and partnerships, including with international organizations; and
- Develop a resource mobilization process to support testing, evaluating or scaling approaches for digital technologies especially focused on fragile regions and for frontier technologies; for example, machine learning-enabled digital extension services via chatbots.

C. Action area 3: Enhancing ICT4D knowledge management and sharing

- Develop and disseminate knowledge on sustainability of ICT4D solutions;
- Operationalize the Data Governance Policy and its action plan for effective data management;
- Improve knowledge-sharing between projects and create internal best practices on what works and what does not in ICT4D project implementation;
- Collaborate with other teams to design concrete impact pathways with specific goals; and
- Support the creation of regional action plans aligned with the corporate ICT4D action plan for effective tracking and knowledge management and sharing.

D. Action area 4: Building internal ICT4D awareness, capacity and leadership

- Expand the use of digital storytelling to:
    - Make it easier for staff to find useful examples and lessons when designing new ICT4D-enabled projects; and
    - Add visibility and transparency to IFAD's ICT4D work for external audiences.
- Encourage and support the spread of ICT4D expertise across IFAD by formally assigning regional ICT4D leads;
- Expand capacity development opportunities for IFAD colleagues and project partners; and
- Advance organizational understanding of safe, useful, ethical and cost-effective uses of emerging technologies such as AI and large language models and advise on their inclusion in projects.