

---

## **Midterm review of IFAD's Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027**

---

Document: EB 2025/OR/13

Date: 30 October 2025

Distribution: Public

Original: English

**FOR: REVIEW**

**Useful references:** IFAD's Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027  
([EB 2022/137/R.7](#))

**Action:** The Executive Board is invited to conduct an online review of the midterm review of IFAD's Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027.

---

---

**Technical questions:**

**Pieterneel Boogaard**  
Managing Director  
Office of Technical Delivery  
e-mail: [p.boogaard@ifad.org](mailto:p.boogaard@ifad.org)

**Juan Carlos Mendoza Casadiegos**  
Director  
Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion  
Division  
e-mail: [juancarlos.mendoza@ifad.org](mailto:juancarlos.mendoza@ifad.org)

---

*For more information on Disability Inclusion, please visit: [Persons with disabilities](#).*

## Contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>I. Background</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. Methodology</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>III. Overview of IFAD's performance</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>IV. Main findings by action area</b>	<b>3</b>
A. Action area 1: Leadership, strategic planning and management	3
B. Action area 2: Inclusiveness	4
C. Action area 3: Programming	5
D. Action area 4: Organizational culture	7
<b>V. Way forward</b>	<b>8</b>

## Executive summary

1. This midterm review assesses progress in implementing IFAD's Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027. The strategy was approved by the Executive Board in December 2022, responding to commitments undertaken for the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD12) period (2022–2024).
2. Since its adoption, the strategy has guided IFAD's efforts to more systematically include persons with disabilities across both operations and the workplace. The midterm review confirms that the strategy remains relevant and has helped consolidate disability inclusion as a cross-cutting area of work. It has also contributed to increased staff awareness, greater institutional engagement and growing inclusion of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of IFAD-supported projects.
3. Key enablers of progress include strong alignment with the United Nations system performance benchmarks, the use of a twin-track approach combining mainstreaming with targeted initiatives focusing on rural persons with disabilities, and collaboration with specialized partners, which have supported capacity development and innovation in disability-inclusive programming.
4. Continued Management commitment and targeted initiatives, combined with enhanced capacity development, strengthened partnerships with expert organizations, and active engagement with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, will be critical to fully realizing the strategy's objectives and ensuring that disability inclusion becomes a sustained and visible dimension of IFAD's work on rural poverty reduction.

# Midterm review of IFAD's Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027

## I. Background

1. IFAD's Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027 was approved by the Executive Board in December 2022, responding to commitments undertaken for the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD12) period (2022–2024). At the time of this midterm review, the document remains fully aligned with key international frameworks promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.
2. The strategy aims to ensure that IFAD is fit for purpose to promote disability inclusion in both its operations and the workplace. In alignment with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), it is structured around four broad action areas: (1) leadership, strategic planning and management; (2) inclusiveness; (3) programming; and (4) organizational culture.
3. Implementation of the strategy is monitored through annual reporting on performance under the UNDIS, as well as IFAD's stand-alone annual Report on IFAD's Mainstreaming Effectiveness (RIME), which includes a dedicated section on disability inclusion.
4. This review provides an opportunity for a more comprehensive assessment of IFAD's achievements, challenges and opportunities in advancing disability inclusion across its operations and workplace, and for setting out recommendations to strengthen the strategy's implementation.

## II. Methodology

5. The midterm review draws on the past three annual reports on UNDIS performance indicators (2022, 2023 and 2024) and the progress reported through the RIME. To support the analysis of findings and recommendations under action area 3 (programming), a light stocktake of ongoing projects was also conducted, including information up to April 2025.
6. Qualitative data was collected through surveys, interviews and focus group discussions with IFAD staff and relevant stakeholders, including project management units and implementing partners.

## III. Overview of IFAD's performance

7. As the objectives and action areas of the IFAD strategy closely align with those of the UNDIS,<sup>1</sup> reporting against the UNDIS performance standards provides a robust measure of the progress achieved in implementing the corporate strategy. UNDIS monitors performance through 16 indicators, organized around the same four action areas. Since the first report in 2021, IFAD has demonstrated steady improvement, progressing from two indicators met, two approaching and 12 missing; to four indicators exceeded, six met, five approaching and one missing as of 2024. A detailed breakdown of performance by indicator in 2024 is presented in figure 1.

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the UNDIS reporting and accountability framework, please consult the UNDIS technical notes available at this link: [https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN\\_Disability\\_Inclusion\\_Strategy\\_Entity\\_Technical\\_Notes.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_Entity_Technical_Notes.pdf).

Figure 1  
Breakdown of performance by indicator

LEADERSHIP, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT	INCLUSIVENESS	PROGRAMMING	ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
1. Leadership Meeting	5. Consultation with persons with disabilities Meeting	9. Programmes and projects Exceeding	13. Employment Approaching
2. Strategic planning Meeting	6. Accessibility Missing	10. Evaluation Approaching	14. Capacity development for staff Exceeding
3. Disability-specific policy/strategy Exceeding	6.1. Conferences and events Approaching	11. Country programme documents Approaching	15. Communication Meeting
4. Institutional set-up Exceeding	7. Reasonable accommodation Approaching	12. Joint initiatives Meeting	
	8. Procurement Meeting		

8. To date, UNDIS has served as IFAD's primary implementation and monitoring framework for the work on disability inclusion. The consultations with staff confirm that UNDIS has been a critical enabler of progress within IFAD, offering a structured set of benchmarks and indicators for promoting disability inclusion across different areas of work.
9. The IFAD strategy calls on divisions and departments to ensure compliance by designating dedicated focal points and establishing plans, commitments and budgets to support its implementation. As of 2025, a disability focal points network is fully operational, comprising 20 members from across IFAD's divisions and decentralized offices. The network meets quarterly under the coordination of the Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division (ECG). Currently there are no staff fully dedicated to disability inclusion, which remains a constraint. Responsibilities in this area are integrated within the broader portfolio of a senior technical specialist on gender and social inclusion at the P-4 level, who serves as IFAD's main focal point for disability inclusion both within the organization and in external engagements.
10. While an action plan was developed after the endorsement of the strategy, it has largely functioned as an informal tool to support coordination within the disability focal points network. To enhance coordination and ensure more consistent progress across all action areas, the network highlighted the need to revise the action plan – structuring it around clear, time-bound and costed deliverables – and to further disseminate it across the organization.
11. With regard to programming, IFAD fulfilled the IFAD12 target of promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities as a priority target group in at least five newly designed projects. The latter target has been surpassed, with seven new projects prioritizing persons with disabilities approved by the end of 2024. Progress has also been achieved with regards to the organizational culture. The IFAD Global Staff Survey shows that the percentage of staff who believe that people in IFAD are treated with dignity and respect – irrespective of their characteristics, including abilities and disabilities – has risen from 40 per cent in 2022 to 64 per cent in 2024.

12. The overarching approaches on which the strategy is based – intersectionality, a twin-track approach and partnerships – have been pivotal to its implementation. Partnerships with expert organizations have been essential for building internal capacities and testing disability-inclusive approaches tailored to the needs of rural persons with disabilities. The application of intersectionality and cross-fertilization between thematic areas (for example, working with youth, women and Indigenous Peoples with disabilities) has also proven highly beneficial in promoting disability inclusion as an integral part of IFAD’s broader mainstreaming agenda. However, these approaches still need to be more effectively translated into concrete strategies and solutions at project level.

## **IV. Main findings by action area**

### **A. Action area 1: Leadership, strategic planning and management**

13. IFAD’s Senior Management has continued to champion disability inclusion both within the organization and in global forums. In April 2025, the Vice-President participated in the third Global Disability Summit held in Berlin. Her intervention marked a unique opportunity for IFAD to position itself in an international forum as an agency working toward disability-inclusive agricultural and rural development. In recent years, members of Senior Management have chaired several internal and external events dedicated to IFAD’s engagement with persons with disabilities. The Associate Vice-President of the Corporate Services Department has been designated as the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) champion, with a specific focus on supporting staff and their dependents, including on issues related to disability inclusion.
14. The commitment to disability inclusion is well reflected in IFAD’s recent strategic planning documents. The Report of the Consultation on the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD’s Resources<sup>2</sup> referenced disability inclusion in four out of 10 key messages, recognizing that increasing ambition on mainstreaming themes – including disability inclusion – is critical to deepening IFAD’s impact. As noted, IFAD12 introduced two specific policy commitments related to disability inclusion. This focus was reaffirmed during the IFAD13 consultation in 2023, whereby Management renewed its pledge to integrate disability inclusion across the project portfolio and to complement mainstreaming with targeted interventions – committing to ensure that at least five additional projects include persons with disabilities as a priority target group.<sup>3</sup> Under IFAD13, Management also committed to explore ways to ensure the meaningful participation of all relevant rights holders and stakeholders in the development of strategies and operational policies. Particular attention is to be paid to persons or groups facing additional barriers to participation, including persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.
15. The current institutional setup, which includes an operational disability focal point network bringing together relevant offices and divisions, meets the minimum requirements set by the UNDIS. The focal points contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the UNDIS indicators by coordinating actions within their respective divisions to meet established benchmarks. As the main delivery mechanism for the IFAD strategy, the network has played a key role in driving improvements in corporate performance. It convenes regularly and is currently exploring ways to formally recognize and track the contribution of focal points through the performance evaluation system (PES). As mentioned in paragraph 9, a main focal point at the P-4 level (a senior gender and social inclusion specialist in ECG) allocates 20 per cent of their time to coordinate efforts on this mainstreaming theme. Nonetheless, the absence of dedicated staff with specific expertise in

---

<sup>2</sup> [GC 44/L.6/Rev.1.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [GC 47/L.5.](#)

disability inclusion remains a major constraint to further advancing the implementation of the strategy.

## **B. Action area 2: Inclusiveness**

16. The strategy calls for consultations with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to ensure that their specific needs and interests are recognized and addressed in relevant decision-making processes. At the project level, IFAD requires engagement with local stakeholders to ensure that the design and implementation of activities and services is responsive to the needs of communities and individuals, including persons with disabilities. The Disability Inclusion in IFAD's Operations: A Practitioner's Guide, finalized in 2024, offers guidance on how to ensure meaningful engagement. Disability inclusion is also addressed in other operational guidelines, such as the Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) and Mainstreaming Youth in IFAD Operations: A Practitioner's Guide. However, consultation with IFAD staff shows that awareness and capacities on how to ensure systematic consultation with OPDs and persons with disabilities at local and national level still needs to be reinforced. This calls for broader dissemination of existing guidance materials, the generation of new knowledge based on lessons from ongoing projects and the provision of timely technical assistance during project design.
17. At corporate level, the introduction of new procedures for public consultations on policies and strategies, as well as the IFAD13 commitment to further broaden and deepen consultation with relevant stakeholders on relevant strategies and policies, supports the participation of civil society organizations, including OPDs, in relevant IFAD consultation processes. The engagement of OPDs has also been promoted through existing consultation platforms, such as the Indigenous Peoples Forum, which recognize Indigenous Peoples with disabilities as a priority target group.
18. Accessibility is a prerequisite for inclusiveness. While IFAD has not yet conducted the baseline accessibility assessment outlined in its strategy and required by the UNDIS, the headquarters building was renovated in 2008 in compliance with Italian Ministerial Decree 236/1989, which ensures accessibility, adaptability and the removal of physical barriers. The premises hold a certificate of occupancy issued by the Sportello Unico per le Attività Produttive (SUAP) and a fire prevention certificate (CPI) from the Ministry of the Interior, confirming compliance with national safety and fire regulations. The emergency and evacuation plan annexed to the CPI includes specific procedures for persons with cognitive, motor, hearing and visual impairments, ensuring inclusive safety measures. Since the strategy's endorsement, IFAD has also undertaken concrete steps to enhance accessibility at headquarters, including the installation of elevators, ramps and barrier-free pathways. A dedicated procedure with security services was introduced to facilitate access to the IFAD headquarters rooftop terrace for individuals with specific needs. Accessibility considerations are systematically integrated into the planning and execution of events and infrastructure upgrades at headquarters. In contrast, information on the accessibility of decentralized offices and project infrastructure remains limited. IFAD has committed to developing a plan to address these gaps and enhance accessibility beyond headquarters. More efforts are also needed to promote information and communications technology (ICT) accessibility, ensuring that IFAD's digital platforms, tools and resources are designed to be usable by persons with disabilities. This includes considering accessibility standards, compatibility with assistive technologies such as screen readers and ease of navigation for users with diverse needs.
19. In line with the principles of the IFAD Strategy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (endorsed in 2021 and updated in 2023), IFAD already provides certain forms of reasonable accommodation – such as flexible working arrangements (e.g. telecommuting, extended or additional breaks) and accessibility-related measures – on an ad hoc basis and upon official request. The IFAD travel policy also includes

the possibility of requesting accommodations – such as alternative travel routes, a different class of travel or the support of a personal assistant – in line with the principle of reasonable accommodation. To comply with the requirements of the UNDIS and IFAD's corporate strategy, formal guidelines on reasonable accommodation are under development in consultation with various divisions, units and the IFAD Staff Association. These guidelines are expected to outline the procedure for requesting accommodation, establish a monitoring and funding mechanism, define an accountability framework, and include provisions to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

20. IFAD's corporate procurement procedures are aligned with United Nations system requirements on equality and non-discrimination to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to goods, facilities, equipment, technology and services. As such, they are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all potential bidders. To promote accessibility, originators are expected to consider the needs of persons with disabilities when drafting specifications for goods and services, as applicable, in order to avoid introducing new barriers.

### **C. Action area 3: Programming**

21. Disability-inclusive programming is a core priority of the strategy, which calls for a progressive increase in the number of projects promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. As of April 2025, 42 out of 192 projects (21.8 per cent of the total active portfolio) identify persons with disabilities as a distinct target group, with an estimated intended outreach of approximately 240,000 individuals. Seven of these projects have been designed under IFAD12, exceeding the commitment made following the strategy's endorsement. Most ongoing disability-inclusive projects are concentrated in East and Southern Africa (ESA) and West and Central Africa, with Latin America and the Caribbean recently expanding their portfolio with three new IFAD12 designs. Asia and the Pacific (APR) and the Near East, North Africa and Europe (NEN) regions have not included persons with disabilities as a priority in recent project designs; however, technical support is being provided to facilitate the integration of this mainstreaming theme in designs foreseen under IFAD13.
22. A range of guidance material is available to support staff in designing and implementing disability-inclusive projects. These include an e-learning course on disability inclusion in IFAD's operations, the practitioner's guide on disability inclusion as mentioned above, and the mainstreaming guidelines for social inclusion (annex VII to the project design guidelines), which clearly outline requirements for disability-inclusive project design.
23. Consultations with IFAD and project staff, however, highlight both a need and demand for more practical training and technical assistance. Staff cited limited knowledge of the thematic area, poor understanding of IFAD's requirements and the frequent lack of disability-disaggregated data to inform project design as key challenges. Opportunities remain to strengthen the mainstreaming of disability inclusion in IFAD-supported projects by enhancing the documentation of good practices and lessons learned, and by expanding training and peer exchange on effective strategies for engaging rural persons with disabilities. Additional guidance is also needed on assessing project performance on disability inclusion, for example by revising or complementing existing materials used for monitoring during project supervision and completion.
24. While a growing number of interventions identify persons with disabilities as a specific target group, qualitative assessments of project design and supervision reports show that this often does not translate into concrete targeting strategies, disability-inclusive approaches and monitoring tools, or the allocation of dedicated human and financial resources to implement them. These gaps weaken outreach and limit the achievement of results in promoting the socioeconomic empowerment of persons with disabilities. Disability-disaggregated data collection and analysis of

results achieved in promoting disability inclusion remains very limited. This restricts the ability to monitor progress, assess impact and build a strong evidence base to inform future programming. Greater efforts are needed to embed disability inclusion priorities into IFAD's programme of work. The long-term sustainability of this agenda will largely depend on integrating disability inclusion into project designs, including budgets and results frameworks.

25. The strategy calls for a twin-track approach that combines mainstreaming with targeted interventions. The most relevant targeted and joint initiative implemented since its endorsement has been the IFAD-funded grant Sparking Disability Inclusive Rural Transformation (SPARK), implemented by Light for the World, the International Labour Organization and PROCASUR.<sup>4</sup> Between 2021 and 2024, SPARK supported seven ongoing projects in Burkina Faso, India, Malawi and Mozambique to enhance their outreach to persons with disabilities and pilot disability-inclusive approaches tailored to agricultural and rural development. The initiative yielded positive results, with 63,050 persons with disabilities (35,707 women and 27,343 men) receiving targeted training and advisory services through the microfinance institutions, civil society organizations, vocational training organizations and private sector actors supported by SPARK. Through the application of different tools and approaches, the grant also built the awareness and capacity of IFAD and project staff, government counterparts, implementing partners and local communities to identify and address the barriers faced by persons with disabilities. Beyond its field-level result, SPARK contributed to the establishment of a help desk within IFAD and organized hands-on learning experiences – such as learning routes hosted by successful projects – that extended its impact beyond the directly targeted countries. The grant also demonstrated the value of joint programming and collaboration to leverage comparative advantages at country, regional and global levels.
26. Targeted initiatives like SPARK, along with others supported through supplementary funds, remain critical to strengthening the mainstreaming of disability inclusion across IFAD operations, by offering dedicated expertise and financial resources not always available through loan financing. This is the case, for example, of the Agribusiness Hub programme in Rwanda, which successfully promoted pathways for the employment of rural youth with disabilities. In 2024, ESA submitted a proposal for a follow-up grant aimed at consolidating SPARK's achievements in Malawi and Mozambique, and expanding activities to Zimbabwe, while also offering learning and technical support to projects globally, which will be considered under the grants pipeline for IFAD13.
27. Opportunities for disability-inclusive programming are also shaped by country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) and the extent to which they reference persons with disabilities in their analysis, priorities and targeting strategies. While 40 per cent of the new COSOPs approved in 2024 included explicit references to persons with disabilities, integrating disability considerations in these high-level strategies remains a challenge. In many cases, relevant data and analysis are included only in the SECAP background study, an annex covering all mainstreaming themes. Because the inclusion of disability in the main COSOP text is not mandatory, it is often overlooked during review and approval – even in high-prevalence contexts such as post-conflict settings. Since COSOP content is aligned with national priorities, disability inclusion is frequently sidelined when not emphasized by the government. A stronger business case and awareness raising of country directors are needed to position disability inclusion as relevant to IFAD's work and to strengthen policy dialogue with partner governments during COSOP preparation.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://sparkinclusion.org/>.

28. Integrating disability inclusion across all evaluation types is critical for institutional accountability and learning. The 2022 IFAD Revised Evaluation Manual provides guidance on addressing social justice in evaluations, including discrimination linked to health and disability, and emphasizes intersectionality across gender, age, ethnicity, and disability. The manual references UNDIS and links to guidance from the United Nations Evaluation Group. In 2024, these principles were applied – albeit unevenly – in all 13 evaluations conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE), including one thematic evaluation, six country strategy and programme evaluations, and six project performance evaluations. However, because persons with disabilities have only been explicitly included in IFAD’s target groups since 2019, projects evaluated as of April 2025, most of which were designed before 2019, did not recognize persons with disabilities as an explicit target group or include data disaggregated by disability. This has limited the ability of evaluations to assess results and impacts on persons with disabilities, despite IOE’s efforts to apply a disability lens throughout the evaluation process.
29. Under IFAD11, IFAD undertook analytical work on the economic activities of persons with disabilities in rural areas, applying the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) in Ethiopia, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania. Findings confirmed that persons with disabilities in rural areas are economically active and able to follow productive pathways out of poverty. In parallel, IFAD piloted the use of WG-SS for data disaggregation in project monitoring surveys in Georgia, Liberia, Nepal and Malawi. Results, presented to the Executive Board in September 2020, underscored the need for differentiated targeting and inclusion strategies. Moving forward, WG-SS will be applied, where relevant, in impact assessment surveys to strengthen the evidence base and inform programming.

#### **D. Action area 4: Organizational culture**

30. IFAD is committed to ensuring a disability-inclusive working environment. The Human Resources Policy, which applies to IFAD personnel, prohibits any form of discrimination including based on disability. It also includes provisions to attract, recruit, retain and support the career development of employees with disabilities. As noted above, in 2024 IFAD initiated the development of its first reasonable accommodation guidelines to further support the recruitment and professional growth of personnel with disabilities. The guidelines aim to provide direction on how job design and recruitment can be approached through a disability inclusion lens and promote inclusive practices across onboarding, training and development, career management, working conditions and workspace arrangements. The draft guidelines also encourage an intersectional approach, recognizing how gender, age, geographic location and other identities interact with disability. In this context, IFAD’s 5R Action Plan to improve gender parity (2022–2026) serves as an additional framework to foster the attraction and recruitment of women with disabilities. Moving forward, implementation will need to be guided by the understanding that work processes may be carried out differently, and that IFAD personnel with disabilities can perform their roles equally well – without placing the burden of adaptation on them, while recognizing that reasonable accommodation is not an absolute right but is subject to an institutional reasonableness test and an undue hardship test, consistent with international standards.
31. In addition to individualized interventions, IFAD engages with staff through the IFAD Staff Association support group on disabilities (ISGD) to better assess and respond to the needs of staff with disabilities. ISGD is a voluntary employee resource group comprising staff who self-identify as having disabilities and staff with dependants with disabilities. The group consolidates general disability-related concerns and collaborates with Senior Management to identify and implement solutions. In 2024, the group participated in an open, moderated disability-focused event to share perspectives on how IFAD could become more disability confident.

32. Organization-wide learning opportunities are available to build staff capacity in disability inclusion. Since 2022, the disability inclusion e-learning course – developed through inter-agency collaboration between the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Secretariat and IFAD – has been available in English, French and Spanish via IFAD’s Learning Management System (LMS). Additional disability inclusion courses include IFAD’s Operations Academy pillar III – Disability Inclusion in IFAD’s Operations; and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy – Putting Words into Action (developed by the United Nations System Staff College). As of April 2025, however, course completion rates for these non-mandatory trainings remain low.
33. In 2023, IFAD launched mandatory DEI training for its workforce. This training includes content on perceptions and attitudes toward persons with disabilities and refers learners to additional learning opportunities available on the LMS. The mandatory nature of this course has resulted in higher levels of uptake and engagement compared to voluntary trainings. The People and Culture Division (PCD) has also curated LinkedIn Learning content on DEI, including modules specific to disability inclusion such as one on inclusion and equity for workers with disability.
34. In 2024, as part of preparations for rolling out the Reasonable Accommodation Guidelines, IFAD intensified capacity-building efforts targeting staff and designated focal points. Targeted training was delivered to supervisors, Staff Association disability focal persons, departmental representatives and personnel from PCD. Conducted over four days, the training engaged 58 participants. In-person capacity development on disability-inclusive programming has lagged, primarily due to limited staff capacity within ECG.
35. IFAD aligns with the United Nations Disability-Inclusive Communication Guidelines and has developed its own internal and external communications guidance on disability inclusion, accessible to all staff. Disability inclusion is integrated into IFAD’s broader communications – from leadership speeches and website content to multimedia stories shared via social media platforms. In 2024, the dedicated page on IFAD’s work on persons with disabilities has been updated to ensure consistency with the above-mentioned guidelines. The gender and social inclusion team also launched a disability inclusion newsletter, published quarterly, to promote awareness raising and knowledge exchange on this thematic area with staff and partners.

## **V. Way forward**

36. The findings of the midterm review reaffirm the relevance of IFAD’s Disability Inclusion Strategy as a guiding framework for IFAD’s work. To consolidate progress and address remaining gaps, a set of priority actions were identified across the four action areas of the strategy, particularly areas 2 and 3 which, based also on the results of the UNDIS report 2024, require further strengthening. These actions also aim to strengthen the implementation of the UNDIS, accelerating corporate efforts to deepen the integration of disability inclusion in IFAD’s operations and the workplace.

### **Action area 1: Leadership, strategic planning and management**

- Enhance the accountability framework for implementing the strategy and UNDIS by revising the existing disability inclusion action plan and identifying time-bound and costed deliverables, associated with clear roles and responsibilities for different departments and divisions.

- Strengthen the disability focal point network and expand it through the appointment of representatives of other relevant offices and divisions and reflecting their commitment in their PES.

### **Action area 2: Inclusiveness**

- Enhance accessibility of spaces, services and opportunities provided by IFAD to persons with disabilities, both in the workplace and through its operations, by:
  - Identifying additional mechanisms to enhance the consultations with OPDs and organizations working on disability inclusion in relevant consultation processes, either through existing stakeholder groupings or through direct engagement;
  - Reinforcing capacities of IFAD staff and implementing partners on how to ensure systematic consultation with OPDs and persons with disabilities at local and national level, especially to inform project design;
  - Conducting the baseline accessibility assessment envisioned by both the strategy and UNDIS, with a commitment to a structured assessment across decentralized offices, thereby strengthening both accountability and compliance; and
  - Ensuring accessibility of communication materials and relevant in-presence and virtual meetings, consultations and events to facilitate participation of persons with disabilities.

### **Action area 3: Programming**

- Strengthen the design and implementation of projects that target rural persons with disabilities through the following actions:
  - Develop accessible toolkits (e.g. "how-to-do" notes, checklists, case studies) based on SPARK and other documented good practices;
  - Produce a knowledge product on disability in fragile settings, showcasing evidence from IFAD's own projects, to guide future programming in these contexts;
  - Continue strengthening capacities of ECG staff responsible for social inclusion to support the mainstreaming of disability inclusion in IFAD-supported projects;
  - Build the capacities of project management units, implementing partners and government counterparts to effectively target and empower persons with disabilities, in line with IFAD's requirements;
  - Organize more knowledge-sharing sessions to expose IFAD staff and partners to disability-inclusive practices tailored to agricultural and rural development interventions;
  - Strengthen monitoring systems to track outreach and results on disability inclusion and contribute to a stronger evidence base on effective approaches to dismantle the barriers faced by persons with disabilities in rural settings. As an immediate next step, develop a note for projects targeting persons with disabilities, with guidance for supervision missions and project data entry in corporate systems; and
  - Introduce clearer performance and fiduciary measures to track disability inclusion outcomes and related expenditures. The upcoming review of corporate guidelines may offer an opportunity to embed social inclusion safeguards, with benchmarking against other international organizations.

- Reinforce the use of a twin-track approach by:
  - Mobilizing resources to deliver targeted initiatives (like the IFAD-funded grant SPARK), which are essential to accelerate IFAD's work with rural persons with disabilities and expand strategic partnerships with specialized organizations and representative groups;
  - Applying a disability-inclusive perspective in the design and implementation of IFAD-supported projects more systematically; and
  - Strengthening synergies across mainstreaming themes, integrating disability inclusion concerns in the work with rural youth and rural women's engagement and empowerment.

#### **Action area 4: Organizational culture**

- Expand the membership and enhance the visibility of ISGD to contribute to enhancing awareness within the organization;
- Adopt and monitor compliance with the forthcoming reasonable accommodation guidelines;
- Ensure that employees with disabilities are consulted and that their concerns can be raised and channelled to appropriate mechanisms, ensuring privacy and confidentiality;
- Increase uptake of the disability e-learning courses through:
  - (i) performance-based incentives; and
  - (ii) integration into onboarding processes; and
- Promote internal storytelling and recognition initiatives that highlight contributions by and for persons with disabilities. This may include establishing a Disability Inclusion Award for projects or corporate work with outstanding performance, building on the experience of the IFAD Gender Awards.