

**GREEN  
CLIMATE  
FUND**

**Meeting of the Board**  
21 – 24 October 2024  
Songdo, Incheon, Republic of Korea  
Provisional agenda item 10

**GCF/B.40/02/Add.02**

**30 September 2024**

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# Consideration of funding proposals – Addendum II

## Funding proposal package for SAP045

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### **Summary**

This addendum contains the following six parts:

- a) A funding proposal titled "Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders";
- b) No-objection letter issued by the national designated authority(ies) or focal point(s);
- c) Secretariat's assessment;
- d) Independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment;
- e) Response from the project-specific assessment approach applicant to the independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment; and
- f) Gender documentation.

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# Simplified Approval Process Funding Proposal

Project/Programme title:	Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders
Country(ies):	Burundi
National Designated Authority(ies):	Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock (MINEAGRIE)
Accredited Entity:	One Acre Fund
Date of first submission:	<u>2024-05-10 [V.1]</u>
Date of current submission/ version number	<u>2024-09-27</u>



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## A. PROJECT/PROGRAMME SUMMARY

<b>A.1. Has this FP been submitted as a SAP CN before?</b>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>A.2. Is the Environmental and Social Safeguards Category C or I-3?</b>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>A.3. Project or programme</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Programme	<b>A.4. Public or private sector</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public sector <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector	<b>A.5. RfP</b>	No
<b>A.6. Result area(s)</b>				<b>GCF Contribution</b>	<b>Co-financers' contribution<sup>1</sup></b>
	<b>Mitigation total</b>			<b>7.4%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy generation and access			0%	0%
	<input type="checkbox"/> Low emission transport			0%	0%
	<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings, cities and industries and appliances			0%	0%
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forestry and land use			7.4%	7.4%
	<b>Adaptation total</b>			<b>92.6%</b>	<b>92.6%</b>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Most vulnerable people and communities			10.8%	10.8%
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health and well-being, and food and water security			81.8%	81.8%
	<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure and built environment			0%	0%
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ecosystem and ecosystem services			0%	0%
<b>A.7.1. Expected mitigation outcome</b> <i>(Core indicator 1: GHG emissions reduced, avoided or removed / sequestered)</i>	1.99M tCO <sub>2</sub> eq (permanent removals)	<b>A.7.2 Expected adaptation outcome</b> <i>(Core indicator 2: direct and indirect beneficiaries reached)</i>	2.3M total beneficiaries		
			1.54M direct beneficiaries	0.77M indirect beneficiaries <sup>2</sup>	
			10% of total population <sup>3</sup>	5% of total population	

<sup>1</sup> Co-financer's contribution means the financial resources required, whether Public Finance or Private Finance, in addition to the GCF contribution (i.e. GCF financial resources requested by the Accredited Entity) to implement the project or programme described in the funding proposal.

<sup>2</sup> GCF defines indirect beneficiaries as farmers that receive 'measurable adaptation benefit' without targeted support from the GCF-funded intervention. 1AF counts the number of indirect beneficiaries (household members) that will achieve a measurable increase in household income compared to true non-project enrolled farmers as a result of spillover impacts of the project (non-enrolled farmers adopt the same practices as their project-participating neighbors). The project methodology to determine indirect beneficiaries is conservative, and translates to a ratio of 0.5 indirect beneficiaries for every 1 direct beneficiary. Annex 2 provides a detailed overview.

<sup>3</sup> This assumes 15.4M people in Burundi by the year 2029 ([source](#)). This project is expected to reach >13% of the smallholder pop.

<b>A.8.1. Total investment (GCF + co-finance<sup>4</sup>)</b>	Amount: \$35,000,000	<b>A.8.2 Total GCF funding requested (max USD 25M)</b>	Amount: \$25,000,000
<b>A.9. Type of financial instrument requested for the GCF funding</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Loan <sup>5</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Equity <input type="checkbox"/> Guarantees <input type="checkbox"/> Others:		
<b>A.10. Implementation period (months)</b>	60 months	<b>A.11. Total project/ programme lifespan (years)</b>	25 years
<b>A.12. Expected date of internal approval</b>	05/09/2024	<b>A.13. Has Readiness or PPF support been used to prepare this FP?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>A.14. Is this FP included in the entity work programme?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>A.15. Is this FP included in the country programme?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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### A.16. Executing Entity information

1. Founded in 2006, One Acre Fund (hereinafter: 1AF) is a non-profit delivering a bundled solution to the lowest-income, typically women-led staple-crop farm families. 1AF has laid a strong groundwork over the past 18 years and serves 1.5M+ farm families directly in nine countries in rural East and Southern Africa. These countries include Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Burundi. 1AF offers financing, input distribution, training and market facilitation via a team of 4000+ rural-based field officers. 1AF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation founded and registered in the U.S. and is the parent legal entity. The implementation arrangements are described in Annex 2 section 4.5.1., and the 1AF core model is covered in Annex 2, section 5.1.
2. The Burundi 1AF branch is consolidated under the U.S. 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation; *this Burundi branch is not a separate legal entity from the U.S. non-profit*. Therefore, the U.S. non-profit entity is both the Accredited Entity (AE) and the Executing Entity (EE), with the project executed through its Burundi branch. The Burundi branch has 1088 in-country staff members, and is headquartered in the town of Muramvya, Muramvya Province.
3. For over 10 years (since 2011), the Burundi 1AF branch has worked with farmers to help them to improve food security, build permanent pathways out of poverty and become more resilient to the negative impacts of climate change. This track record is covered in Annex 2, section 5. In summary, 1AF strives to build three levels of resilience for Burundian smallholder households:
  - **Food security:** 1AF provides farmers with the inputs and on-farm advisory and extension support needed to increase harvest yields by 40% or more, and therefore achieve greater food security. 1AF also supports farmers to optimize production from staples such as maize and beans, and ensures access to a diverse, nutritious set of products, such as vegetables and poultry.
  - **Income security:** 1AF helps farmers to improve their livelihoods by diversifying their revenue streams, and thereby build farm income and household assets over time. 1AF also provides access to high-value agroforestry species, including fruit (such as avocado) and timber (such as grevillea) trees, as well as solar technology which helps to save on fuel costs.
  - **Climate resilience:** 1AF supports farmers to build multiple layers of resilience to the impacts of climate change. This includes supporting farmers to improve their farm soil health (e.g. through organic composting), the provision of agro-ecologically tailored and improved farm inputs (e.g. imported hybrid seed), and agroforestry tree planting at scale.
4. This structure is implemented through 22 core operating districts in Burundi, which are spread across six provinces in central, northern and north-eastern parts of the country: Gitega, Mwaro, Muramvya, Kayanza, Ngozi, Muyinza. With funding from GCF, 1AF will expand to an additional five districts over a five-year period, mostly in the west and north. The additional project-supported districts include Ruyigi<sup>6</sup>, Kirundo, Karuzi, Cankuzo, and Rutana. With this expansion, 1AF will operate in 11 out of 17 total provinces in Burundi.

### A.17. Scalability and potential for transformation (max. 100 words)

5. Building off 1AF's strong historical track record in Burundi<sup>7</sup>—extremely high year-on-year re-enrollment and deep impacts on farmer livelihoods—this GCF-funded project will sustainably build the adaptation capacity of

<sup>4</sup> Refer to the Policy on Co-financing of the GCF.

<sup>5</sup> Senior loans and subordinated loans.

<sup>6</sup> Expansion to Ruyigi is currently taking place in the 2024A season; expansion to the other four new districts (Kirundo, Karuzi, Cankuzo, and Rutana) will take place during the project period 2025-29.

<sup>7</sup> This track record is explored in more detail in section D.6.3.

smallholders in the face of climate change and drive meaningful mitigation outcomes at scale.

- **Climate adaptation:** This project will serve 10% of the total population in the country directly (>13% of the *smallholder* population) by 2029, supporting these vulnerable farming households to achieve improved climate resilience. Namely, each project household is project to achieve an average of ~\$100 of new annual farming income, and an estimated \$1500 in accumulated household assets after two years enrolled. Considering the existing scale of 1AF, the funding for this project will enable a ~2x rapid scale-up of 1AF's operations in Burundi. When indirect beneficiaries are included, this project will reach 15% of the total population (as well as 20% of the smallholder population).
  - **Climate mitigation:** In addition, this project will make a meaningful contribution to global climate change mitigation efforts: 26,000+ hectares of land will be sustainably restored through rural agroforestry, representing a cumulative 1.99M tCO<sub>2</sub>eq of permanent removals.
6. This project will generate practical lessons in the smallholder agricultural space that will be spread through 1AF's network of private and public partners in Burundi. These partners include local government/extension system actors and private sector entities, who are typically involved in rural service delivery. Through annual National Advisory Council (NAC)<sup>8</sup> meetings and a one-time workshop at the end of the project, the project will share of best practices with these stakeholders, enabling them to build off its key lessons and multiply impacts. This knowledge dissemination effort will contribute towards building strong institutions (private and public) in Burundi, strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders to support vulnerable households to build climate resilience.
  7. Several years of investment in proactive government relations have supported an enabling environment, and recently a major milestone in 1AF's program history was achieved: a five-year renewable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with the Burundian national government. This MOU will ensure the stability of this project over the five-year implementation period, as well as future continued support to smallholder farmers. While Burundi remains a dynamic operating environment, 1AF is presently in its strongest ever position vis-a-vis government alignment across smallholder adaptation and climate change mitigation objectives.

#### A.18. Project/Programme rationale, objectives and approach (max. 300 words)

8. There exists a range of root causes and barriers that contribute to widespread lack of climate resilience and food insecurity among Burundian smallholders, explored in depth in Annex 2, section 2. In a nutshell, rural farmers have been left at the fringes of adaptation and climate-resilient oriented work. This is because of a challenging operating environment borne from historic geo-political turmoil (such as 1993-2005 civil war) and explained below.
9. Smallholder farmers lack access to high-quality agricultural inputs within a reasonable distance of their doorsteps, and which are accessible before the rains begin. Most farmers also rely on traditional/unoptimized farming methods, which widens the yield gap for staple crops because of sub-optimal farming practices and soil degradation. The World Food Programme (WFP) reports that few people are trained in agricultural activities; farmers lack understanding of how to intensify agricultural production on small plots of land sustainably, and do not choose seed varieties resistant to climatic hazards.<sup>9</sup> Farmers also lack access to a range of good quality, diverse agroforestry species, and training on their cultivation and maintenance. There is generally limited knowledge about crop farming or agroforestry practices that are climate smart (i.e. good for soil health).
10. The above barriers exist in the context of a challenging socio-economic environment. Burundi is one of the world's poorest countries, yet it has one of the world's highest population densities. Most of the population lives in extreme poverty, with rural farmers comprising the largest share of the ultra-poor. Although 86% of the population depends on rainfed agriculture for their livelihood,<sup>10</sup> as mentioned above, yields fall short relative to global production. This means that the real-world consequences of food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition, are commonplace and widespread. More than 46% of newly enrolled supported farmers report eating less than they should be due to

<sup>8</sup> The National Advisory Council meets annually, and includes representatives from the Ministry of Environment Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and private sector.

<sup>9</sup> See Annex 2, page 44.

<sup>10</sup> According to the World Bank, ~86% of Burundi's population lives in rural areas ([source](#)).

lack of resources. By the age of five, more than 50% of Burundian children experience stunted growth. As a result of these realities, the Global Hunger Index consistently ranks Burundi as one of the world's hungriest countries.<sup>11</sup>

11. Despite widespread food insecurity and poverty, farmers in Burundi do not have access to financial services to fall back on. WFP notes that most households do not have access to microcredit, and that traditional microfinancing schemes are for sums that are too low to create sufficient access to quality farm inputs/products.<sup>12</sup>
12. Climate change is exacerbating these acute vulnerabilities; Burundi ranks in the top quintile of most climate-vulnerable countries, despite having the fourth-lowest global rate of per capita carbon emissions.<sup>13 14</sup> Namely—and as explored in Annex 2—the country contributed just 0.01% of the world's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2022<sup>15</sup>, ranking 171st out of 210 countries across the world at less than 0.1 tons per capita.<sup>16</sup> With a population that is at once dense and rural, and whose livelihoods are predominately sourced from smallholder agriculture, Burundi's rural farmers are acutely vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change.
13. The Burundian government has not had the resources to put its plans to address climate risks and smallholder vulnerability into action. That said, the government *has* successfully created different documents that highlight the country's commitment to fight adverse effects of climate change, explored in more depth in section D.5. Although many of these plans could legitimately help address vulnerabilities within and throughout Burundi, the State lacks the financial capacity to implement them at scale. This is not due to governmental failure, but rather, to a lack of financial resources. WFP notes that existing social protection programmes are constrained by fiscal deficits.<sup>17</sup>
14. 1AF has already established a successful model in Burundi that provides smallholders with input funding/delivery, training, and trees. This model has proven positive effects on farmers' adoption of climate-smart techniques, tree planting, and household profits. However, 1AF requires the support of mission-aligned partners, such as GCF, to scale up this model to a greater portion of ultra-poor households. This will help to explicitly address the drivers that will otherwise make the problems of food insecurity and climate vulnerability worse in Burundi in the coming decades. The funding will also support 1AF to embed more deeply with the Burundi government's priorities to drive farmer climate adaptation, thereby helping to drive future, long-term impacts.

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<sup>11</sup> [World Bank data; Global Hunger Index 2022](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Ibid](#)

<sup>13</sup> [ND-GAIN 2020; Our World in Data 2021](#)

<sup>14</sup> Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative

<sup>15</sup> Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR): [GHG emissions of all world countries report](#) (2023)

<sup>16</sup> [Burundi: CO2 Country Profile](#) (Our World in Data)

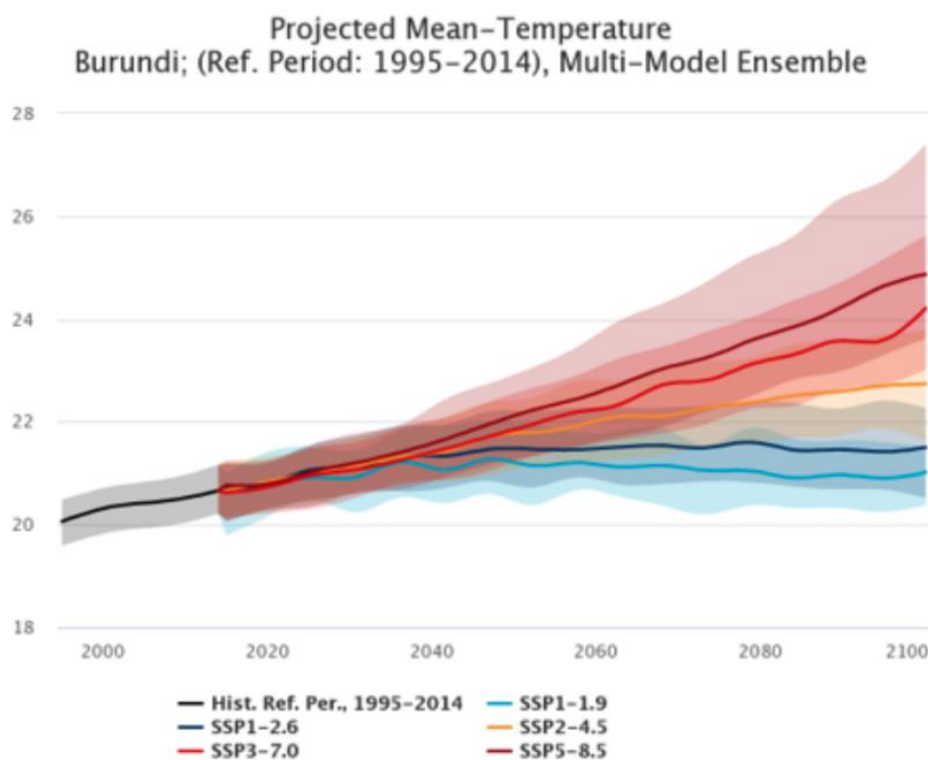
<sup>17</sup> [Burundi Country Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#) (WFP)



### B.1. Context and baseline (max. 500 words)

15. The climate rationale for this project is explored in great depth in Annex 2, section 3, and summarized below. First, it is important to highlight the climate change trend in Burundi.

- **Temperature rise** - Burundi has a tropical climate with average temperatures ranging between 16 °C and 25 °C with most of the country receiving between 1300 and 1600 mm of rainfall a year<sup>18</sup>. As a largely rural, landlocked country, climate change is very evident in Burundi and expected to have far reaching consequences on all key sectors of the economy. Studies show that between 1950 and 2021, mean annual temperatures have risen from 24.9 degrees Celsius to 26.2 degrees Celsius.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, temperatures in Burundi are expected to rise by up to 2.5 degrees Celsius by 2050 (compared to 2019 levels).<sup>20</sup> Similarly, under an RCP8.5 scenario, projected daily-mean surface temperatures in Burundi are expected to rise from approximate 20.5 degrees Celsius in 2020 to 25 degrees Celsius in 2050, indicated substantial increases to both daily highs *and* daily lows. Meanwhile, temperature variability in 2021-2050 is expected to increase by 23.8%.<sup>21</sup>



**Figure 1:** Projected Mean Temperatures in Burundi under various SSP scenarios

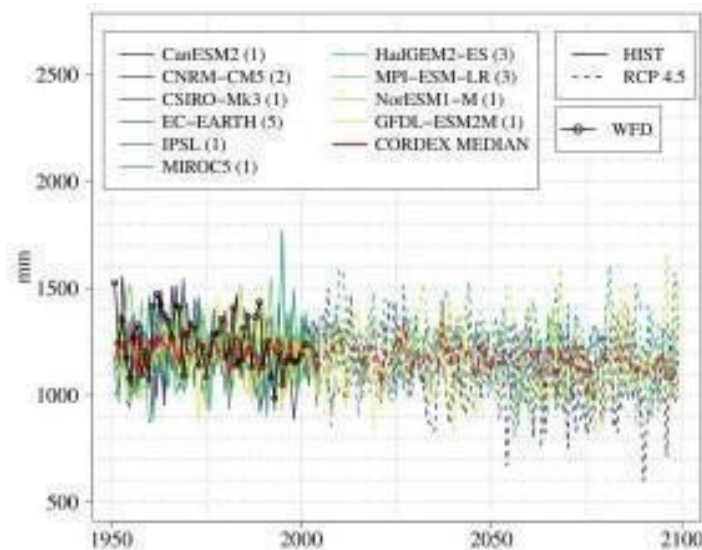
- **Rainfall variability** - Annual precipitation has also become significantly more variable. Compared to a baseline average taken between 2000 and 2018, rainfall during Burundi's 2023 December-February wet season increased from a one-day high of about 32mm to a one-day high of about 68mm.<sup>22</sup> Precipitation values are also projected to increase by around 10% under the medium (RCP 4.5). Per the model depicted in Figure 2 below, these changes will continue towards the middle and end of the century.<sup>23</sup> The changes in precipitation and temperature have also caused significant changes in the frequency and intensity of extreme events such as floods and droughts. In the worst-case RCP 8.5 scenario, precipitation during the dry season is expected to drop by 25% from 2014 baseline levels by 2060.<sup>24</sup> This would increase both the severity and frequency of drought conditions, which will have far reaching consequences on the agriculture sector. For example, per a 2021 study, using data collected from 1981-2017, drought conditions profoundly negatively affected crop yields in Burundi.<sup>25</sup> Another study, using the

<sup>18</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Source](#)

same years' data, determined that drought conditions can explain approximately 50% of any downturn in maize yields in Burundi occurring under particularly dry periods.<sup>26</sup>



(c) Annual precipitation in the south of Burundi for the historical scenario and RCP 4.5

**Figure 2:** Annual precipitation figures in the South of Burundi based on the RCP 4.5 scenario

- 16. Climate change vulnerability and impact on agriculture:** Agriculture contributes to about half of the GDP of Burundi, making it a key sector in national economic development. The sector employs about 85% of the population. Farming is largely rainfed and subsistence with maize, beans, rice, and cassava as the main staple food crops is commonplace. Therefore, although largely produced on less than an acre of land, smallholder farming systems make substantial contributions to household and national food security requirements. This notwithstanding, agriculture is highly vulnerable to climate change: highly variable and unpredictable rainfall patterns, rising temperatures and extreme events such as droughts and floods.
- 17.** Recent studies show that climate change is expected to exacerbate food insecurity in Burundi, with the WFP warning that hunger in the country could worsen in the coming years. Burundi is particularly vulnerable to hazards described above. These hazards can lead to compounding concerns like deforestation, soil erosion, and displacement. Climate change hazards, particularly droughts, heavy rains and interannual rainfall variability, have intensified and they are triggering major impacts to the agricultural production, food and water security in the project's proposed operating geographies. These yield reductions are likely to be particularly damaging for maize and beans - the most important staple crops in Burundi for smallholders.

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<sup>21</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>23</sup> Rivas-López, M. Rocío, et al. "Potential Hydro-Meteorological Impacts over Burundi from Climate Change." *Journal of Hydrology: Regional Studies*, vol. 42, 2022, p. 101130. [Source](#).

<sup>24</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Source](#)

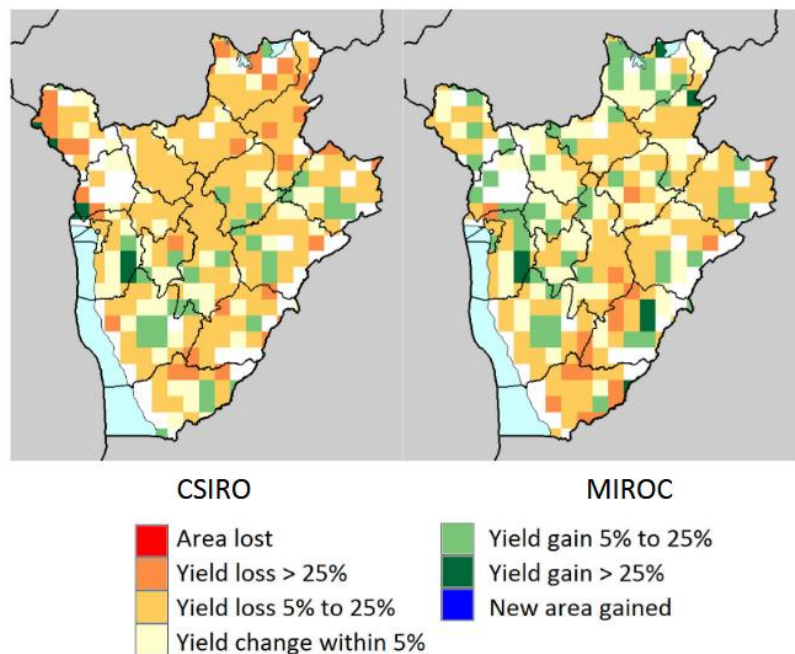
<sup>26</sup> [Source](#)

Threats	Affected LHZs	Impacts	Contributing factors
<b>Climate-related threats</b>			
Droughts	2, 3	Reduced yields	Lack of irrigation infrastructure
Water deficits	1, 4	Reduced yields	Water management, sediment management, overexploitation
Landslides	1,4	Road closures/transport impediment	Deforestation, land degradation, heavier rains
Flooding	1, 2, 4	Reduced yields; increased landslides	Poor infrastructure

**Figure 3:** Climate-related threats in Burundi and their impacts

18. Under the current realities of climate change, yields of major food crops are likely to reduce substantially. For example, as seen in the below Figure, maize production in certain parts of Burundi will decrease by 25% compared to 2005 levels.<sup>27</sup>

**CHANGES IN YIELD WITH CLIMATE CHANGE: RAINFED MAIZE**



**Figure 4:** Predicted maize crop yield loss by 2050 due to extreme heat and drought, compared to 2005 levels.

19. Taken together, each of the discussed hazards will contribute to reduced maize and bean yields in Burundi, although this might not be immediately apparent. Compared to a 2020 baseline, under worst-case RCP8.5 scenarios, overall maize production in Burundi is expected to *increase* by 60.1% by 2050. However, this value is 9.8% *lower* than it be absent global warming and its effects. Meanwhile, bean production is already dropping

<sup>27</sup> [Source](#)

precipitously in Burundi, with yields decreasing by approximately 28.4% between 2000 and 2020. Climate change is likely to worsen this, with an RCP8.5 scenario lowering bean yields by 20.3% by 2050, compared to 2005 levels.<sup>28</sup>

Crop	Emission scenario	Yield change (%) in 2050
Maize	RCP 4.5	-10%, compared to 2018 values*
	RCP 8.5	-9.8%, compared to projected 2050 values absent climate change-related hazards
Beans	RCP 4.5	-14%, compared to 2018 values*
	RCP 8.5	-20.3%, compared to 2005 values
Sorghum	RCP 4.5	-4%, compared to 2018 values*
	RCP 8.5	-8.4%, compared to 2005 values
Rice	RCP 8.5	-21.1%, compared to 2005 values
Wheat	RCP 8.5	-16.6%, compared to 2005 values
Potatoes	RCP 4.5	-10%, compared to 2018 values*
	RCP 8.5	-16%, compared to 2018 values*
Sweet Potatoes	RCP 4.5	No change in yield, compared to 2018 values*
	RCP 8.5	-3%, compared to 2018 values*

**Figure 5:** Yield change in staple crops under various RCP scenarios<sup>29</sup>

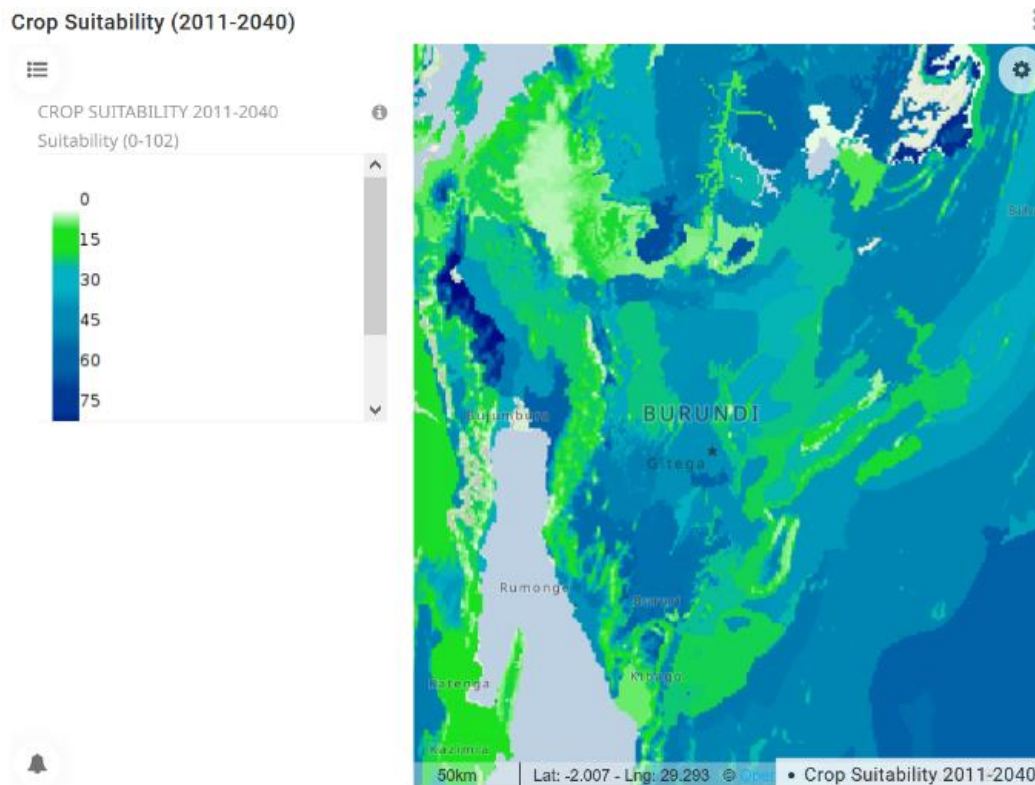
**20.** Moreover, Burundi is projected to lose crop suitability throughout large swaths of the country by 2040. This can be seen in the below figure, where “not suitable” and “marginally suitable” cropland covers a significant area in Burundi.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>29</sup> \*Values marked with an asterisk are taken from a study done in a country in nearby proximity to Burundi with near-identical climates, topographies, and demographics. [Source](#).

<sup>30</sup> [Source](#)



**Figure 6:** Projected crop suitability in Burundi between 2011 and 2040.

**21.** In short, the direct consequences of the climate hazards on agriculture include a reduction in the productive potential of agroecosystems and increasing smallholders’ food and water insecurity across most of the country. As explored in section A.18, Burundi already suffers from widespread food insecurity and malnutrition.<sup>31</sup> Continuing yield losses would exacerbate these harms. Food insecurity would increase among subsistence farmers, who are unable to grow enough food to feed themselves and their families. Meanwhile, food prices would increase, as the supply dwindles. This would cause malnutrition to worsen, potentially having a disproportionate impact on children.

**22. Burundian farmers’ lack of adaptive capacity:** As explored in section A.18, the Burundian government has made strides in creating plans to address climate risks in Burundi, but it has not had the resources to put those plans into action on the ground.<sup>32</sup> Burundi does not receive overseas development assistance (ODA) or foreign direct investment (FDI) at the same rate as neighboring countries.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, farmers lack knowledge about climate smart practices or of how to intensify agricultural production on small plots of land sustainably.<sup>34</sup> This is in the context of a country that, as a reminder, has the highest rate of poverty worldwide.<sup>35</sup> WFP notes that the high cost of soil amendments, fertilizer, and improved/adapted seeds prevent farmers from using them.<sup>36</sup> The figure below details the combined impacts of the socio-economic and political barriers explained in section A.18., with the expected environmental hazards explained above, in order to illustrate the vicious pressures that ultimately drive food insecurity and a loss of livelihoods among rural farmers.

<sup>31</sup> Roughly half of all children in the country experiencing stunted ([source](#))

<sup>32</sup> [Burundi Country Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#) (WFP)

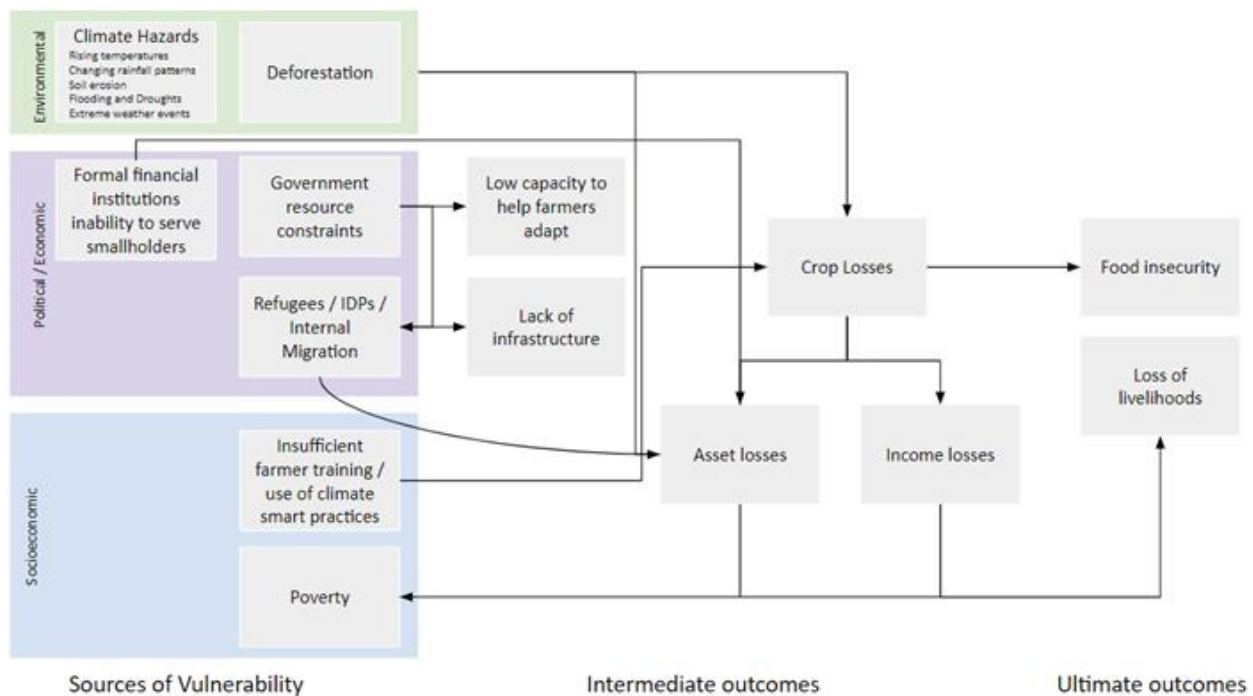
<sup>33</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>34</sup> [Climate Response Analysis for Adaptation - Burundi](#) (WFP, 2022)

<sup>35</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>36</sup> [Climate Response Analysis for Adaptation - Burundi](#) (WFP, 2022)





**Figure 7:** How smallholder vulnerabilities contribute to greater food insecurity and loss of livelihoods

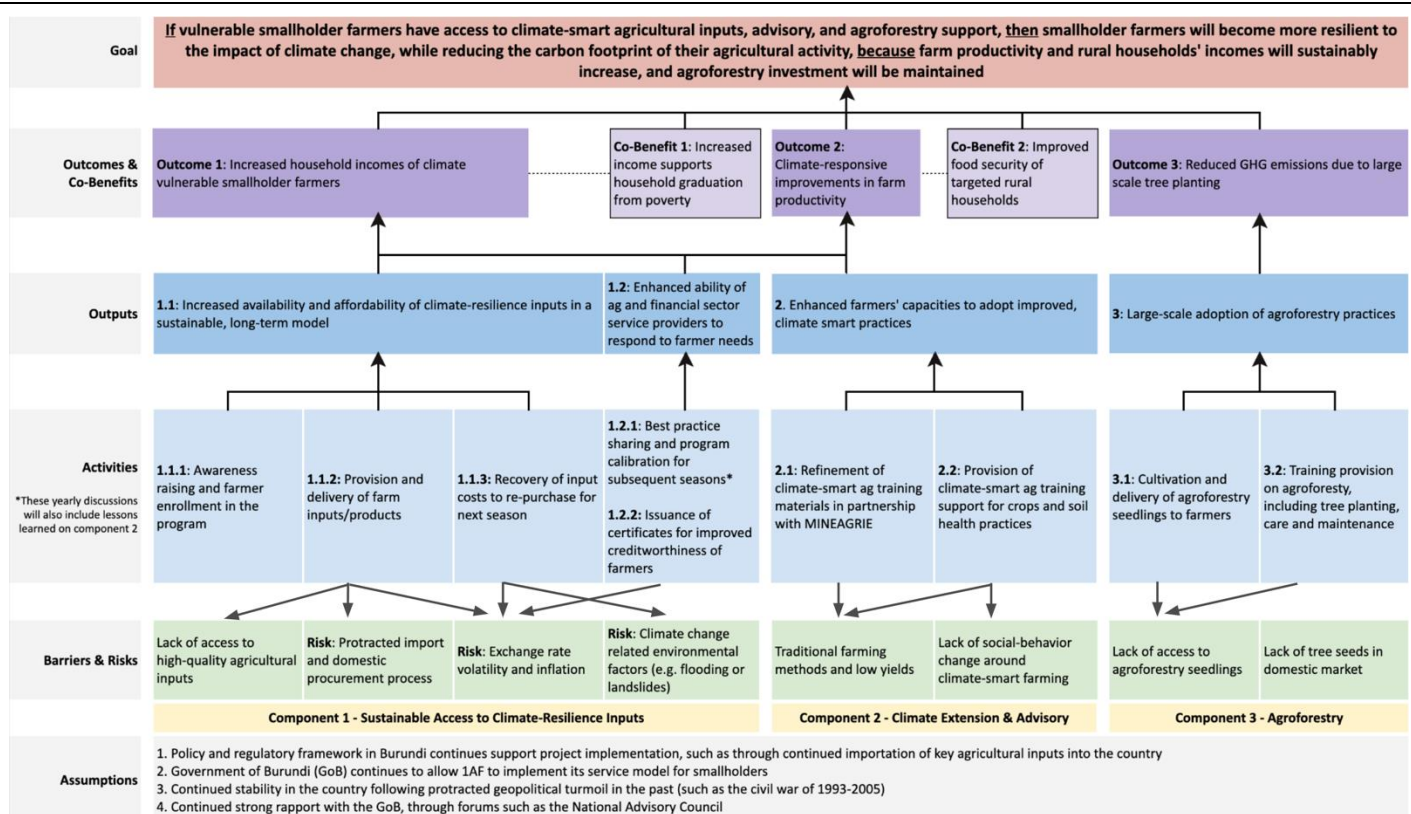
**23. How the project will help to address climate vulnerability in Burundi:** 1AF already addresses the discussed climate change impacts issues through its farmer services. Agricultural inputs to farmers help to ensure they have access to the resources needed to maximize harvests. Training programs supplement efforts led by the Burundian government to better educate rural smallholders on land management best practices.<sup>37</sup> These include instruction, in the local language, on how best to rotate crops, affix nitrogen, sustainably plant seeds, make and use compost, and “microdose” fertilizer for maximum effectiveness with minimal risk of environmental contamination. 1AF also offers support services for cash crops to test and identify crops which show promise in terms of adaptability to current and future conditions as well as potential for additional profit over traditional staple crops. Reforestation, meanwhile, is widely considered to be one of the easiest ways to combat climate change. 1AF seeks to contribute to carbon capture and reduce pressure on existing forests through its Tree Program, having already planted over 5.3 million trees through 180,000 participating farmers in 2022 alone.<sup>38</sup> These comprehensive smallholder focused interventions are summarized in section B.2.1. of this proposal, and covered in section 3.6 of Annex 2.

### B.2.1. Project/Programme description (max. 1,000 words)

**24.** This project’s underlying Theory of Change is that *if* vulnerable smallholder farmers have access to climate-smart agricultural inputs, advisory, and agroforestry support, *then* they will become more resilient to the impact of climate change, while reducing the carbon footprint of their agricultural activity, *because* farm productivity and rural households’ incomes will sustainably increase, and agroforestry investment will be maintained. Figure 8 below provides a visual overview of the Theory of Change, and Annex 2, section 4 provides a fuller deep dive into project-specific details.

<sup>37</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Source](#)



**Figure 8: Theory of Change diagram**

**25.** This project will use a three-pronged approach to address smallholder vulnerabilities and build climate resilience in Burundi. This includes: (1) **sustainable access to climate-resilience inputs**, (2) **climate extension and advisory services** and (3) **agroforestry support**. Each one of the 303,000 farming households<sup>39</sup> reached by 2029 will receive these critical interventions. The project will advertise the program and interested farming households will enroll as described in Annex 2, sections 4.1 and 4.2. The project's paradigm shift potential is explained in sections A.17 and D.2, and in depth in Annex 2a.

- **Input provision** – To identify farmers' needs, data from 'crop mix' and qualitative studies were utilized. The project will use these lessons to guide farmers on what crops and varieties (e.g. higher yielding/drought-resistant varieties) are best suited to their agroecological context. This will be complemented with planting timing recommendations, equipping farmers to optimize planting of a wide range of diverse crops. Crop offerings will include the primary staple crops of *maize* and *beans*, and secondary food crops such as *tomatoes* and *avocados*. This diverse product package is expected to contribute to multiple secondary benefits. For example, by offering several crop options, farmers will have the option to diversify their farm production, helping to alleviate malnutrition and improve farm-level biodiversity (a key driver of resilience). It also will de-risk farmers from low prices on staple crop markets. This overview and the specific activities under this component are covered in Annex 2, section 4.2.
- **Climate extension and advisory** – The project will provide agronomic training to support farmers to not only increase yields—which leads to better food security—but also improve soil health. 1AF has tailored and refined these training and product offerings to the needs of farmers since starting its operations in Burundi. For example, the legumes (beans) that the project will support are expected to contribute directly to soil nutrition and improved yields from maize because of nitrogen fixation. This project will engage the International Fertilizer and Development Corporation (IFDC) to scale up the adoption of agricultural lime as part of a 'step change' behavior change campaign to reduce on-farm soil acidity. In addition, farmers will be trained on compost creation and application, using green matter that is readily available at the farm. Each of these climate-smart interventions are expected to add a layer of farm-level resilience, helping to maximize nutrient uptake, drive up organic matter, reduce the risk of erosion, and

<sup>39</sup> See Annex 2 Figure 38a for a summary of eligibility criteria

drive an overall improvement in soil health. This overview and the specific activities under this component are covered in Annex 2, section 4.3.

- **Agroforestry** – This project will build the long-term climate-resilience of smallholder farmers by providing an agroforestry package of fruit trees and sustainable timber, with training focused on tree survival. This will include inputs/seedlings and training support for the following species - *grevillea* and *calliandra*, as well as a perennial fruit tree *banana*. Trees enable farmers to realize multiple direct and secondary benefits, such as better household nutrition, access to supplemental animal fodder, and act as an important shield against erosion. Farmers will also benefit from diversified income through sustainable timber or fruit sales; further shielding farmers against single-season climatic shocks. Trees are also highly resistant to weather events that might destroy crops (such as flooding, low rainfall and drought) and disease, therefore acting as an ‘insurance plan’ in case of crop failure.
  - In addition to these adaptation-focused activities, this project aims to run a hillside agroforestry pilot to test agroforestry and anti-erosion planting required to explicitly address the hazards of landslides and flooding. This overview and the specific activities under this component are covered in Annex 2, section 4.4.

**26.** These interventions are aimed at creating a virtuous cycle that boosts farmer incomes (by an expected \$100 annually per household) and their climate resilience. This is intended to incentivize further investment in improved agriculture and agroforestry and prevent the harvesting of existing environmental stocks. It will also drive sequestration of atmospheric carbon, with an expected 1.99M tCO<sub>2</sub>eq of permanent removals.

**27.** Each project component, with associated activities and outputs/outcomes, is explored in more detail below, and part of a three-pronged approach to deepen the climate resilience of smallholder farmers in Burundi. Through the project’s innovative funding cycle, these three key elements are expected to remain sustainable in the long-term.

- **Component 1** – The project will provide sustainable access to climate-resilience inputs, which will result in the increased availability and affordability of these inputs in a sustainable, long-term model (Output 1.1), as well as enhance the ability of the agricultural and financial sector service providers to respond to farmer needs (Output 1.2). Overall, this will result in increased household incomes of climate vulnerable smallholder farmers (Outcome 1).
  - **Output 1.1 activities:** These activities are designed to address farmers’ historic lack of access to financing mechanisms and high-quality inputs. The project will raise awareness through 1AF’s network of field officers, and via enrollment meetings (as described in the Annex 2 sections 4.1 and 4.2). Farmer enrollments will take place from April to May (for the A season which takes place from September to January), and October to November (for the B season which takes place from February to June). This project will offer a suite of agricultural inputs to enrolled farmers (see table in Annex 2 section 4.2) on a reimbursable basis. It will also offer the ‘last-mile’ delivery of these inputs to hard-to-reach rural locations, within walking distance of all farmers served. Once enrolled farmers have accessed and utilized their inputs, they will make reimbursements on their own schedule and at any time throughout the season, until the full input cost is recovered. This approach has been very successful historically at 1AF, with <2% year-on-year leakage; i.e. >98% recovery of total input costs through farmer contributions.
  - **Output 1.2 activities:** These activities are designed to lead to long-term, pro-smallholder shifts in the larger agricultural and financial sectors. The project will organize a one-time workshop that brings actors in these ecosystems together, and then share learnings/best practices on smallholder farmer extension provision and agroforestry (as well as the key mechanisms that enable widespread adoption). Best practices will also be shared through NAC meetings. Further, every year the project will offer certificates to detail the creditworthiness of farmers that successfully provide a contribution of 100% of the total value of inputs ordered. These certificates are designed to support farmers’ financial access, as they can be presented to potential financial service providers/MFIs.
- **Component 2** – The project will provide climate extension and advisory services to farmers, which will lead to enhanced farmers’ capacities to adopt improved, climate smart practices (Output 2), and support overall climate-responsive improvements in farm productivity (Outcome 2).
  - **Activities:** The activities under this component are designed to address farmers’ use of traditional farming methods; a result of the lack of social behavior change around improved farming technologies. The project will work with MINEAGRIE (the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock) to ensure that the climate smart agriculture trainings offered by 1AF conform to technical guidance approved by the Ministry and integrate best practices offered by



the sector. Once a farmer training is either initially created or changed substantially (in terms of the technical lessons being taught), the appropriate office of the MINEAGRIE will be engaged to validate it. Under this project, 1AF will also regularly engage with the agricultural sector to gather additional best practices for integration into the training regimen. Once these sector reviews are complete, farmers will be trained to enhance their soil health and to grow a diverse range of crops—comprising grains, legumes, and vegetables—with a seed menu optimized for farmers’ micro-climate, soil type, and other agroecological factors. Taken together, the suite of climate-smart training materials offered will be specifically tailored to build smallholder resilience to a changing climate. The soil health component will cover practices such as composting, lime application (to reduce soil acidity) and optimal application of mineral fertilizer using the ‘microdosing’ method.<sup>40</sup>

- **Component 3** – The project will provide agroforestry support (seedlings and training) to farmers, which will lead to the large-scale adoption of agroforestry practices (Output 3), and ultimately contribute to reduced GHG emissions due to large scale tree planting (Outcome 3).
  - **Activities:** These activities are designed to address farmers’ historic lack of access to agroforestry support. Seedlings will be cultivated at centralized (directly managed via this project) and ‘decentralized’ (managed by community members that are trained and equipped to run the nursery, and overseen via this project). These seedlings will then be distributed to smallholders, who typically plant their trees alongside cereal crops, i.e. in alleys within fields or as borders around fields. Throughout the project, ongoing research will be conducted on the best species selection to offer to farmers. In addition, farmers will receive training on not only the value of trees, but also proper techniques for management; focusing especially on tree survival.

**28.** Each component was designed based on a track record of measurable impact, especially among women. Burundi is where 1AF has seen the greatest impact from its model, with extremely high year-on-year re-enrollment. In 2023, for instance, farmers in Burundi generated an average 51% of incremental income on supported activities when compared to unenrolled farmers; well above the 35% organization-wide average. In addition, while 35-45% of enrolled farmers in Burundi are women, 1AF has found through surveys that women comprise most climate-smart training attendees (62% in 2023) and household members who do most of the farming (76% in 2023) are women, demonstrating measurable impacts and empowerment among female farmers. A detailed gender action plan can be found in Annex 4, outlining how this project will ensure that women farmers continue to be effectively supported. In addition, 1AF results are covered in Annex 2, section 5.3.1.

**29.** To support knowledge dissemination and replication of best practices, key lessons will be shared through a one-time workshop that will include key private (especially from the financial and agricultural sectors) and public stakeholders. The project will hold further workshops throughout the five-year project period via the NAC, which includes representatives from the Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and representatives from the private sector. These activities are captured in Activity 1.2.1 in the Theory of Change and contribute to Output 1.2.

### B.2.2. Outcome mapping to GCF results areas and co-benefits categorization

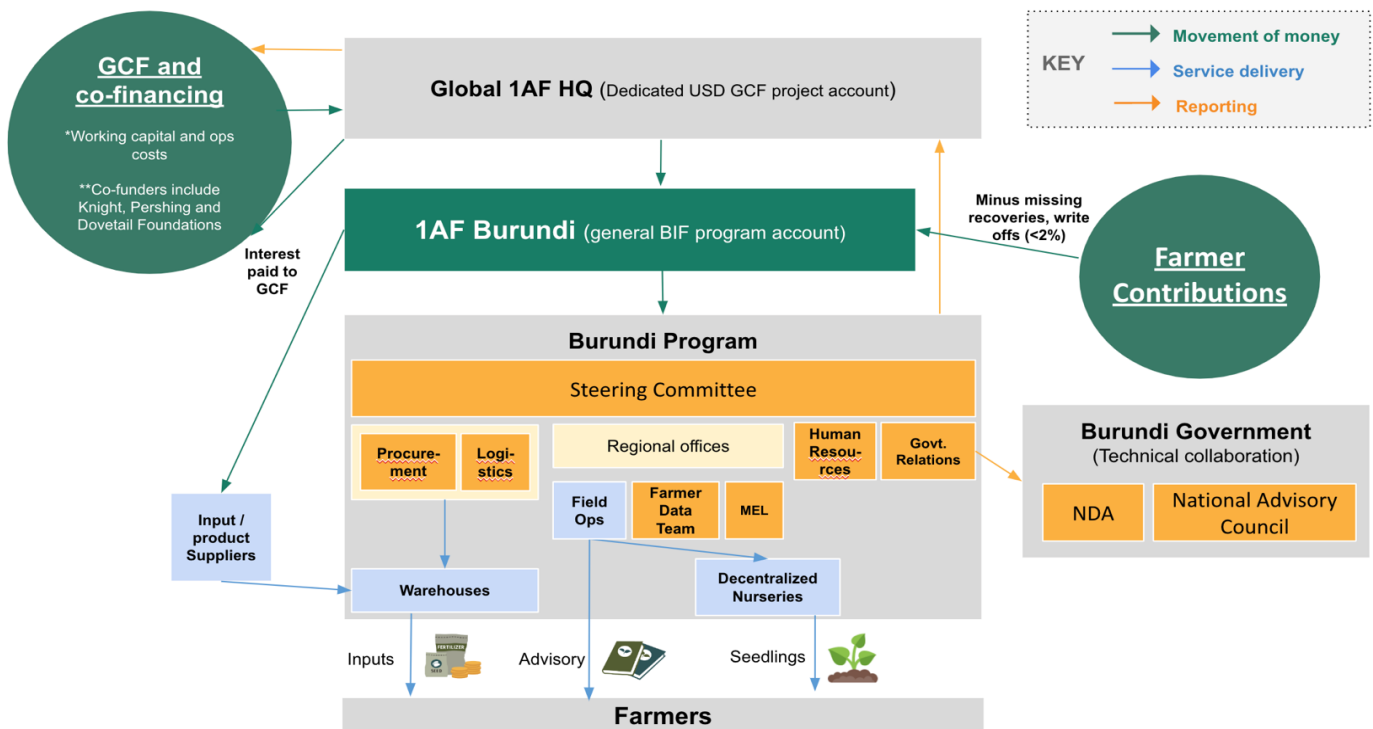
Outcome number	GCF Mitigation Results Area (MRA 1-4)				GCF Adaptation Results Area (ARA 1-4)			
	MRA 1 Energy generation and access	MRA 2 Low-emission transport	MRA 3 Building, cities, industries, appliances	MRA 4 Forestry and land use	ARA 1 Most vulnerable people and communities	ARA 2 Health, well-being, food and water security	ARA 3 Infrastructure and built environment	ARA 4 Ecosystems and ecosystem services

<sup>40</sup> Burundi is a small country with significant constraints on available land. Although 1AF trains farmers in organic composting, on both a countrywide level and an individual farm level, it is not possible to make enough organic fertilizer from traditional sources (e.g. manure and compost) to meet the total need for soil nutrients. That said, 1AF trains farmers in the application of mineral fertilizer using the ‘micro-dosing’ method; a method specially designed by 1AF to reduce/eliminate surface run-off and minimize wastage. However, the Burundian smallholders served by 1AF will make a relatively minimal contribution to fertilizer emissions. This is because mineral fertilizer application rates are drastically below average rates in Europe and other parts of the world, where recommended application rates can reach up to 270 kg/acre (7x more than the recommended 1AF application rate) on much larger land sizes. A more detailed explanation of 1AF’s approach to fertilizer application is included in Annex 2.

<b>Outcome 1:</b> Increased household incomes of climate vulnerable smallholder farmers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Climate responsive improvements in farm productivity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Reduced GHG emissions due to large scale tree planting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Co-benefit number	Co-benefit					
	Environmental	Social	Economic	Gender	Adaptation	Mitigation
<b>Co-benefit 1:</b> Household graduation from poverty supported through increased income	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Co-benefit 2:</b> Improved food security for targeted rural households	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**B.3. Implementation / institutional arrangements (max. 750 words)**



**Figure 9: Summary of project implementation arrangements**

- 30. Funding flow:** The funding flow for this project is outlined in more detail in Annex 2, section 6. To explain: GCF funding and the co-financed amount will be sent to a dedicated 1AF global headquarters account (under the U.S. based not-for-profit 501(c)(3) entity), specifically set up for the GCF project. From this account, the funds will be sent to 1AF's Burundi program (as explained in section A.16, this is a branch office of the U.S. based 501(c)(3) entity). Transfers will follow a pre-agreed schedule and process, as outlined in the project Term Sheet (Annex 6). These funds will flow into the Burundi Program's general account and will cover two sets of expenses, both of which will be accounted for separately:
- Project-specific working capital in Burundi.
  - GCF-funded operational activities, that are detailed in this core proposal under section B.2.1, as well as in more depth in Annex 2a.
- 31. Farmer contribution:** Farmers repay for the farm inputs/products (excluding Component 3; agroforestry seedlings) as a farmer contribution. This is covered in Annex 2, section 6.
- The money reimbursed for the farm inputs/products will be managed as working capital in the general account and used for purchasing additional farm inputs/products in future seasons. A leakage rate *maximum* of 2% is expected each season. The money reimbursed via the farmer contributions are applied against the cost of services the farmers receive (detailed in sections 4 and 5.1 of Annex 2), lowering the overall project cost and making it more sustainable. The farmer contributions are based on a sliding scale; the farmers who take the least farm inputs/products are not required to contribute.
  - For most of the farm inputs/products included in this project, the reimbursement deadline coincides roughly with the end of the agricultural season. The A season reimbursement deadline is in January; the B season reimbursement deadline is in July. This gives farmers roughly five months to reimburse. In the case of the harvest drying sheets (a product that will be offered to facilitate the post-harvest drying of staple crops)—since they are a more expensive product—reimbursement is divided across two seasons to allow more farmers the opportunity to access the product.
  - While >98% reimbursements are expected each season (based on 1AF's track record, and explained in depth in section D.6.3), this project will implement a standard process to collect late reimbursements as a requirement for a farmer to rejoin the program in subsequent seasons. Uncollected reimbursements will be written off in the following calendar year. This project will set aside a budget for uncollected reimbursement, which is targeted at 2% (the expected maximum) of the total projected amount. In this way—so long as the uncollected amount ends up being 2% or less—write-offs will not affect project operations. This is based on precedent: write-offs have not exceeded 2% from 2012 to date.
- 32. Service delivery:**
- As explained in section A.16, One Acre Fund is registered as a non-profit 501(c)(3) in the U.S. and has a regional branch office in Burundi—One Acre Fund Burundi. Therefore, One Acre Fund is both the AE and EE for this project. The Burundi branch will be responsible for procurement, implementation, monitoring and internal activity reporting, while the U.S. non-profit will be responsible for compliance supervision (policies), project milestone/deliverable review, and external reporting to GCF.
  - Farmers will receive agricultural inputs and products through this project, stored in leased warehouses and distributed by 1AF's Logistics department. The Field Operations department will be responsible to manage field staff that provide extension training on climate-smart agriculture and support to farmers. Farmers will pick up agroforestry seedlings from decentralized tree nurseries, managed by the Field Operations department. 1AF's track record of service delivery is discussed in section A.16 as well as in the Annex 2, section 5. Post-implementation arrangements are discussed in the Annex 2, section 9.
- 33. Reporting and project management arrangements:**
- **Country leadership:** The 1AF Burundi program is overseen by a Steering Committee and reports to the Global 1AF office, which in turn will report directly to GCF. At a sub-national level, the Steering Committee oversees several departments responsible for inventory management, oversight of regional offices, human resources and government relations. The Government Relations department will work directly with the National Designated Authority (NDA) as well as collaborate with public and private partners through annual National Advisory Council (NAC) meetings.
  - **Team structure:** 1AF's field operations are facilitated by a number of support (e.g. Government Relations, Human Resources) and R&D (e.g. Innovations) departments, and there is a dedicated Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team set up to gather field data on adoption, impact and key trends across each project component, report on performance, and provide strategic recommendations on improvements to 1AF's service delivery approach. This sub-national structure is explained in more detail in Figure 2 above.

The project will run according to the following general financial order flow with farmers (summarized in this graphic along with key calendar dates, and explained further in Annex 2, section 6):

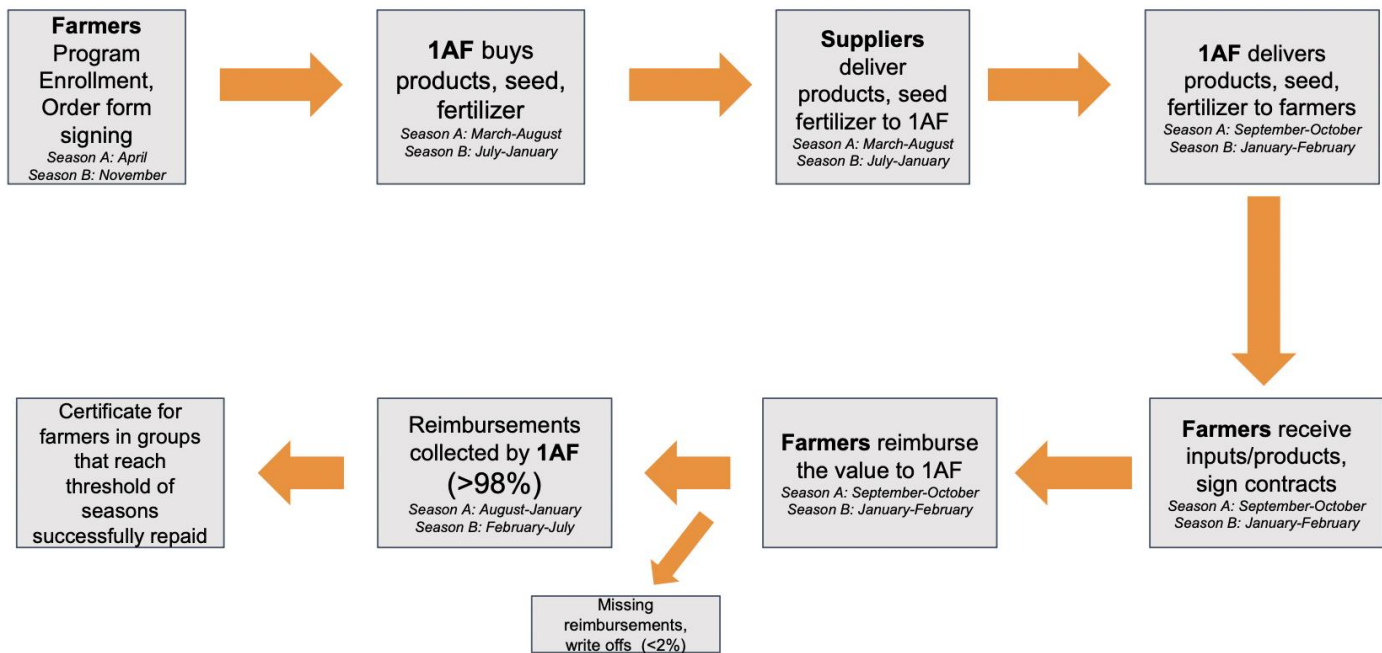


Figure 10: Summary of farmer order flow

C. FINANCING INFORMATION					
C.1. Total financing					
<b>(a) Requested GCF funding (i + ii + iii + iv + v + vi)</b>		Total Amount: 25,000,000		Currency: USD	
GCF Financial Instrument		Amount	Currency	Tenor & grace	Pricing
(i)	Senior loans	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(ii)	Subordinated loans	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(iii)	Equity	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(iv)	Guarantees	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(v)	Reimbursable grants	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(vi)	Grants	25,000,000	USD	n/a	n/a

(b) Co-financing information <sup>41</sup>	Total amount			Currency		
	10,000,000			USD		
Name of institution	Financial instrument	Amount	Currency	Tenor & Grace	Pricing	Seniority
Dovetail Impact Foundation (DIF)	Grant	6,000,000	USD	n/a	n/a	n/a
Knight Family Foundation (KFF)	Grant	1,000,000	USD	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pershing Square Philanthropies (PSP)	Grant	3,000,000	USD	n/a	n/a	n/a
(c) Total investment (c) = (a)+(b)	Amount			Currency		
	35,000,000			USD		
(d) Co-financing ratio (d) = (b)/(a)	0.4					
(e) Other financing arrangements for the project/programme (max ½ page)	<p><b>34.</b> As detailed in Annex 2, 1AF is a non-profit. However, its programmatic model includes a farmer contribution for services that they receive. In 2023, farmer contributions covered around 50% of total operating expenses. This approach will be applied via this GCF-funded project. Farmer contributions towards the cost of services will be paid slowly over the course of agricultural seasons from 2025-2029, with expected low levels of leakage (i.e. &lt;2%; estimated based on more than ten years of historical performance data). This farmer contribution, which will create an opportunity for project beneficiaries to have 'skin in the game' (and thereby generate a more ownership of farming and agroforestry outcomes) lowers the amount of funding needed to cover the project's operational expenses. This makes the model more sustainable and equipped to deliver services in the long-term, even beyond 2029. The farmers contributions will be received into the project's 'General Account' (see Figure 9 in section B.3 above for the complete funding flow arrangement).</p> <p><b>35.</b> This model will make this project much more financially efficient, as compared to those implemented by most INGOs operating in the region<sup>42</sup>. In addition, an extremely high rate of farmer re-enrollment (i.e. &gt;90%) year-on-year is expected (see sections D.1 and D.6.3 for more details).</p>					
C.2. Financing by component						

<sup>41</sup> If the co-financing is provided in different currency other than the GCF requested, please provide detailed financing information and a converted figure in the GCF requested currency in the comment box. Please refer to the date when the currency conversion was performed and the reference source.

<sup>42</sup> Burundi ranks 187th in the HDI, and the per capita GDP is \$259. It is not feasible to expect farmers to cover the full amount. However, it is important that farmers make a contribution. This increases their buy-in and encourages them to follow practices taught in training. It is also not possible to use debt financing for operational expenses, as there is no viable pathway to paying back lenders because 1AF ends each year with a financial deficit.

Component	Output	Indicative cost <u>Options</u>	GCF financing		Co-financing		
			<u>Amount Options</u>	<u>Financial Instrument</u>	<u>Amount Options</u>	<u>Financial Instrument</u>	<u>Name of Institutions</u>
<b>Component 1:</b> Sustainable access to climate resilience inputs	<b>Output 1.1:</b> Increased access to climate-resilience inputs in a sustainable, long-term model.	\$29.6M	\$21.1M	Grant	\$5.1M \$846K \$2.5M	Grant Grant Grant	DIF KFF PSP
	<b>Output 1.2:</b> Enhanced ability of ag and financial sector service providers to respond to farmer needs.	\$141K	\$101K	Grant	\$24K \$4K \$12K	Grant Grant Grant	DIF KFF PSP
<b>Component 2:</b> Farmer advisory and extension	<b>Output 2:</b> Enhanced farmers' capacities to adopt improved, climate smart practices.	\$2.4M	\$1.7M	Grant	\$406K \$68K \$203K	Grant Grant Grant	DIF KFF PSP
<b>Component 3:</b> Agroforestry	<b>Output 3:</b> Large-scale adoption of agroforestry practices.	\$1.6M	\$1.2M	Grant	\$280K \$47K \$140K	Grant Grant Grant	DIF KFF PSP
Monitoring and evaluation costs		\$534K	\$382K	Grant	\$92K \$15K \$46K	Grant Grant Grant	DIF KFF PSP
Project management costs		\$716K	\$511K	Grant	\$123K \$20K \$61K	Grant Grant Grant	DIF KFF PSP
<b>Indicative total cost (USD)</b>		<b>\$35M</b>	<b>\$25M</b>		<b>\$10M</b>		

### C.3 Capacity Building and Technology development/transfer

C.3.1 Does GCF funding finance Capacity building activities?

\$2,369,000

\*This is cost of activities under component 2 (climate extension and advisory)

C.3.2. Does GCF funding finance Technology development/transfer?

n/a

### C.4. Justification for GCF funding request (max. 500 words)

36. GCF is the appropriate partner for this project because Burundian smallholders are a uniquely underserved and climate-vulnerable population, requiring a level and duration of support that puts climate resilience needs front and center. GCF can provide this better than other large public donors given its technical expertise and strategic focus on climate. Funding from GCF will enable the scale-up of a novel, sustainable, and climate-focused solution via this project, and complement other GCF-funded work in the country. As described in more detail in Annex 2 as well as throughout this proposal, GCF's involvement will be felt well beyond the five-year project period. This is because the project design explicitly takes a long-term perspective on smallholder adaptation; focusing on reducing smallholder vulnerability to climate



hazards—and ensuring sustainable access to inputs and training that build long-term climate resilience—rather than only focusing on only immediate food security/production support.

37. Burundi is one of the most food insecure and poorest countries on the planet, and its smallholder families live on the margin of subsistence.<sup>43</sup> More on the country profile is covered in Annex 2, section 2. Although over 80% of the population is made up of smallholder farm families, most cannot grow enough food; as a result, 62% of Burundians live under the international poverty line of \$2.15 per person per day, and 56% of children under 5 are stunted due to malnutrition.<sup>44</sup> Climate change threatens far greater food insecurity. Yet, few actors in Burundi are providing appropriate services or financing to this population. The acute vulnerabilities faced by smallholders in Burundi are explored in detail in sections A.18 and B.1. Namely:
- The government has strong plans in place but lacks sufficient resources to meaningfully drive adaptation at scale. In addition, one of the government’s primary adaptation initiatives is aimed at facilitating greater investment in higher-value crops such as coffee, tea, cotton, and rice<sup>45</sup>. However, according to farmer surveys conducted by 1AF, these high-value crops are only grown by ~5% of Burundi’s farmers, whereas most of the smallholder production consists of staple crops such as maize and beans.<sup>46</sup>
  - Smallholder agriculture is largely neglected by private-sector actors and MFIs in Burundi. Significant further investment is needed to unlock improved agricultural markets for farmers, yet there are few resources or incentives for this. Smallholder-facing SMEs and service providers are severely underfinanced, value chain gaps are exacerbated by significant market barriers, and the climate vulnerability of smallholders means they are seen as ever riskier to serve.
38. In contrast, 1AF has pioneered a holistic model for serving Burundian smallholders, proven to drive meaningful improvements in farm yields and resilience/adaptation (this track record is explored in section B.1 and Annex 2). Multi-year funding from GCF will directly enable this project to pursue the rapid growth required to meet the significant level of smallholder demand that exists in Burundi.
39. An important and positive initiative to highlight is the GCF-funded IFAD project, focused on soil and water conservation. Programmatically, this GCF-funded project will directly complement IFAD’s work in Burundi by equipping more smallholders nationwide to achieve better soil health and water retention capacity (driven by agroforestry), together with greater food security and climate resilience. The IFAD project targets certain areas of Burundi expected to face severe weather events, such as the Imbo and Moso catchments on Burundi’s western, southern, and eastern perimeters. Geographically, this project will complement IFAD’s interventions by addressing the soil needs of farmers in geographies not served directly by the IFAD project. Namely, this project will target farmers in central Burundi with the suite of soil health enhancing training interventions covered in section B.2.1 and Annex 2a, such as tree-planting, composting, mulching and lime application. IFAD’s work in Burundi is covered in Annex 2, section 2.7.2.

### C.5. Exit strategy (max. 300 words)

40. This project will leverage GCF funding to achieve long-term impact beyond 2029. It will also support the government of Burundi to achieve its vision for agricultural development and smallholder adaptation via three main channels:
- **Recovery of input costs for sustained refinancing in future seasons:** This project is unique from other agriculture development projects: its future sustainability is built a track record of both effectively addressing and continually stimulating farmer demand. Namely, 1AF has historically achieved a >98% recovery rate (i.e. total farmer reimbursements for the cost agricultural inputs) in Burundi. This performance is explained in more in more depth in section D.6.3. Building off this strong recovery rate performance, the funds from GCF will enable this project to catalyze impact for smallholder farmers well beyond the 5-year project span: most input costs will continue to be recouped annually and re-used for 1AF’s upfront purchase of inventory the following year, at low annual levels of ‘leakage’ (i.e. <2%). This will help to generate ongoing and long-term impact.

<sup>43</sup> [Global Hunger Index 2023](#) ranks Burundi as among the world’s ten hungriest countries; [World Bank data](#) indicates that Burundi has the world’s lowest per-capita GDP

<sup>44</sup> [World Bank data](#); [World Bank data](#)

<sup>45</sup> National plan for the [development of Burundi](#), 2018 - 2027

<sup>46</sup> [FAOStat](#), Burundi “Crops and livestock products” query – based on 2021 data, coffee and tea represent less than 1% of Burundi’s total agricultural production, whereas the primary crops by output are maize, beans, cassava, banana, potatoes, and vegetables.

Meanwhile, the GCF-fueled growth that this project will provide will help generate greater economies of scale from larger aggregate annual input enrollments, which will drive ever increasing cost-efficiencies as more and more of Burundi's smallholder population is served.

- **New long-term farmer assets to build farmer resilience against climate-related hazards:** In addition to improved household income (a driver of climate resilience), this GCF-funded project will equip farmers to build diverse assets (both directly and via reinvestment of income) that drive new income and resilience to climate-related hazards over the long term. These include fruit/nut trees, timber trees (replanted upon harvest), land improvements, livestock, new business ventures, and investments in children's education.
- **Pro-smallholder systems change:** Lastly, GCF funding will support project efforts to permanently build the capacity and shift the incentives of existing public/private actors in Burundian agriculture. For example, by providing certificates to farmers confirming their creditworthiness, thereby enabling greater participation in the financial sector.

41. To enable 1AF to serve smallholder farmers in the long-term, the organization has (and will continue to) invest significant resources into financing what is termed the "farmer deficit" (the gap between what farmers contribute and total operational costs). This includes by:

- **Fundraising:** Donor money is indeed still required to facilitate sustained services to the world's most vulnerable communities, like smallholder farmers in Burundi. 1AF has invested in a large Business Development team, with 45 permanent staff members; this team raises ~\$100 million annually. It has maintained a high level of fundraising success for well over a decade, growing 1AF's total growth in farmers served to more than 4 million across Africa.
- **Prioritizing fundraising time and resources towards countries where 1AF sees the highest impact:** Burundi combines a very high-need market with high programmatic impact and high efficiency (see section D.6.3 for more details). As such, the Burundi program is a key part of reaching 1AF's organization-wide goal of serving 10M farmers by 2030.

42. Notably, given the depth and scope of the need in Burundi, especially in a changing climate, 1AF's vision for farmer impact extends beyond the duration of this project. Funding from GCF will unlock a permanently higher growth path for farmers (in terms of scale, impact, and financial sustainability) and help 1AF deepen its long-term partnership with the government of Burundi to serve farmers under its strategic vision. More on post-implementation operations and management is described in Annex 2, section 9.

## C.6. Financial management/procurement (max. 300 words)

43. The project will implement strong governance and controls around financial management and procurement. These controls are informed by 1AF's existing financial management and procurement best practices, which are explained below:

- **Oversight:** 1AF's Global Executive Board oversees overall strategy and governance, within which sits the Finance Committee for specific financial oversight.
- **Financial statements and external/internal audits:** 1AF presents financial statements in accordance with US GAAP and with the accrual method of accounting. BDO (a top 10 global accounting firm with local presence in 1AF's operating countries) conducts an annual independent evaluation of 1AF's financial statements; this has consistently resulted in clean audits, with no material weaknesses nor control deficiencies identified. Additionally, 1AF employs a 16-person internal audit department to regularly evaluates compliance with controls and policies.
- **Documentation:** The Finance Committee maintains 1AF's Board Finance Policy, which outlines all policies/procedures related to internal controls, spending/budgeting, cash management/disbursement, treasury/risk management, audits/filings, and approval authority matrices for financial decision-making. This is supplemented by function-specific policies, such as a Global Sourcing Manual for procurement controls, attached as Annex 8.
- **Fiduciary standards:** 1AF maintains policies to avoid/mitigate any negative consequences of financial activities, including full compliance with the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). All 1AF staff at Coordinator level and above must complete annual training and testing on risk, compliance, and fraud.
- **Budgeting and reporting:** Annual department/country-level budgets are developed by department heads and country leadership and approved by the Executive Director and Global Executive Board. Budget vs Actual analyses are undertaken each month by the Financial Advisory



Team and department heads, with results and reprojections reported to the Finance Committee on a quarterly basis for approval.

- **Additional controls:** 1AF maintains a broad set of financial controls to ensure appropriate segregation of duties, robust procurement controls, monthly books closing and reconciliation, and regular management reviews, and reconciliation. These support a zero-tolerance policy for fraud; 1AF's Finance Committee stipulates that fraud losses should be less than 0.5% of revenue, a threshold which the Burundi team has consistently achieved.

44. The procuring entity and procurement policies will vary depending on the inputs/products being procured as follows (please see Annex 8 for more details):

- 1AF AE/EE will procure inputs/products that are imported into Burundi using the methods of QCBS, SSS, and RFQ:
  - Maize seed
  - PICS bags
  - Harvest drying sheets
  - Hoes
  - Scoops
- 1AF AE/EE will procure all other inputs/products/supplies/services using the methods of QCBS and SSS:
  - Fertilizer
  - Cookstoves
  - Watering cans
  - Planting strings
  - Tree seed
  - Biodegradable tree sockets
  - Printing, workshop venues, radio, input transport, consultants

## D. EXPECTED PERFORMANCE AGAINST INVESTMENT CRITERIA

### D.1. Impact potential (max. 300 words)

45. This project will deliver meaningful adaptation (covered in more depth in Annex 2, section 7.1 - 7.3) and mitigation impacts across three core GCF result areas:

- **ARA 1 - Most vulnerable people and communities:** Component 2 of this project will drive farm productivity among vulnerable smallholder households through climate extension and advisory. This will be achieved through field based, demonstration-oriented training across a suite of climate-smart practices. This includes, for example, organic composting (to improve soil fertility) and lime application (to reduce soil acidity; an acute problem in Burundi).<sup>47</sup> It also includes hands-on training on improved farming practices such as standardized seed and row spacing. These interventions will not only drive-up farm productivity from important staple crops (i.e., as indicated in Annex 2a, this project expects to deliver a projected 27%+ increase in average maize yields, and a 15%+ average increase in bean yields) but help to improve soil health and productivity.
- **ARA 2 - Health, well-being and water security:** Component 1 of this project will improve the household income of farm households, and therefore help to reduce poverty rates. This will be achieved through the sustainable, year-on-year provision of high-quality agricultural inputs to a progressively larger number of farming households each year; this number will reach an expected 303,000 households, and \$30.2M+ in total annual incremental income, by 2029. These impacts will be driven by an average ~\$100 in new income per household per year, or put differently: a 12% increase in total average annual household income.

<sup>47</sup> 1AF defines smallholder climate resilience as the number of protective 'layers' a client can build around their farmers and livelihoods. These 'layers' offer a buffer and protection in climate change events - e.g. drought, flood, new pest emergence, and staple crop failure. The practices include **organic composting**, **tree planting** (to support nitrogen-fixing, erosion control, and water management), **crop diversification** (adopting non-staple crops including tubers, legumes, and horticulture), **lime application** (to reduce soil acidity), **erosion control** practice, as well as two key practices aimed at improving crop yields - **correct plant spacing** and **fertilizer microdosing**.

- **MRA 4 - Forestry and land use:** Component 3 of this project will support the planting (and verified survival beyond the two-year mark)<sup>48</sup> of a cumulative 5.3M trees by 2029; equivalent to over 26,000 hectares. This large-scale agroforestry initiative, the first of its kind in Burundi, will enable income diversification among project beneficiaries and provide additional farm-level benefits—such as access to animal fodder, wood fuel and timber—without putting pressure on Burundi’s limited forests. As a result of these agroforestry interventions, this project will lead a significant mitigation outcome: a cumulative 1.99M tCO<sub>2</sub>eq of permanent removals.

**46. Direct beneficiaries (ARA 1 and ARA 2)<sup>49</sup>:** This project will reach direct beneficiaries by leveraging the marketing, expansion and enrollment methodology detailed from pages 51-52 of Annex 2. This methodology will include a combination of ‘outward growth’ (expansion to new provinces), and ‘inward growth’ (increasing the density of farmers served in provinces where 1AF already has a footprint). It is expected to take ~4 years to reach maximum penetration (via ‘inward growth’) in new provinces/areas of operation (reached via ‘outward growth’). Newly enrolled farmers will receive the full suite of project services across each component, with the specific adaptation benefits articulated in more detail from pages 53-58 in Annex 2 and summarized in section B.2.1. To estimate the number of direct beneficiaries (a projected 1.5M by 2029), this approach is used:

- **Beneficiary criteria:** The definition of a beneficiary/enrolled project farmer has been provided in detail in page 51 of Annex 2. In summary, these are individuals that farm at or near the average land size (0.94 acres), earn at or near the poverty line level (\$2.15 per day), and do not farm at a commercial scale. These farmers generally use the traditional farming methods explored in depth in Annex 2 and summarized in section B.1, thus exacerbating their climate vulnerability.
- **Expansion modeling:** Using historic growth models—created using 1AF’s growth trends since 2012, as well as future projections that have been created based on the remaining addressable market and project demand—the total estimated number of newly enrolled project farmers from 2025-2029 is determined. Only the specific set of new *project* farmers that are attributable to the incremental funding from GCF (i.e. not the total number of new farmers that 1AF expects to serve from 2025-29) are included in this proposal, based on the average cost-to-serve per farmer.
- **Direct beneficiary modeling:** Annual household demographic survey data from Burundi is used, implemented using a rigorous sampling method and overseen by 1AF’s global MEL team. This survey has run annually for more than eight years, with continual improvements to the methodology and overall accuracy. The three-year (2021-2023) average of 5.09 members per household has been multiplied by the estimated number of GCF-attributable enrolled farmers each year, to determine the total number of direct beneficiaries by year 5 (2029), i.e. 1.54M.

**47. Indirect beneficiaries (ARA 1 and ARA 2)<sup>50</sup>:** The methodology to determine indirect beneficiaries (estimated at 0.77M by 2029), is based on targeted MEL studies and follows the same logic as the direct beneficiary’s calculation (i.e. in this case, multiplying the total number of *calculated spillover farmers* by the average household size). More specifically, the number of individuals that will achieve a measurable increase in household income because of the ‘spillover impact’ of the project is considered. Taken broadly, spillover impact means the positive food security and climate resilience outcomes derived from the adoption of the same practices (i.e. farming or agroforestry related practices) as farming neighbors that are enrolled in the GCF-funded project. In page 51 of Annex 2, a paragraph is provided that defines what is meant by indirect beneficiary in more detail. This approach is aligned with the GCF definition of an indirect beneficiary, in that these farmers should receive ‘measurable adaptation benefit’, but without targeted support from the GCF-funded project. The overall steps to determine the total number of indirect beneficiaries are explained below:

- **Spillover survey module:** A spillover impact survey module—only asked to non-1AF farmers—was developed by 1AF, with a series of questions that assess if these farmers have generated any spillover benefits from their proximity to farmers directly served by 1AF. This comprehensive module includes questions such as: ‘Have you received inputs/training?’, and ‘Have you copied 1AF practices?’. The spillover questions are layered onto a harvest survey (this survey is administered at the household level and used to determine the differences in staple crop yields of project and non-project farmers through physical measurements) and asked to non-1AF farmers specifically.
- **Spillover effects estimated using Principal Component Analysis (PCA):** Low vs high spillover affected farmers using PCA, a statistical method. This analysis provides both the yield impact on spillover farmers, as well as the *ratio of enrolled to non-enrolled (spillover) farmers in areas where farmers receive services from 1AF*. For this GCF-funded project, a 1 (project farmer) to 0.5 (spillover

<sup>48</sup> Because the first two years are the sensitive period for trees, 1AF assumes that most trees that survive for at least 2 years will reach maturity.

<sup>49</sup> Direct beneficiaries (1.54M) = # enrolled farmers (303,000) \* household size (5.09)

<sup>50</sup> Indirect beneficiaries (0.77M) = # direct beneficiaries (1.54M) \* spillover ratio (0.5)

farmer) ratio was determined using this method, based on studies of 1AF-enrolled and non-enrolled farmers in the 2023A and 2023B seasons.

- 48. Learning loops and improvement:** Feedback loops have formed a big part of 1AF’s success to date and have therefore contributed to the development of this proposed project. This is covered in Annex 2, section 4.5.2. To explain: 1AF has been operating in Burundi since 2012 and has implemented systems that ensure that farmer voices are not only heard, but that regular feedback loops are systematized and utilized frequently. These measures have contributed to resounding farmer demand for 1AF’s products and services in Burundi, culminating in a ~96% re-enrollment rate in 2023 (i.e. the percentage of 2022 enrolled farmers that enrolled *again* in 2023). This high retention performance is expected via this project from 2025-2029 (see section D.6.3. for more details). The specific measures taken to embed feedback loops include:
- **Farmers as staff/group leaders:** Farmer perspectives are embedded into the 1AF program structure because farmers comprise over 90% of field operations staff. 1AF also relies on a large volunteer network of farmer ‘group leaders’ to help arrange farmer meetings and lead groups in activities such as planting and harvest. Field officers and group leaders spend their days in the fields of the farmers they serve, gathering formal and informal feedback. Input is then communicated upwards through weekly meetings with their managers. This staffing model forms a powerful feedback mechanism: farmers make up a majority of 1AF staff, which boosts their influence on organizational operations.
  - **Farmer contributions:** The farmer contribution for 1AF services is a useful tool for strengthening the sway of farmers in operations. If the quality of service in a particular area drops, 1AF immediately sees a drop in input cost recovery and re-enrollment rates (i.e. farmers “voting with their feet” and choosing not to enroll again if 1AF’s offerings are not worth their cost), which sends a clear signal that there is room for improved service delivery. 1AF’s growth trajectory since 2012 shows that this project has the capacity to continually adapt and improve the portfolio of services offered (e.g. by making tweaks to training modules, or by offering new agricultural inputs) and generate sustained demand.
  - **Farmers as co-innovators:** Incorporating farmer opinions in the innovations process has led the organization to think about the adoptability and simplicity of products and training materials, rather than just their theoretical impact. To explain: 1AF has ensured that farmers play an active role in the product R&D process (a key component of *every* new product or crop offered to farmers). After some initial research and pilots, farmers test new products through hands-on farm-level trials that measure both quantitative parameters such as yields, as well as qualitative parameters such as farmers’ reception and preferences. Namely, 1AF asks farmers at each stage of the process—through focus group discussions and household-level surveys—for their feedback on what worked, what didn’t work and what to improve. 1AF uses these insights to not only optimize its portfolio of climate-resilience inputs, but to continually refine training components. This is important in ensuring that training methodologies are both understandable and actionable in the local context.
- 49.** Underpinning the explained impact elements will be an efficient rate of impact delivered per dollar invested by GCF and co-funders. For every \$1 donated, project enrolled farmers will generate more than \$5 in new income (this is backed by solid historical data; 1AF’s ‘Social Return on Investment’ or SROI is 1: 5.3 in Burundi). This means that a five-year investment of \$35M<sup>51</sup> will generate an aggregate \$185M+ in total new farm income for project beneficiaries. These projections are based on 1AF’s past track record of impact—as well as a rigorous MEL methodology, backed by multiple RCTs—which are introduced in section 4 of Annex 2a, and in more depth in Annex 2, section 5.

## D.2. Paradigm shift potential (max. 300 words)

- 50.** This project will drive a paradigm shift in Burundi through the sheer scale of its adaptation and mitigation impacts, as well as innovative project elements that will also contribute to sustainable and widespread replicability. In summary: this project will reach 10% of the total population in Burundi directly (this includes >13% of the smallholder population; and 15% of the total population when indirect beneficiaries are included) and achieve 1.99M tCO<sub>2</sub>eq of permanent removals. This will enable smallholder households to become more resilient to the negative impacts of climate change and reduce Burundi’s overall carbon footprint. This paradigm shift is explored in depth in section 1 of Annex 2a, and touched on below:

<sup>51</sup> 1AF’s SROI calculation already accounts for the farmer contribution, hence this uses the total *net* investment amount of \$35M (versus the total project cost of \$50M)

51. More specifically, the paradigm shift potential of this project across the agricultural and financial sectors, both public and private, can be summarized by the project's scale, replicability and sustainability:
- **Scale:** Not only will this project reduce the climate vulnerability of 10% of Burundi's population (as mentioned above) but will make a meaningful contribution to global climate change mitigation efforts. This will be achieved through agroforestry support for smallholder households: these households will collectively own and farm a combined land area of *over 26,000 hectares* by year 5 of the project.
  - **Replicability:** Enrolled farmers will be better equipped to access future financial services from MFIs and other financial service providers through the provision of certificates that detail their creditworthiness. The project will also share learnings with a wider agricultural and financial ecosystem in Burundi and drive pro-smallholder systems change among public/private actors.
  - **Sustainability:** This project will provide climate-resilience inputs to smallholder farmers in a sustainable, long-term model. The sustainability of these services is underpinned by farmer contributions at low levels of leakage (note: farmer contributions are discussed in more detail in Annex 2 sections 4 and 5.1, as well as section B.3). This will not only drive the future, long-term growth of this service model, but also deliver proof-of-concept for other players in the financial and agricultural sectors; enabling them to enter the market with tailored farmer-resilience-oriented services. This sustainability of this project's model is also explained in more detail in section C.5.
52. This project will also contribute to an enabling environment in Burundi through market development, knowledge transfer and technology diffusion. Like the above, this contribution to Burundi's enabling environment can be explored in Annex 2a, section 1.
- **Markets:** This project will provide proof-of-concept—through the sustainable provision of climate-resilience inputs—for potential new market entrants, such as micro-finance institutions (MFIs) and agricultural extension service providers. As a result of this project, the policy and regulatory environment of Burundi will evolve; this will be achieved through government engagement and advocacy on key issues that affect farmers, such as the removal of constraints to the importation of high-quality agricultural inputs that cannot be sourced locally.
  - **Knowledge:** This project will share lessons and best practices with a wide set of stakeholders in the agricultural sector through the NAC, and a one-time workshop at the end of the project with sector and public stakeholders. The project will also produce and disseminate best practices manuals on financing and agroforestry and contribute to Burundi's policy framework; working with the government to more deeply embed a climate-resilience approach in policies on rural agriculture.
  - **Technology diffusion:** Component 2 (climate extension and advisory) is covered in section B.2.1., and in Annex 2 section 4.2. This agronomy training is part of a project technology diffusion effort to support smallholder farmers to become more resilient to the negative effects of climate change.
53. These actions represent a significant contribution to the national priorities of the Burundian government—specifically under Vision 2025, the National Development Strategy and NDC's—to expand food security, improve household incomes and drive-up tree cover through rural agroforestry. Section D.5 provides more detail on these national frameworks, and Annex 2 section 5.2.2. explains this project's alignment with them.

### D.3. Sustainable development (max. 300 words)

54. This project will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by helping smallholder households to rise above poverty (SDG 1 - No Poverty) and become more food secure (SDG 2 - Zero Hunger). The indicators explained below have been provided in more detail in Annex 2a, including the methodology used calculate them, and the historical data backing the projected targets.
- **Poverty reduction:** Through project activities, project farmers (i.e. across 303,000 households by 2029) will realize an expected average 12% increase in total annual household income.
  - **Food security:** This project will lead to an expected average 25% reduction in the annual number of enrolled farmers that report “moderate to severe hunger” on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)<sup>52</sup>. As noted above, progress against these poverty reduction and food security targets will be provided via this project's reporting schedule to GCF (explained in section 4 of Annex 2a).
55. Beyond these direct impacts (and although not explicitly stated as project co-benefits) this project is expected to deliver a range of additional benefits across SDG 5 - Gender Equality, SDG 8 - Decent Work, and SDG 4 - Quality Education. Below is an explanation of how this project will achieve these impacts:

<sup>52</sup> Explored in more detail in Annex 2a Logical Framework



- **Gender equality:** This project will proactively prioritize gender inclusion in its operations, and women are expected to generate the outsized benefit from the provision of project services. Namely, project households that report that women do most of the farming is expected to exceed >70%,<sup>53</sup> and women are expected to make up for >60% of attendances at the hands-on project trainings on improved agriculture and agroforestry that are delivered on the ground.<sup>54</sup> A comprehensive gender action plan has been developed and submitted via this application; it can be explored in depth via Annex 4.
- **Employment:** This project will provide full-time jobs to hundreds of Burundians (especially young Burundians under 35) and invest in their growth through professional development initiatives. These training and development programs will focus on team management, as well as digital and interpersonal skills, empowering trainees to pursue quality career growth within and beyond the five-year project implementation period. Specifically, the project will deliver 1100+ new full-time jobs, and another 600+ jobs in rural communities. Given that this project's innovative financial model allows for sustained service delivery beyond 2029, these jobs are fully expected to stay filled after the project ends, representing a significant and long-term contribution to quality job creation in Burundi.
- **Education:** While the estimated family contribution to education has not been studied in Burundi since 2019, past studies in other countries of operation showed that up to 30% of new income is directly spent on children's school fees. It is expected this via this project, enrolled farmers will spend their new income on pro-social investments; most importantly, children's school fees.<sup>55</sup>

#### D.4. Needs of recipient (max. 300 words)

56. As explained in section B.1 and Annex 2 section 2 (and specifically section 2.6., which covers the Human Development Index in Burundi), most of Burundi's population lives in under \$2.15-a-day extreme poverty conditions, with poverty rates even higher among rural smallholder farmers. This economic reality makes the project's target demographic group especially vulnerable to climate change hazards (the specific hazards are explored in more depth in section B.1). This includes more deeply entrenched food insecurity driven by higher precipitation variability, as well as a higher risk of drought, floods and landslides because of widespread soil degradation and deforestation. Annex 2, section 3 explores the full climate rationale for this project. In partnership with GCF, this project will not only improve the resilience of farmers to the negative impacts of climate change but achieve this through socio-economic development and soil health improvements.
57. This project will drive economic and social development by equipping farmers to increase their household income (to an expected \$100 per household on average) and accumulate household assets. It is estimated that each direct beneficiary household will generate \$1500+ in total assets after two consecutive years enrolled in the project, with at least a \$400 improvement vis a vis non-project neighbors.<sup>56</sup> As explained in section D.3, this project will also provide more than 1100 new full-time, rural-based jobs in Burundi.
58. Through the provision of climate-resilience agricultural inputs and advisory, project farmers will be supported to increase the net productivity of their farms and improve soil health, a driver of future productivity gains. This will result in greater food security and farm-level resilience to climate change hazards. This work is paramount; as explored in Annex 2a, 1AF is the only NGO working at scale in Burundi that offers reliable access to these products and services. While the organization already operates in some of the most vulnerable regions in the country, this project will help to expand its reach some of the most at-risk geographies in Burundi. For example, Kirundo province—a target province under this project—is widely thought to be one of the neediest provinces in the country.

#### D.5. Country ownership (max. 500 words)

<sup>53</sup> In 2023, women did 76% of the farming among 1AF's enrolled farming households.

<sup>54</sup> In 2023, women comprised 61% of total training attendances.

<sup>55</sup> These investments also comprise new business opportunities, and additional nutrition.

<sup>56</sup> Each year 1AF MEL collects Quality of Life data which includes data on asset accumulation. These assets include physical assets, livestock, and financial assets. Looking across 4 years of the survey 2020-2023, veteran members had on average \$1539 in assets and newly enrolled members (a proxy for unenrolled farmers) had on average \$1120 in assets.

59. 1AF has worked with farmers in Burundi since 2011, equipping them to start building pathways out of poverty and to achieve greater resilience. As of 2023, 276,000 Burundian farm families were supported through the organization's service delivery infrastructure: including 800+ rural-based field staff, a last-mile delivery system, and 350+ tree nurseries. An agroforestry platform has been operated since 2012, and in 2023 alone, >5.5M agroforestry trees were delivered to farmers. During this period, the organization has been fortunate to have the support of large, mission-minded donors and thought leaders. For example, DGIS has supported rapid expansion over the past decade and helped to accelerate partnerships with the private sector. Ikea was one of the first dedicated climate resilience donors, enabling significant investment in crop diversification, soil health, and tree planting. Rigorous due diligence has been pursued with each partner, via a combination of third-party evaluations, financial audits, and in-person field visits.
60. This project has been developed based on extensive stakeholder engagement within government, the agricultural sector and with farmers themselves; 1AF engages a variety of multilateral, NGO and private stakeholders (explored in section D.6.3). These stakeholder consultations are covered in Annex 2 section 4.5.2. Therefore, this project will complement the existing pro-smallholder sector in Burundi, including:
- **Burundi MINEAGRIE:** Employs extension agents in all collines across the country. Note that resourcing constraints prevent these agents from meeting their full impact potential.
  - **Various aid related organizations** that have historically run limited ag-related projects in Burundi at the smallholder level. These projects have historically been restricted in geography and scope.
  - **Large NGOs and IOs such as WFP, FAO, IFAD:** WFP runs school feeding programs in Burundi; 1AF is an active partner of WFP. IFAD works closely with the government on various projects, such as the importation of hybrid maize into the country to support food security.
  - **Embassies:** Of note is the Soil Fertility Stewardship Programme (PAGRIS)<sup>57</sup> with Wageningen University and IFDC, under the guidance of the Dutch embassy. 1AF is an implementing member of this transformative program; supporting to improve the soil health of farms across the country.
61. This project will leverage 1AF's deep government partnership and rapport; the organization works with partners at all levels of the Burundi government and has grown into a valued and respected partner. In 2020, the Ministry assessed 1AF as the most effective NGO operating in Burundi. 1AF's model is well aligned with the government's overall objectives, as outlined in The Stratégie Agricole Nationale 2008-2015 and Plan National d'Investissement Agricole 2016-2020; these documents reflect the government's priorities for the agricultural sector.<sup>58</sup> Specifically, this project aligns with the following agricultural and climate priorities (explained in more depth in Annex 2 section 5.2.2.):
- **Burundi's Vision 2025:** This addresses food security and household income challenges.
  - **National Development Strategy:** This articulates a strategy to leverage expanded access to credit, agronomic training, and distribution of agricultural inputs (notably fruit trees) to support the government's priorities of improved food security and increased household income.
  - **National forestation initiatives:** Burundi's NDCs prioritize actions under the Forestry and Other Land Use sector, entailing the development of rural agroforestry with a target of producing/planting 85,344,000 seedlings on 53,340 hectares.
62. The government views 1AF as a key long-term partner to help them meet their agricultural transformation vision. 1AF signed a five-year renewable Protocol d'Execution (MOU) with the government of Burundi in September 2023, fully encompassing the operations that this GCF-funded project will undertake. In addition, long-term collaboration plans beyond this initial five-year period are already in discussion. Via this project, 1AF will convene NAC meetings twice annually to discuss issues and align on priorities (see section A.17 and Annex 2a for more details about the NAC; most members represent the Burundian government, with some from the private sector). As detailed in Annex 2 section 4.5.2, this project has already been presented to the NAC. To multiply impacts beyond enrolled farmers; this project will include extensive coordination with other government factions. For example, the project will engage with MINEAGRIE and include an initiative to build the capacity of government extension staff, contribute to the 'Ewe Urambye' (the national reforestation efforts),<sup>59</sup> and support government-sponsored cooperatives via training and access to agricultural inputs. Please see Annex 2 section 5.2.2 for more information on each of these project activities with government.

<sup>57</sup> [Soil Fertility Stewardship Programme \(PAGRIS\)](#)

<sup>58</sup> [Stratégie Agricole Nationale 2008-2015; Plan National d'Investissement Agricole 2016-2020](#)

<sup>59</sup> The government of Burundi implemented the National Reforestation Project "Ewe Burundi Urambye," a national campaign to protect Burundi's environment. 1AF supports this initiative directly.

**63.** As detailed in Annex 2 section 4.5.3, this project will consult the government of Burundi to prioritize geographic areas for implementation, and to further align of the proposed project activities (covered in section B.2.1 and in Annex 2) with national priorities. In the event of field visits and/or joint meetings requiring the travel and participation of MINEAGRIE authorities, the project will provide the required payments in accordance with the current scale of in-country mission expenses.

### D.6. Efficiency and effectiveness

<p>D.6.1. Estimated cost per t CO<sub>2</sub> eq, defined as total investment cost / expected lifetime emission reductions (Mitigation and Cross-cutting)</p>	<table> <tr> <td>(a) Total project financing</td> <td>US \$35,000,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(b) Requested GCF amount</td> <td>US \$25,000,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(c) Expected lifetime emission reductions</td> <td>1.99M tCO<sub>2</sub>eq (permanent removals)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(d) Estimated cost per tCO<sub>2</sub>eq (d = a / c)</td> <td>US\$17.59 / tCO<sub>2</sub>eq</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(e) Estimated GCF cost per tCO<sub>2</sub>eq removed (e = b / c)</td> <td>US\$12.56 / tCO<sub>2</sub>eq</td> </tr> </table>	(a) Total project financing	US \$35,000,000	(b) Requested GCF amount	US \$25,000,000	(c) Expected lifetime emission reductions	1.99M tCO <sub>2</sub> eq (permanent removals)	(d) Estimated cost per tCO <sub>2</sub> eq (d = a / c)	US\$17.59 / tCO <sub>2</sub> eq	(e) Estimated GCF cost per tCO <sub>2</sub> eq removed (e = b / c)	US\$12.56 / tCO <sub>2</sub> eq		
(a) Total project financing	US \$35,000,000												
(b) Requested GCF amount	US \$25,000,000												
(c) Expected lifetime emission reductions	1.99M tCO <sub>2</sub> eq (permanent removals)												
(d) Estimated cost per tCO <sub>2</sub> eq (d = a / c)	US\$17.59 / tCO <sub>2</sub> eq												
(e) Estimated GCF cost per tCO <sub>2</sub> eq removed (e = b / c)	US\$12.56 / tCO <sub>2</sub> eq												
<p>D.6.2. Expected volume of finance to be leveraged by the proposed project/programme and as a result of the Fund's financing, disaggregated by public and private sources (Mitigation and Cross-cutting)</p>	<table> <tr> <td>(f) Total finance leveraged</td> <td>US \$35,000,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(g) Public source finance leveraged</td> <td>US \$25,000,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(h) Private source finance leveraged</td> <td>US \$10,000,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(i) Total Leverage ratio (i = f / b)</td> <td>1.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(j) Public source leverage ratio (j = g / b)</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(k) Private source leverage ratio (k = h / b)</td> <td>0.4</td> </tr> </table>	(f) Total finance leveraged	US \$35,000,000	(g) Public source finance leveraged	US \$25,000,000	(h) Private source finance leveraged	US \$10,000,000	(i) Total Leverage ratio (i = f / b)	1.4	(j) Public source leverage ratio (j = g / b)	1	(k) Private source leverage ratio (k = h / b)	0.4
(f) Total finance leveraged	US \$35,000,000												
(g) Public source finance leveraged	US \$25,000,000												
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(i) Total Leverage ratio (i = f / b)	1.4												
(j) Public source leverage ratio (j = g / b)	1												
(k) Private source leverage ratio (k = h / b)	0.4												

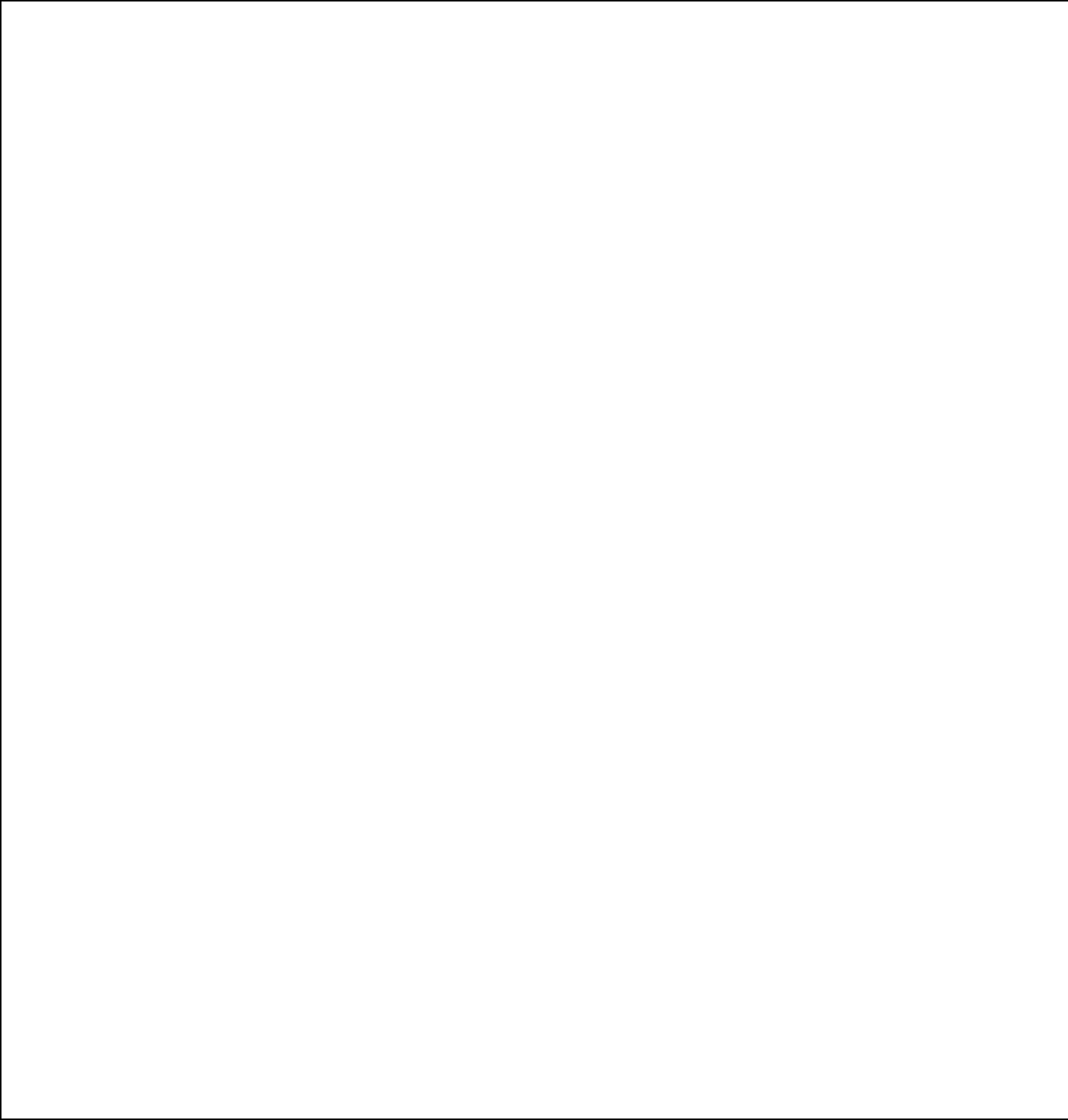
D.6.3. Describe how the financial structure is adequate and reasonable in order to achieve the proposal's objective(s), including addressing existing bottlenecks and/or barriers; providing the minimum concessionality; and without crowding out private and other public investment. (max. 500 words) –

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64. The project has been designed in consultation with multilateral, private and public stakeholders. For example, the Dutch embassy acted as an advisor on the unique impact proposition of 1AF, and on modalities for interaction with government. 1AF stays up to date on NGO best practices through NGO Association meetings, and works closely with private sector suppliers, such as Panaar Seed and SeedCo, to ensure that its seed menu is optimized for local agroecological conditions.
65. This project will leverage best practices from 1AF to effectively deliver on its commitments. The effectiveness of 1AF's program is best summarized through two key complementing metrics—scale and impact—which demonstrate the sustained productivity of its model in the Burundi context.
- **Scale:** In 2023, 1AF successfully expanded into 60 new sites (i.e. clusters of homes within ~10 kilometers of each other, that are typically served by one field officer). This allowed the organization to serve more Burundian communities than ever before: 275,900 farmers by the end of 2023. This represented the largest year-over-year scale increase since the program was launched in 2012. These households can now achieve a brighter future for themselves and the 717,300 children in their families. By end of 2024, the organization expects to serve 346,000+ farmers.
  - **Impact:** In the same year (2023), enrolled farmers generated an above-target rate of income improvement, i.e. \$130 per family. The Burundi context is important to note; each new dollar of farm profit represents much more value when a family's entire asset base is relatively small (i.e. <\$1000).<sup>60</sup> This additional income has left holistic improvements in the wellbeing of families served; enabling school fees and healthcare payments, and investments in new business ventures. Participating farmers also achieved a 57% reduction in severe hunger and planted 4.2 million agroforestry trees.
66. The climate-smart interventions implemented by this project will also improve the long-term sustainability of farmer livelihoods. This is best summarized through another measure of the effectiveness of 1AF's programming: cost-efficiency. This can be defined by three core metrics: financial sustainability, farmer re-enrollment rate, and social return on investment. In each case, the organization has demonstrated strong performance, continued farmer demand and a high rate of program sustainability.
- **Financial sustainability:** The high impact of 1AF's program on smallholder livelihoods—along with the relative absence of competing service providers at scale—has consistently contributed to one of the highest recovery rates (farmer contributions) in the organization. In 2023, the program achieved a 98% recovery rate. This rate is not only slightly below the running three-year average (2021-2023), but also well above the organization-wide average of ~94%. 82% of field expenses were fully covered by farmer contributions; this was slightly below target, and a result of high inflation and a government-mandated currency devaluation impacting the Burundi Franc (-36%). Looking forward, *over the lifetime of this GCF-funded project, a total aggregate farmer contribution of \$15M is expected*; this will drive the project's overall financial sustainability and long-term impact potential.
  - **Re-enrollment rate:** The high recovery rate indicated above (98%) represents continued farmer demand and satisfaction. Namely, the Burundi program performs the highest on customer satisfaction and retention scores, with a ~96% re-enrollment rate (i.e. farmers re-enrolling in the program again in subsequent seasons), against an org-wide average of 74%. Continued high re-enrollment performance is expected over the five-year duration of this GCF-funded project.
  - **Social return on investment (SROI):** 1AF's projected impact performance and program sustainability in 2024 is expected to lead to a social return on investment of 5.4 (SROI is explained further in section D.1). Over the five-year project period, it is projected that SROI will further increase.
67. Since this is a grant, repayment concessions are not requested.

<sup>60</sup> Based on surveys of randomly selected incoming 1AF clients





**E. ANNEXES**

**E.1. Mandatory annexes**

- Annex 1 NDA No-objection Letter(s) ([Template](#))
- Annex 2 Pre-feasibility (or feasibility) study ([Guidance](#))
- Annex 2a Logical Framework ([Template](#))
- Annex 2b Timetable ([Template](#))
- Annex 3 Budget plan that provides breakdown by type of expense including AE fees ([Template](#))
- Annex 4 Gender assessment and action plan ([Template](#))
- Annex 5 Co-financing commitment letter if applicable ([Template](#))
- Annex 6 Term sheet including a detailed disbursement schedule and, if applicable, repayment schedule
- Annex 7 Risk assessment and management ([Template](#))
- Annex 8 Procurement plan model ([Template](#))
- Annex 9a Legal Due Diligence (regulation, taxation and insurance) ([Template](#))
- Annex 9b Legal Opinion/Certificate of Internal Approvals ([Template](#))

## **E.2. Other annexes to be submitted when applicable/requested**

- Annex 10 Economic and/or financial analysis ([Guidance](#))
- Annex 11 Appraisal, due diligence or evaluation report for proposals based on up-scaling or replicating a pilot project
- Annex 12 Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESAP) ([Template](#))
- Annex 13 Operations manual for EDA projects ([guidance](#))
- Annex 14 Assessment of GHG emission reductions and their monitoring and reporting (for mitigation and cross cutting-projects)<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Guidance on GHG emission reduction calculations for GCF projects/programmes is available on the GCF Programming Guidance ([source](#)), Box 12 "How to estimate greenhouse gas emission reductions for GCF". This annex is mandatory for Mitigation and Cross-cutting projects

REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI

Gitega, April, 30<sup>th</sup> 2024



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT,  
AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

NATIONAL DESIGNATED AUTHORITY

N/Réf: AND-PF/FVC- BURUNDI/03/2023

To: Ms. Mafalda Duarte  
Executive Director  
Secretariat of the Green Climate Fund  
175 Art Center-daero  
Yeonsu-gu, Incheon 406-840  
Republic of Korea

Subject: Expression of nomination and no-objection for the application for the Green Climate Fund Project-specific Assessment Approach (PSAA)

Dear Madam,

We refer to the project titled Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders under the Project-Specific Assessment Approach ("PSAA") submitted by One Acre Fund to us on 26 April 2024.

The undersigned is the duly authorized representative of the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture, and Livestock, the National Designated Authority of Burundi.

Pursuant to the GCF Board decision B.08/10, the content of which we acknowledge to have reviewed, in my capacity as representative of the National Designated Authority, we hereby communicate our no-objection to the project as included in the funding proposal.

Additionally, pursuant to paragraph 47 of the Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund and the GCF Board decision B.31/06 on the implementation of the PSAA, in my capacity as representative of the National Designated Authority for Burundi, I hereby nominate the entity below in connection with the funding proposal.

**One Acre Fund:**

Contact Person: Colin Christensen  
Phone: +1 202-569-6998  
Address: 1319 Elson Place, Takoma Park MD 20912  
Email: colin.christensen@oneacrefund.org

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be the name of the representative.

By communicating our no-objection, it is implied that:

- (a) The government of Burundi has no-objection to the project as included in the funding proposal;
- (b) The project as included in the funding proposal is in conformity with the national priorities, strategies and plans of Burundi;
- (c) In accordance with the GCF's environmental and social safeguards, the project as included in the funding proposal is in conformity with relevant national laws and regulations.

We also confirm that our national process for ascertaining no-objection to the project as included in the funding proposal has been duly followed.

We acknowledge that this letter will be made publicly available on the GCF website.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Diomède Ndayirukiye', is written over a horizontal line.

Mr. Diomède Ndayirukiye  
Ministry of Environment, Agriculture, and Livestock  
National Designated Authority  
Burundi

## **Secretariat's assessment of the PSAA Applicant and SAP045**

The Secretariat's assessment is presented in two (2) sections:

1. Secretariat's Assessment of the PSAA Applicant
2. Secretariat's assessment of the Funding Proposal (SAP045)

## Section 1. Secretariat’s assessment of the PSAA Applicant

1. The document "**PSAA Accreditation: Application and Review Checklist**" submitted by One Acre Fund has been assessed against the GCF accreditation standards. The result of the Applicant capacity assessment and the Secretariat’s endorsement and recommendations for GCF PSAA Accreditation are as follows:

<b>Overall Capacity</b>	High  The Applicant has a well-developed financial management system, a well-functioning control framework, including risk management, and robust systems and policies in place to prevent money-laundering and the financing of terrorism and other prohibited practices, such as fraud and corruption, and with sufficient scope to manage E&S and gender risks and impacts with a low likelihood of negative impact on the Applicant’s ability to undertake the proposed project as designed.
<b>Fiduciary functions</b>	Basic fiduciary standards
	Specialized fiduciary standard for project management
<b>Maximum environmental and social risk category</b>	Minimal to no risk (Category C)
<b>Conditions</b>	N/A

<sup>1</sup>The Secretariat has augmented its capacity by using external experts in undertaking the Applicant capacity assessment review. A summary of this report is presented in the next section.

### I. Applicant Capacity Assessment Summary Report

#### 1.1 Introduction and Institutional Assessment

##### 1.1.1. Basic information about the project and the Applicant

2. One Acre Fund is a non-profit corporation delivering a bundled solution of financing, agricultural input distribution, training and market facilitation to the lowest-income staple-crop farm families in Africa. Over the past 18 years, One Acre Fund has expanded its operations mostly in Southern and East Africa and currently serves 1.5M+ typically women-led farmer families directly in nine countries: Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Burundi. One Acre Fund has an international management team and employs 4000+ rural-based field officers.

3. One Acre Fund is applying for a USD 25M grant from GCF for a project Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders which falls into the category of small projects (USD 10-50M). One Acre Fund has an average annual operating budget of USD 200M, which

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<sup>1</sup> In line with the PSAA Accreditation Pilot Framework approved by the Board (decision B.31/06), the Secretariat has augmented its capacity by using external experts, third-party organizations and or service providers to support it in undertaking the applicant capacity assessment review.

justifies the proposed project size. The annual operating expenses in Burundi (average from the past three years) has been USD 15,5M.

4. Based on One Acre Fund's self-assessment and Environmental and Social (E&S) risk and impact screening at Concept Note stage, the proposed project falls into category C. One Acre Fund's existing country programmes in Burundi and other countries have been assessed similarly as category C with no or minimum social and environmental risks and impacts. The GCF E&S review team has confirmed the E&S risk category C on the basis of the Funding Proposal (FP).

- (a) Access modality: PSAA
- (b) Fiduciary functions: Basic fiduciary standards; Specialized fiduciary standard for Project management
- (c) Maximum environmental and social risk category: Minimal to no risk - Category C
- (d) Indicative results areas for intended projects/programmes with GCF:
- (e) Health, Food and Water Security;
- (f) Livelihoods of People and Communities; and
- (g) Forests and Land Use

## 1.2 Methodology

5. One Acre Fund passed the CIC2 on 11 January 2024 and submitted the first set of materials for Review round #1 on 22 April 2024 based on the customized application form and material request. The two following review rounds were conducted from May to June 2024. The External Review Team (ERT) conducted a comprehensive review of the submitted materials against the accreditation standards and checklist.

6. Step 1 of the review included the completeness check of documentation based on the material request and it was finalized in April 2024. Step 2 included the first assessment of the policies, procedures, capacities, track record and human resources of One Acre Fund. In addition to the desk review, the ERT interviewed key informants from One Acre Fund related to general management and financial administration, procurement, project management, E&S and Gender as well as transparency and accountability issues. These discussions provided further evidence of the capacity and procedures within One Acre Fund and also allowed a walkthrough of some of the key systems and tools in use by staff.

7. ERT also conducted a reference check interview with the Dutch Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) that has supported One Acre Fund since 2012. The referees confirmed that no issues related to the fiduciary role or other capacities of One Acre Fund have been identified during the long-term donor relationship.

8. Step 2 continued with a final assessment and review of the risks in light of the Funding Proposal, which was received in May 2024. The assessment was finalized in June 2024.

9. The applicant was assessed in accordance with the GCF policies and standards to the extent applicable to accreditation below:

- (a) "Updated Strategic Plan for the Green Climate Fund 2024-2027"
- (b) "Matters related to the accreditation framework" regarding the accreditation process (decisions B.24/13 and B.26/01);



- (c) “Guiding Framework and Procedures for Accrediting National, Regional and International Implementing Entities and Intermediaries, Including the Fund’s Fiduciary Principles and Standards and Environmental and Social Safeguards” (decision B.07/02);
- (d) “Policy on Prohibited Practices” (decision B.22/19);
- (e) “Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy” (AML/CFT Policy) (decision B.18/10);
- (f) “Policy on the Protection of Whistle-blowers and Witnesses” (decision B.BM-2018/21);
- (g) “Environmental and Social Management System: Environmental and Social Policy” (decision B.19/10);
- (h) “Comprehensive Information Disclosure Policy of the Fund” (decision B.12/35) regarding the disclosure of environmental and social (E&S) information;
- (i) “Updated Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan 2020–2023” (decision B.24/12).
- (j) “Revised Environmental and Social Policy” (decision B.BM-2021/18);
- (k) “Evaluation Policy” (decision B.BM 2021/07); and
- (l) “Updates to the Accreditation Framework” (decision B.31/06).

### 1.3 Contribution to the mandate of the GCF

10. The funding proposal describes One Acre Fund’s contribution to Health, Food and Water Security; Livelihoods of People and Communities; and Forests and Land Use results areas of the GCF. One Acre Fund focuses on climate adaptation through supporting smallholder farmers with climate-smart farming practices and enhancing low-emission climate-resilient food systems mostly in the least developed countries (LDCs) such as Burundi. The proposed project seeks to layer climate adaptation support and activities on top of the core program’s bundle of services offered by One Acre Fund. One Acre Fund’s mission aligns with the current 2024-2027 strategy of the GCF and contributes to the mandate of the GCF.

### 1.4 Track record and implementation of similar projects

11. One Acre Fund has referenced the two country programs in Rwanda and Burundi as key evidence of their track record, which demonstrate strong capacity to manage and deliver similar sized agricultural projects in the proposed geography. One Acre Fund’s business model under these programs is based on continuous sustainable financial and operational infrastructure in the target countries, but the Applicant also has track record from implementing and managing donor-funded projects with more defined timelines, targets, activities and reporting requirements.

12. One Acre Fund’s program in Rwanda was launched in 2007 and replicates the Applicant’s fundamental market bundle model. According to the track record table, in 2022, One Acre Fund served more than 800,000 farmers in Rwanda, representing 50% of the country-wide smallholder population. According to One Acre Fund’s impact reporting, the total benefit per farmer was USD 124, driven primarily by 40% higher average crop yields. In Burundi, One Acre Fund has been operating since 2011 and is currently serving over 290,000 smallholder farm families in seven provinces of the country. The total benefit per farmer in 2023 through improved yields was USD 103 (close to 50% of Burundi’s GDP per capita). Comprehensive internal M&E reports from 2022 for both Burundi and Rwanda were shared as evidence of track record.



13. Globally, One Acre Fund has an extensive network of financing partners from US-based and other international foundations to government donors demonstrating a strong funding base. In addition, One Acre Fund has typically been able to cover a share of the operating expenses from the farmers' contributions. In 2023, One Acre Fund distributed and collected reimbursement of inputs and products from the farmers with a total value of over USD 23M in Burundi covering about 50% of the annual operating costs. The reimbursement rate has been close to 99% every season.

## 1.5 Legal status, registration, permits and licenses

14. One Acre Fund is a 501c(3) nonprofit corporation founded and registered in the U.S. in 2005. The US-based parent legal entity would be the Accredited Entity (AE) and the contractual party with GCF, and it has indicated the legal capacity to enter into a financing agreement with GCF. The Burundi One Acre Fund is the Executing Entity (EE) for this project, with 1000+ in-country staff members, and headquartered in Muramyva, Burundi. The Burundi One Acre Fund branch (and other country branches) are consolidated under the 501c(3) nonprofit corporation. The branch office in Burundi is registered locally as a non-profit but is 100% owned by the US entity. One Acre Fund has a long-term MoU with the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock which is the GCF NDA in Burundi. One Acre Fund's work as an international NGO operating in Burundi is overseen by the Burundian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINIRELEX).

## II. Accreditation Assessment

### 2.1 Basic Fiduciary standards

#### 2.1.1. Key administrative and financial capacities

15. At a global level One Acre Fund is governed by its Governing Board that is composed of ten members. The senior leadership, as described in the organizational chart, consists of two key positions: President and Executive Director who are both Senior Partners. The new office holders commenced their work in March 2024. One Acre Fund also has an 18-person global Leadership Council that has an advisory role providing guidance, for example, on organisation's vision and objectives, and on country operations as needed. The Council members are positioned to program-level and global-level, and as staff representatives.

16. The global organisational structure is divided into two types of units – impact-generating units composed of Core Program, Systems Change and Field-Building units, and support units that comprise Research & Development and Shared Services / Global Support units. The organisational chart and terms of references of governing bodies and oversight mechanisms define the structure and the roles and responsibilities of key bodies. One Acre Fund's objectives are guided by the Organisational Plan prepared on an annual basis. The progress and results are communicated through quarterly performance reports and annual reports. The Annual Organisational Plan provides information, on project backgrounds, challenges and updates, plans for the upcoming year, and results achieved as well as activities and resources that support the delivery of services. Also risks and mitigation measures are considered and assessed at the contextual, programme and implementation level. Regularly documented planning and progress communication demonstrate effective processes in place to measure objectives and achievements against budgeted targets.

17. One Acre Fund's Finance Committee of the Board maintains global financial oversight, and the Chair of the Finance Committee is a member of the Global Executive Board which

oversees overall strategy and governance. The 75-person Finance Division consists of accounting and reporting, payments, internal audit, risk management, corporate finance, and financial advisory department. One Acre Fund's financial management is governed through two main policies – Board Finance Policy and Accounting and Financial Control Manual.

18. One Acre Fund has an established financial management system, with financial reporting and processing capacities. The internal control framework of financial management is outlined in the Accounting and Financial Control Manual, which last updated in 2019 and approved by the CFO/Finance Committee.

19. The Board Finance Policy, last updated in December 2020 is maintained by the Finance Committee. It outlines policies and procedures related to internal controls, spending and budgeting, cash management and disbursements, treasury and risk management, and annual audits. The Policy is annexed with One Acre Fund Approval Matrix for financial decision-making.

20. One Acre Fund's financial management and the work of external auditors and internal audit function is overseen by the Finance Committee whose mandate is outlined in One Acre Fund's Bylaws. The duties of the Committee include overseeing financial reporting and annual audit and tax filings, reviewing financial policies, controls and staffing, and meeting with audit functions following the audits. The applicant shared evidence that Finance Committee meetings have taken place regularly and relevant financial reports are reviewed and followed-up by the Committee.

21. As a US-registered non-profit, One Acre Fund's financial statements are prepared in accordance with the United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP), as confirmed in the external audit opinions. The audit opinions of the three most recent financial statements (2021-2023) issued by the External Auditor are unqualified. External audits are conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the US by an independent external auditor. The Finance Committee approves the selection of external auditors after considering recommendations from the CFO. According to the Board Finance Policy, the auditors' rotation is discussed at least every five years.

22. The One Acre Fund Internal Audit Function is a 16-person body based in Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda. The work of Internal Audit Function is guided by the Internal Audit Approach that outlines guidance on internal audit objectives and process. One Acre Fund provided audit plans for the past three years as evidence of annual risk-based planning of the internal audit, which aims to ensure that the work proposed for the upcoming year has the right coverage of One Acre Fund's significant risks. The final audit plan is discussed with Country Directors and approved by the Finance Committee.

23. Functional independence of the Internal Audit is achieved and evident through the reporting lines. The Internal Audit team reports to the CFO for management purposes and has direct access to the Finance Committee that acts as the Internal Audit Committee of the Board. The internal audit findings are disseminated to the Finance Committee and corrective measures are monitored in the risk management tool Symbiant.

24. One Acre Fund's control framework is regulated in the Board Finance Policy and in Accounting and Financial Control Manual. The roles and responsibilities for management, internal auditors, Board of Directors, and other relevant bodies are clearly defined and documented in the guidelines. The Finance Department is responsible for establishing an adequate system of internal controls and monitoring their proper functioning while the responsibility for ensuring the organization-level controls lies with the Executive Director. Additionally, the responsibilities are distributed throughout the organisation among managers who ensure that controls are adequately designed and functioning in their area of responsibility. The overall responsibility of control framework lies with the Board.

25. Segregation of duties as part of the control framework is maintained to prevent fraud and error. If small staff size may limit segregation of duties, One Acre Fund is prepared to implement mitigating measures, such as additional management reviews to identify unexpected transactions and possible budget overruns. One Acre Fund has confirmed that it does not have a position of a fiscal agent in place. In terms of fiduciary trustees, the members of the Board of Directors perform their respective roles.

26. One Acre Fund procures large volumes of agricultural inputs, and the procurement procedures are guided by an extensive Procurement Manual (Global Sourcing Team Manual) last updated in August 2023. The Manual includes guidance on all key processes, roles and responsibilities, code of conduct, supplier relationship management, forecasting, , operation procurement policies, support functions, and key measures (such as KPIs and targets).

27. One Acre Fund has two key procurement functions where the Global Inputs Team manages global contracting and deliveries for agricultural inputs and other goods for direct sale to clients, and the Country Procurement Team manages operational procurements locally in each country of operation for program support services and goods. The Procurement Manual sets the control procedures for operations, such as approval threshold limits and guidance for tendering procedures. One Acre Fund runs a transparent bidding process for all products sourced. The bidding process includes market scanning to identify the market landscape and request for quotations for products offered by more than one supplier. Single sourced products are subject to different procedural requirements.

28. One Acre Fund's Procurement Control Dashboard guides the procurement process. To evidence the process flow and guidance being followed, the procurement lead demonstrated the Dashboard through a virtual walkthrough to the ERT. The control heatmap of the Dashboard covers the areas of purchase process, vendor delivery process, and payment process. Conflict of interest and anti-fraud policy forms' completion are also followed as part of the process flow.

29. Procurement related controls are considered in the risk register and in the internal audit plan for 2024. The procurement function is monitored by both external and internal mechanisms – the internal audit function and management function. The management is responsible for monitoring and follow-up on external review/audit reports provided by external auditors or internal audit function.

30. The ERT assesses that One Acre Fund has demonstrated to have sufficient general management and administrative capacities to manage funds. The financial management and accounting procedures are appropriate and compliant with international standards. Internal and external audit functions are independent, reporting directly to the Finance Committee of the Board, and there is appropriate internal control framework in place. In addition, the ERT finds that One Acre Fund's procurement procedures and monitoring mechanisms are appropriate and well documented.

#### **2.1.2. Transparency and accountability**

31. One Acre Fund has not established an ethics committee, but the functions are allocated across the organisation. The compliance roles to cover ethics related matters are spread across teams to safeguard ethical standards defined in the Code of Conduct. One Acre Fund has demonstrated to have a comprehensive Code of Conduct that outlines ethical conduct across different domains, such as conflict of interest, corruption, fraud, whistleblowing and protections from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). The Code of Conduct is linked to other organisational policies, procedures and guidance applied to all employees and other parties involved with One Acre Fund. The Code of Conduct sets a tone from the top on integrity and the approach to prohibited practices.

32. One Acre Fund requires all staff to read and agree to the Code of Conduct. Additionally staff above job grade 5 have to participate in a training, that covers areas such as fraud and ethics violations, sexual harassment, whistleblowing, information security, anti-discrimination, and conflict of interest.
33. The definition and disclosure of conflict of interest are covered in the Code of Conduct as well as in the Procurement Manual when the potential conflict of interest relates to procurements. In addition to the global Code of Conduct, country-level conflict of interest policies may apply. According to the policy, all employees are proactively required to declare conflict of interest upon commencement of employment, annually thereafter, and immediately if a potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest occurs within the year.
34. One Acre Fund has established a specialised investigations team to address instances of fraud and misconduct throughout the entire organisation. The Investigation Team comprises of 22 staff members and the work is guided by a comprehensive Internal Investigations Standard Operating Procedure, last updated in July 2023. The manual consists of guidance on internal investigation tools, processes and decision-making procedures. Cases of sexual misconduct are guided by a separate manual called the Sexual Misconduct Case Investigation Manual, which was also last updated in 2023.
35. Regarding reporting prohibited practices, One Acre Fund has a stand-alone institutional Whistleblower policy (dated 2020) in place. Whistleblowing related matters are guided also in the Code of Conduct. The policies include guidance on the internal reporting channels and reporting process, confidentiality, and protection against retaliation.
36. One Acre Fund has a zero-tolerance policy for violations of fraud and mismanagement, and controls have been designed to prevent cases. Despite the controls, fraud and financial mismanagement cases have been identified due to the operational environment of One Acre Fund. According to the policy, the Internal Audit department verifies the investigated and confirmed fraud numbers (involving both internal staff and farmers) and reports to the Board every quarter. Number of fraud cases are also reported to the statutory auditor annually. In 2023, One Acre Fund's focus has been on internal controls and fraud prevention, and the lessons learned from 2023 fraud incidents will be incorporated into the control design such as ensuring sufficient resources to internal control roles, fraud detection, investigation, and staff fraud awareness training.
37. One Acre Fund has demonstrated to have policies in place related to anti-money laundering (AML), terrorism financing and fraud prevention. The stand-alone Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Fraud Policy covers measures to prevent financing of terrorist activities and provides guidance for conducting due diligence process on One Acre Fund's partners.
38. The ERT finds that One Acre Fund has appropriate ethical and conflict of interest practices in place, as well as policies and functions concerning prohibited practices. The whistleblowing systems, fraud detection and investigation function have also been assessed to be at an appropriate level. One Acre Fund follows a strict anti-money laundering and countering the terrorism finance regime.

## 2.2 Specialized Fiduciary Standards

### 2.2.1 Project Management

39. One Acre Fund operates through its country programs "as a business" with sustainable financial and operational infrastructure to maintain continuous services to farmers. One Acre Fund also runs partnerships with public and private actors (30 partnerships in 2023) and implements projects in terms of allocating earmarked donor-funding for specific geographies or

thematic activities or in terms of developing new products, such as new seed plants. One Acre Fund shared as evidence work plans, budgets and annual reports of two sample projects for Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and Dutch government.

40. As all One Acre Fund country programs follow the same model, the proposed GCF project in Burundi builds upon a track record of capability and experience in the region. The Business Development team collaborates with other units within One Acre Fund when developing technical funding proposals. The team examines technical, financial, economic, and legal aspects, as well as possible environmental, social and climate change aspects at the appraisal stage.

41. One Acre Fund does not have a project management manual but there are internal Learning and Development opportunities for staff members to increase their capacity on the project management cycle. There is a Project Planning Tool in the form of an Excel document and Salesforce CRM tool for project monitoring, donor reporting and financial oversight purposes. It is mandatory for every division, department, and country program to report on objectives and key results in the tools periodically.

42. One Acre Fund will not operate with external implementing partners for the proposed GCF project. All components of the proposed GCF project will be entirely managed by One Acre Fund staff. According to the planned implementation arrangements, the Burundi Country Director and the Project Coordination Lead (to be recruited) will be ultimately accountable to the global team for delivering project results. They are supported by other Project staff including the Grants Administrator and the Head of Growth Countries Unit. The Grants Administrator, with support by a Finance Manager, is responsible for ensuring compliance with reporting, financial and other project requirements, whereas the Growth Countries Unit Head will have key project oversight responsibilities. A Project Steering Committee will be established to oversee the project management.

43. One Acre Fund has a track record of preparing project reports and other deliverables to various international donors. As outlined in the Board Finance Policy, there is a monthly review of expense variances conducted. Further, One Acre Fund has demonstrated internal and external capacity and organizational arrangements for monitoring and evaluation and flagging risks during the project lifecycle. The Symbiant risk management system hosts One Acre Fund risks at global and country levels, and is expected to be updated once every six months. There are systems and capacity in place to conduct necessary activities relating to project closure.

44. The Applicant's Monitoring and Evaluation function reports to the Global Impact Director, and there is close collaboration between MEL colleagues at global and country levels. To ensure collection of high-quality data for monitoring and results reporting, One Acre Fund has tools and processes in place, such as double-entry and reconciliation of survey responses to reduce human error in data entry and independent verification of survey responses. One Acre Fund does not have an independent evaluation function, but external evaluations are commissioned approximately once every three years and often focus on measuring the yield and profit improvement of One Acre Fund programs in specific districts. Impact studies and results of external evaluations are published on the One Acre Fund website. Publication of studies and evaluations on the website has been less frequent in the past couple of years, the ERT cannot confirm how comprehensive the publicly available documents are.

45. The ERT finds that One Acre Fund has experience, systems and track record in project management at an expected level. One Acre Fund has adequate systems to oversee and control implementation and to monitor and evaluate results.

#### **2.2.2. Grant award and/or funding allocation mechanisms**



46. One Acre Fund has not applied for accreditation for the grant award and/or funding allocation mechanisms specialized fiduciary standard. One Acre Fund does not award cash grants in the proposed project, but it has provided evidence of the process to select and monitor farmers who participate in the program to receive agricultural inputs, training and other benefits.

### 2.2.3. On-lending and/or blending for loans and equity

47. One Acre Fund did not apply for accreditation for the on-lending and/or blending for loans and equity specialized fiduciary standard.

## 2.3 Environmental and Social Safeguards

48. One Acre Fund's Environmental and Social Risk Management Policy is mandated by its highest decision-making body and focuses on the IFC Performance Standards most relevant to the Applicant's work. All agriculture projects at One Acre Fund are risk classified as Category C (i.e., low risk), including the proposed GCF project. Environmental and Social risks are managed with the Symbiant system, and the Aspects and Impacts Register is expected to be reviewed every six months by the Global Impact Director and designated Field Leaders. The Burundi country-level risks are included in the global risk register, and each risk is assigned to a One Acre Fund staff member.

49. The Applicant has Environmental and Social Mitigation Innovations Assessments (ESIA) in place for projects and trials deemed as "Phase 3" and above. These assessments support in-country conversations and decisions for new project prioritization. As a result of the assessment and the risks identified therein, additional information or mitigation strategies may need to be submitted to the Global Impact Director before moving forward with rollout of the innovation project.

50. The One Acre Fund Environmental and Social Risk Management policy includes provisions on stakeholder engagement and ensuring customer protection and rights when engaging with farmers. The Project Level Redress Mechanism places a strong emphasis on farmer protection, and One Acre Fund's global oversight systems will apply to the GCF project. Customers and community members can contact One Acre Fund via Customer Service Hotline numbers (managed by Customer Service teams) in countries of operations. According to One Acre Fund, there is a Burundi specific hotline number with reverse billing capabilities printed on materials distributed to every farmer. Anonymous reports can be made through the global hotline email or report form, or through countries' HR departments. The Applicant has stated that most documentation relating to the grievance redress mechanism is available in English, French and Swahili.

51. Additionally, One Acre Fund has a "contact us" form on their website which is, according to the Environmental and Social Risk Management Policy, for "other interested and affected parties who have questions or concerns". Further, One Acre Fund's MEL team conducts farmer satisfaction surveys which provide a channel for collecting farmer protection issues. Field staff are asked to sign farmer protection pledges, and One Acre Fund engages with government officials to collect and address farmer protection issues.

52. The One Acre Fund Chief Legal Officer acts as the Applicant's Compliance Officer. According to One Acre Fund, there are 24 investigators at the Applicant who are mainly based in Kenya. The Global Legal Team, HR, or the Ombuds triages the information upon receipt of complaints and an investigator is then assigned to the case. Senior Investigators are assigned to more serious cases and if needed, will travel to the country where the alleged misconduct occurred. According to additional information provided by One Acre Fund, "auxiliary" staff



members may be assigned to manage investigations with oversight from the global team when the severity of the alleged conduct is moderate or less, when the global team lacks the bandwidth, or when local language skills are required. The Human Resources team in Burundi is responsible for maintaining documentation locally. Additionally, One Acre Fund maintains a register of global E&S related inquiries/complaints received.

53. The Director of Impact (Head of Global Impact) is responsible for One Acre Fund's environmental risk and sits within the Research and Development team. The Director of Impact works with the MEL, Agricultural Research, Agroforest and Carbon, and Insurance and Nutrition teams on E&S screening and compliance and has 247 One Acre Fund staff reporting to them. The ESRM role in the Office of the CEO (recruitment ongoing), Interim Risk Management staff, Internal Audit team, and the broad ESG function all have roles in handling the Applicant's E&S matters at the global level. At Burundi country-level, the central authority on E&S compliance is the Country Director who coordinates in-country with other teams and global systems/departments, including the One Acre Fund project managers for the GCF project to ensure proper reporting of E&S compliance.

54. The ERT assesses One Acre Fund's approach to Environmental and Social Risk Management as appropriate. One Acre Fund has an independent grievance redress mechanism in place and capacity to investigate alleged misconduct at the global and country level at an expected level. One Acre Fund has evidenced that they have organizational competency and human resources to monitor, follow-up and manage E&S risks.

## 2.4 Gender

55. One Acre Fund possesses a track record of implementing gender-sensitive and gender-responsive projects/programmes, as is demonstrated by their "Gender at One Acre Fund" memo and One Acre Fund's Gender Measurement Strategy. These documents serve as the Applicant's Gender Strategy, Policy and institutional Action Plan as there is no stand-alone Gender Policy in place. Gender is a core aspect of the proposed GCF project, as the majority of training attendees and household farmers are women and the Revolving Fund component of the project aims to support 2.4M beneficiaries, with 50% being women, in five years. As outlined in One Acre Fund's Gender Strategy, the strategy is routed in 1) gaining a deeper understanding of the prevailing gender norms and the unique cultural and socioeconomic contexts One Acre Fund operates in, 2) measuring gender-based disparities in yield and income, and 3) understanding women's empowerment and agency. One Acre Fund uses gender-sensitive approaches to increase female participation in Burundi, including conducting various trainings and having a high proportion of female field extension agents. Gender disaggregated data is collected and the MEL team conducts annual demographic surveys.

56. The Gender Action Plan for the proposed GCF project includes activities such as increased awareness among staff about the benefits of formalized marriages and women's land rights, gender-informed input distribution schedules and marketing, capacity-building and gender-sensitization training for One Acre Fund Burundi staff, and the creation of a report regarding market access for men and women farmers.

57. One Acre Fund is committed to gender equality at institutional level and reported 50% representation of women in Senior Management roles in the second annual People and DEI Report (2022). A key priority in 2024 is to address the slight decline among women in middle manager and country leadership roles experienced the previous year. There are three main job positions that focus on gender in the proposed project, two of which are vacant at the time of this report. At the Applicant level, there is a Research and Partnerships Senior Manager (also referred to as the Global Gender Monitoring and Evaluation Expert) who is a member of the

global MEL team and leads the development and testing of One Acre Fund's gender measurement strategy and impact evaluation for One Acre Fund's gender-focused partnerships. In Burundi, an Innovations Program Associate will be hired to implement the Gender Action Plan in coordination with field-facing teams. A Global Gender Lead is being recruited who will supervise the work on the ground in Burundi, drawing from other global support staff responsible for supporting gender work and when relevant, working closely with external gender experts. The Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan for the proposed project were developed with the support of an external gender consultant.

58. The ERT finds that One Acre Fund has provisions in two core documents that summarize the Applicant's gender policies, strategy and institutional action plan aligned with the principles in the GCF Gender Policy. One Acre Fund has organizational capacity, track record and human resources to implement projects according to the GCF Gender Policy. The ERT suggests One Acre Fund to develop a stand-alone gender policy and to ensure the recruitment of a gender specialist is executed.

### III. Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 3.1 Conclusions

59. Based on the assessment, One Acre Fund has demonstrated high capacity to implement the proposed project Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders and manage the GCF-funded activities in alignment with the relevant GCF policies. Additionally, One Acre Fund possesses the relevant legal status to implement the project as stipulated in the PSAA pilot framework requirements.

60. One Acre Fund meets the requirements of the GCF Basic Fiduciary standards, Specialized Fiduciary Standards, E&S and gender. The assessment identified some deviations from the requirements as described in the GCF guidance notes, but ERT does not consider the gaps material.

- (a) The applicant meets the requirements of the GCF Basic Fiduciary standards, the GCF Policy on the Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses, the GCF Policy on Prohibited Practices and the GCF AML/CFT Policy, and the Specialized Fiduciary standard for project management; to the extent applicable to PSAA and the Funding Proposal.
- (b) The applicant meets the GCF Revised Environmental and Social Policy, GCF interim ESS standards and the GCF Information Disclosure Policy on disclosure of E&S risk information in relation to the minimal to no E&S risk (category C/I-3) and to the extent applicable to PSAA accreditation;
- (c) The applicant has demonstrated that it has policies, procedures and competencies in order to implement its gender approach, which is found to be consistent with the Updated GCF Gender Policy to the extent applicable to PSAA and the Funding Proposal. The applicant has demonstrated that it has experience in gender consideration in the context of climate change;
  - (i) The only gaps observed relate to absence of a stand-alone gender policy or a designated gender specialist within the organization. The applicant has shown commitment to close this gap.

#### 3.2 Recommendations on project-specific accreditation

61. **Accreditation type:** PSAA
62. **Fiduciary functions**
  - (a) Basic fiduciary standards; and
  - (b) Specialized fiduciary standard for project management
63. **Maximum environmental and social risk category:** Minimal to no risk - Category C
64. **Conditions:** No conditions
65. **Remarks:** No specific remarks

## Section 2. Secretariat's assessment of SAP045

Proposal name:	Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders
Project-specific assessment approach applicant:	One Acre Fund
Country:	Burundi
Project/programme size:	Small

1. The Secretariat has assessed this funding proposal against the GCF investment criteria and its consistency with GCF safeguards and policies. The proposal is recommended to the Board for approval. The Board may wish to consider approving this funding proposal in accordance with the term sheet agreed between the Secretariat and the applicant, and, if considered appropriate, subject to the conditions set out in annex II to document GCF/B.40/02.

### I. Secretariat's assessment of the funding proposal against the investment criteria

Investment criteria	Does the proposal meet the requirements of the GCF investment criteria?	Strengths/Main points of caution (optional)
Impact potential	Yes	The project is designed to address the pressing climate hazards and limited adaptive capacity faced by 20 per cent of Burundian smallholder farmers. Component 1 will significantly contribute to ensuring sustainable access to climate-resilient inputs through a multi-year, adaptive revolving mechanism that One Acre Fund has already developed and implemented successfully in Burundi and in neighbouring countries. Component 2 will have a scalable impact

		<p>on farming practices through climate extension and advisory services, by refining and providing climate-smart agriculture training. Component 3 is expected to have a transformative effect on forestry and land use, supporting the planting of 5.3 million trees by 2029, through an agroforestry-focused approach. This component is projected to result in permanent removals of greenhouse gases amounting to 1.99 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, highlighting its substantial mitigation impact.</p> <p>A significant adaptation impact on 500,000 smallholder families is expected, directly benefiting 1.54 million people by generating USD 150 million in new rural incomes and assets annually. The indirect beneficiaries, estimated at 800,000, will benefit from spillover effects as neighbouring farmers adopt the same climate-smart practices. Furthermore, the project's commitment to continuous improvement through feedback loops and farmer engagement ensures high re-enrolment rates and sustained demand for its services. With a demonstrated social return on investment of 1:5.3, the project is expected to general substantial impact, translating a USD 35 million investment into over USD 185 million in new farm incomes, underscoring its potential for significant economic and environmental impact.</p>
<p><b>Paradigm shift potential</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A paradigm shift will be achieved through the project's scale, replicability and sustainability, leveraging a <b>one-off investment catalysing impact</b> far beyond the five-year lifetime. Working capital from the revolving fund will continuously support new farmer enrolments. The project's replicability ensures that enrolled farmers, equipped with creditworthiness certificates from One Acre Fund, will have improved access to future financial services, fostering systemic change within the agriculture sector that is more inclusive of smallholders. Sustainability is assured through the continuous provision of climate-resilient inputs driven by farmer contributions, setting a precedent for other farmers and stakeholders in the financial and agriculture sectors.</p> <p>Beyond its direct impacts, the project will contribute to creating an enabling environment in Burundi through market development and knowledge transfer, achieved by focusing on capacity development for farmers. By providing proof of concept for sustainable access to climate-resilient inputs, the project paves the way for new market development for microfinance institutions and agricultural extension service providers, as well as enabling farmers to graduate from subsistence agriculture. Additionally, engagement with the government to shape policy</p>

		<p>and regulatory frameworks further ensures that the project’s impacts are institutionalized, promoting long-term resilience.</p> <p>Targeting over 26,000 hectares of land by its fifth year, the project is contributing to not only global climate change mitigation efforts, but also national reforestation objectives with resilience-building co-benefits. By reducing climate vulnerability for 10 per cent of Burundi’s population, the project demonstrates a substantial commitment to enhancing national resilience.</p> <p>While the project will be delivered primarily through One Acre Fund’s structures, several national institutions will be engaged in strategic planning and oversight, as well as in monitoring and evaluation. This participation will – indirectly – also strengthen national capacities.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable development potential</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>By focusing on the inclusion of the most vulnerable farmers and youth, the project addresses systemic social issues, promoting inclusive economic growth. The provision of high-quality, climate-smart inputs is expected to result in a 12 per cent increase in annual household income for 303,000 households by the final project year, significantly impacting poverty reduction in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 (No poverty). Moreover, the project emphasizes food security, thereby contributing to SDG 2 (Zero hunger), with an expected 25 per cent reduction in reported moderate to severe hunger among enrolled farmers as a result of improved farm productivity and soil health.</p> <p>The project’s environmental co-benefits are multifaceted, aiming to reduce deforestation, improve soil nutrition and enhance biodiversity. These efforts contribute to land conservation and the preservation of ecosystems, which are critical for sustainable agricultural practices. Improved soil quality not only boosts agricultural productivity but also supports long-term environmental health, aligning with broader ecological goals.</p> <p>Investing in new business opportunities and job creation is a pivotal component of the project, expected to generate over 1,100 new full-time jobs directly within the implementing organization and an additional 600 jobs in rural communities. This investment in human capital</p>



		<p>is complemented by comprehensive training programmes, enhancing skills in team management, digital literacy and interpersonal relations. Such initiatives contribute to SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) by fostering sustainable employment and career development. Furthermore, the project underscores the importance of education (SDG 4, Quality education), as increased household incomes enable 30 per cent of new income to be directly spent on children's schooling.</p> <p>Gender inclusion is another cornerstone of the project, ensuring that women have access to technical advice and training. By prioritizing gender equality (SDG 5), the project ensures that women, who are integral to farming in 76 per cent of beneficiary households, receive support. This approach not only empowers women but also strengthens the overall effectiveness of agricultural interventions.</p>
<p><b>Needs of the recipient</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Burundi is a <b>least developed country in Africa with institutional fragility and weak macro-economic situation</b>. Approximately 80 per cent of its rural population heavily depends on rainfed agriculture and is particularly vulnerable to poverty. Such dependence exposes rural communities to severe risks associated with climate variability, such as droughts, floods and landslides, exacerbating food insecurity and poverty. Institutional fragility and a weak macroeconomic situation further complicate efforts to address these issues, limiting the capacity to respond effectively to economic and environmental shocks.</p> <p><b>Food insecurity</b> remains a pressing issue in Burundi, where many smallholder farmers live in extreme poverty, earning less than USD 2.15 a day. The agriculture sector, especially for <b>ultra-poor smallholders</b>, suffers from insufficient investment, hindering productivity and exacerbating hunger and malnutrition. The lack of resources and support makes it difficult for these farmers to adopt more resilient agricultural practices or invest in necessary inputs, further entrenching their vulnerability to climate change and economic instability. This project aims to address these gaps by providing high-quality agricultural supplies and access to financing, thereby enhancing the resilience and economic stability of smallholder farmers.</p>

		Expanding current operations into vulnerable regions like Kirundo Province will ensure that the most at-risk populations receive the necessary support to withstand and adapt to changing climatic conditions.
<b>Country ownership</b>	Yes	<p>The project presents strong alignment with Burundi's nationally determined contributions, and climate and sectoral strategies. By supporting adaptation targets for agriculture and tree-planting efforts, the project contributes to <b>25 per cent of Burundi's national targets under its nationally determined contributions</b>. The project's objectives are consistent with Burundi's two most recent national agricultural plans: Stratégie Agricole Nationale 2008–2015 (not yet updated) and Plan National d'Investissement Agricole. This alignment demonstrates the project's strategic fit within broader national and international efforts to combat climate change and enhance agricultural resilience simultaneously.</p> <p>One Acre Fund's <b>robust collaboration with the Burundi Government</b> is pivotal, with a five-year renewable memorandum of understanding signed in September 2023, extending through 2028. This memorandum of understanding solidifies the project's integration with national priorities and facilitates ongoing coordination with key government bodies such as the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock. The project will enhance the capacity of government extension staff and support national reforestation efforts, aligning with initiatives like “Ewe Burundi Urambaye”. Regular engagement with national stakeholders will ensure continuous alignment and prioritization of project activities.</p> <p>Participation of national institutions and the use of national systems could have been better integrated into the design; however, this would have required One Acre Fund's restructuring its delivery model, which in the present form has demonstrated scale, impact and efficiency.</p>
<b>Efficiency and effectiveness</b>	Yes	The project builds on a clearly demonstrated efficient and effective delivery model that One Acre Fund has developed, implemented and refined over more than 15 years in the region, including Burundi. The financing scheme highlights the model's potential to attract private funding post-completion, ensuring sustainability beyond initial GCF grants. The innovative use

		<p>of grant financing provides multi-year, sustained support to farmers while simultaneously fostering local market development for agricultural inputs.</p> <p>Cost-efficiency metrics in the funding proposal reinforce the project’s financial sustainability and high farmer re-enrolment rates. Despite economic challenges like inflation and currency devaluation, the previous and ongoing One Acre Fund programmes maintained a high recovery rate and covered a substantial portion of field expenses through farmer contributions. This indicates strong farmer commitment and the programme's resilience in adverse economic conditions. The high re-enrolment rate signifies continued farmer satisfaction and demand, while the high social return on investment reflects a robust impact on performance and sustainability. The anticipated total farmer contribution of USD 15 million over the project’s lifetime further supports its long-term viability, ensuring that the benefits extend well beyond the grant period without requiring repayment concessions. Additionally, the project secured USD 10 million (grant) in co-financing from philanthropic foundations.</p>
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## II. Secretariat’s assessment of the funding proposal’s consistency with GCF safeguards and policies

<b>Consistency with GCF safeguards and policies</b>	<b>Secretariat’s assessment of the proposal</b>	<b>Remarks (Strengths/Points of caution)</b>
<b>Environmental and social safeguards, including Indigenous Peoples Policy</b>	Consistent	The proposed programme is categorized as C, with minimal to no environmental and social risks, consistent with the GCF Revised Environmental and Social Policy. The activities will mostly involve capacity-building, with low risks related to occupational and community health and safety during planting, among others. The programme will exclude the introduction or promotion of genetically modified organisms without comprehensive environmental and social impact assessments and adherence to national and international regulatory frameworks. An environmental and social action plan has been prepared to address identified environmental and social risks during screening. For specific locations to be identified during implementation, a screening procedure is described in the environmental and social action

		<p>plan, ensuring that activities will be limited to environmental and social safeguards category C. Stakeholder engagement will continue during programme implementation.</p> <p>One Acre Fund adopts a zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. While the fund anticipates no major risks with regard to SEAH, SEAH-specific measures will be adopted due to the existing country context. The fund will implement policies on SEAH, deliver trainings, and report and monitor SEAH incidents through the grievance redress mechanism, among other actions.</p> <p>The funding proposal is consistent with the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy, with activities that pose no to minimal risk to Indigenous Peoples. The applicant commits to ensuring that any eligible Indigenous Peoples are able to participate in the project activities.</p>
<p><b>Gender Policy</b></p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The applicant provided a gender assessment and action plan with the funding proposal, thereby complying with the requirements of the GCF Updated Gender Policy. The gender analysis applied the gender analysis framework to collect gender disparities on five domains: (i) laws, policies, regulations and institutional practices; (ii) cultural norms and beliefs; (iii) gender roles, responsibilities and time allocation; (iv) access to and control over assets and resources; and (v) patterns of power and decision-making.</p> <p>The gender action plan takes an intersectionality lens to examine different vulnerabilities based on sex and age. The applicant will use the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index to assess and compare women's empowerment with that of men. This will enable the applicant to tailor programme components to better meet the needs of young female farmers, ultimately driving productivity and income generation.</p> <p>The gender action plan outlines steps to address gender gaps and barriers identified in the gender assessment in alignment with the project's main objectives. The corresponding outputs include issuing creditworthiness certificates and increasing awareness on the part of applicant's staff of the benefits of formalized marriages for women's land rights. Additionally, there are gender-informed input distribution schedules and strategies. The project also</p>

		<p>involves developing product bundles specifically designed for women, which include mechanized tools and climate-smart inputs. One Acre Fund’s staff receive capacity-building and gender-sensitization training to ensure the project’s success from a gender transformative perspective. This training will use gender-informed methods and cover gender-relevant content. These outputs align with the respective activities.</p>
<p><b>Risks</b></p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>The project is subject to risks such as price volatility due to exchange rate volatility and inflation, and extreme weather events as described in the funding proposal. Mitigants have been included in the design and the term sheet.</p> <p>The risk assessment submitted One Acre Fund (1AF) categorizes money laundering (ML), terrorist financing (TF), and prohibited practices (PP) as low-risk areas, largely based on 1AF’s strong global compliance policies and monitoring systems. However, the risk of engaging with vendors or partners that are not adequately vetted for Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) compliance remains a concern, particularly in rural areas where formal regulatory oversight is minimal. Additionally, there is a risk that the controls around small-scale input distribution (e.g., seeds, fertilizers) could be exploited by individuals to bypass detection of illicit activities, despite the small transaction sizes.</p> <p>1AF’s mitigation approach is centered on its established AML/CFT policy and Know Your Customer (KYC) procedures, which are applied uniformly across all operations. To address the inherent risks, 1AF screens all beneficiaries and vendors and ensures that only approved entities engage with the project. Additional safeguards include a comprehensive vendor verification process and regular compliance training for staff, particularly in areas like fraud detection and AML/CFT protocols. Furthermore, 1AF’s grievance and whistleblower mechanisms provide avenues for reporting suspicious activities, and their internal investigations team ensures that these reports are acted upon in a timely manner. Enhancing these mitigation strategies, 1AF commits to ongoing training, auditing, and real-time monitoring of financial transactions within the project scope.</p>

		<p>The operational environment in Burundi presents unique challenges such as limited infrastructure and regulatory oversight, which can amplify potential risks. In this project, 1AF intended to provide resources, such as funds or agricultural inputs, directly to farmers without the use of intermediaries. While the direct disbursement model ensures that support reaches the beneficiaries more quickly, it also requires heightened vigilance through enhanced monitoring and auditing to safeguard the proper use of resources. In this regard, 1AF has established compliance mechanisms—such as vendor verification, anonymous reporting channels, and a robust internal audit framework—provide a foundation for managing these risks.</p> <p>The Secretariat has reviewed 1AF’s proposal against GCF Board-approved policies and identified no material compliance issues or deviations. 1AF’s adherence to global AML/CFT standards, combined with proactive measures such as independent investigations and regular staff training, confirms its preparedness to handle compliance challenges.</p>
<b>Fiduciary</b>	Consistent	<p>The funding proposal is in consistent with the GCF fiduciary policy. One Acre Fund maintains policies to avoid/mitigate any negative consequences of financial activities, including full compliance with the United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. One Acre Fund presents financial statements in accordance with United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and with the accrual method of accounting.</p>
<b>Results monitoring and reporting</b>	Consistent	<p>The proposal contains a sound theory of change showcasing the logical pathway for transformation. The logical framework in the funding proposal package aligns with the GCF Integrated Results Management Framework. The applicant has allotted a sufficient budget to conduct monitoring and reporting of the project and commission independent evaluations as per the GCF evaluation policy.</p>



<p><b>Legal assessment</b></p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>This funding proposal is being presented under the project-specific assessment approach. If the funding proposal is approved by the Board, the Secretariat and the applicant will negotiate a funded activity agreement for the proposed project.</p> <p>The applicant has provided a legal opinion/certificate confirming that it has obtained all internal approvals, and it has the capacity and authority to implement the project.</p> <p>The proposed project will be implemented in the Republic of Burundi, a country in which GCF is not provided with privileges and immunities. This means that, among other things, GCF is not protected against litigation or expropriation in this country, which risks need to be further assessed. The Secretariat has not yet dispatched a draft agreement on privileges and immunities and a background note to the Government of the Republic of Burundi; hence, negotiations have not yet started.</p> <p>The Heads of the Independent Redress Mechanism and the Independent Integrity Unit have both expressed that it would not be legally feasible to undertake their redress activities and/or investigations, as appropriate, in countries where GCF is not provided with relevant privileges and immunities. Therefore, it is recommended that disbursements by GCF are made only after GCF has obtained satisfactory protection against litigation and expropriation in the country, or has been provided with appropriate privileges and immunities.</p> <p>To address the matters raised in this section, it is recommended that any approval by the Board is made subject to the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Signature of the funded activity agreement in a form and substance satisfactory to the Secretariat within 180 days from the date of Board approval; and</li> <li>(b) Completion of the legal due diligence to the satisfaction of the Secretariat.</li> </ul>
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## Independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment of SAP045

Proposal name:	Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders
Project-specific assessment approach applicant:	One Acre Fund
Country:	Burundi
Project/programme size:	Small

### I. Assessment of the independent Technical Advisory Panel

#### 1.1 Overview

1. Submitted under the project-specific assessment approach, the project, titled “Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders”, is a cross-cutting and small-scale initiative focused on enhancing the climate resilience of vulnerable smallholder farmers in Burundi, while contributing to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction.
2. The proposed project will be implemented over five years, with long-term impacts projected for 25 years. It directly targets 1.54 million farming households and aims to indirectly benefit 770,000 people across 11 provinces, including Gitega, Mwaro, and Muramvya in the central and northern regions, with planned expansion to five additional districts – Ruyigi, Kirundo, Karuzi, Cankuzo, and Rutana. One Acre Fund (1AF), which has been operational in Burundi since 2011, will serve as the accredited entity (AE) responsible for its implementation.
3. The theory of change identifies that by providing access to climate-smart agricultural inputs, advisory services, and agroforestry support, smallholder farmers will become more resilient to climate change, while reducing GHG emissions.
4. The project expects to permanently remove 1.99 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent from the atmosphere over its lifespan through agroforestry across 26,402 ha of land.
5. The project targets 2.3 million total beneficiaries representing 15 per cent of Burundi’s population. Key adaptation results areas include the most vulnerable people and communities, as well as health, well-being, food and water scarcity.
6. The project is structured around three key interrelated components or outcomes:
  - (a) **Component 1 – Increased household incomes of climate-vulnerable smallholder farmers:**
    - (i) Key outputs for this component are:
      - (1) Output 1.1: Increased availability and affordability of climate-resilient inputs in a sustainable and long-term model; and
      - (2) Output 1.2: Enhanced ability of agricultural and financial service providers to respond to farmers’ needs; and
    - (ii) Activities include:

- (1) Awareness-raising and farmer enrolment; and
  - (2) Providing high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and tools, delivered via rural-based field officers.
- (b) **Component 2 – Enhanced farmers’ capacities to adopt improved and climate-smart services:** Output 2 will focus on enhancing farmers’ ability to adopt climate-smart practices. The activities under this component will concentrate on refining and providing, in partnership with the Burundian Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock (MINEAGRIE), agronomic training in climate-smart techniques likely to enhance soil health, and on promoting crop diversification;
- (c) **Component 3 – Reduced GHG emissions due to large-scale tree-planting:** Output 3 will promote the large-scale adoption of agroforestry practices. The activities will involve distributing fruit and timber trees to boost climate resilience and diversify farmers’ incomes. Additionally, training on agroforestry (including tree-planting, care and maintenance) will be provided and a hillside agroforestry pilot will be implemented to test soil erosion control techniques.
7. The proposed project aims to tackle Burundi’s vulnerabilities to extreme weather events such as variable rainfall, droughts and floods, with a focus on enhancing food security, and boosting the adaptive capacity of smallholder farmers. By establishing agroforestry systems across 26,402 ha, including the planting of 5.3 million trees, the project will help reduce GHG emissions, while improving soil health and resilience.
8. The project is important for Burundi not only from a socioeconomic perspective, but also, as previously mentioned, from an environmental standpoint. Socioeconomically, it addresses the needs of vulnerable smallholder farmers who rely on rain-fed agriculture and are severely affected by food insecurity. Environmentally, it supports national priorities such as forest restoration, climate adaptation, and resilience-building, aligning with Burundi’s nationally determined contributions (NDCs), its Vision 2025 development strategy and national adaptation plan (NAP).
9. The executing entity is also 1AF, which operates its Burundi branch as part of its non-profit structure in line with United States Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). The branch has over 1,000 in-country staff and works across 22 core districts in Burundi.
10. The total project budget is USD 35 million, with USD 25 million requested from GCF as a grant. Co-financing contributions include USD 6 million from the Dovetail Impact Foundation, USD 1 million from the Knight Family Charitable Foundation, and USD 3 million from Pershing Square Philanthropies.

## 1.2 Impact potential

*Scale: N/A for SAP*

11. As a cross-cutting project, the impact potential will be presented from two perspectives: adaptation impact potential and mitigation impact potential.

### 1.2.1. Adaptation impact potential

12. The project aims to support 1.54 million direct beneficiaries and 770,000 indirect beneficiaries, representing 10 per cent and 5 per cent of Burundi’s total population respectively. The focus on smallholder farmers, particularly the most vulnerable, enhances their adaptive capacity, notably their financial and technical capitals, to cope with climate risks such as droughts and floods. These efforts will result in a significant reduction in vulnerability for the most at-risk rural communities.

13. By promoting climate-resilient agricultural inputs and agroforestry, the project avoids the lock-in of long-lived, climate-vulnerable agricultural production systems. Instead, it introduces sustainable practices that not only improve farm-level productivity but also enhance resilience, helping farmers move away from reliance on outdated and unsustainable methods. However, the success of the input distribution model depends heavily not only on the ability to scale up operations efficiently but also on ensuring that the inputs provided are locally adapted and climate-resilient. There is a potential risk that scaling too quickly may lead to a mismatch between the inputs provided and the specific needs of different agroecological zones, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the interventions or even leading to maladaptations.
14. The project targets smallholder farmers, particularly women and ultra-poor households, improving their access to climate-smart agricultural inputs and training. This will significantly reduce their vulnerability to climate-change impacts and enhance their adaptive capacity, particularly in regions most prone to food insecurity. With respect to the training there is the risk that training might vary in effectiveness due to differences in the expertise of field officers, the clarity of training materials, or the cultural relevance of the content. Inconsistencies can lead to an uneven adoption of climate-smart practices, reducing the overall impact of the project.
15. As outlined in the funding proposal, the project will be implemented in close collaboration with MINEAGRIE and other governmental institutions to strengthen the capacity of public extension services. While the proposal mentions a five-year memorandum of understanding with the national government to secure institutional support for long-term climate resilience and adaptation efforts, it lacks clarity on the practical aspects of these partnerships. Specifically, there is insufficient detail on how collaboration with the government will function in practice, particularly regarding knowledge-sharing and the creation of an enabling environment for project delivery.
16. Through farmer advisory services and climate-extension programmes, the project will increase the generation and use of climate information in decision-making. This will help farmers optimize planting decisions, improve soil health, and adapt to climate variability through sustainable land-use practices. While the sharing of climate information for informed decision-making at the farm level is a key activity of great importance, the project remains relatively silent on how this sharing will take into account the social realities of certain farmers, particularly regarding their level of education.
17. By providing access to drought-resistant seed varieties, by training in climate-smart practices, and by promoting agroforestry, the project will significantly reduce farmers' exposure to climate risks such as soil degradation, droughts, and floods. The proposed interventions will directly enhance food security and household income, contributing to long-term resilience. However, the introduction of imported hybrid varieties could increase smallholder farmers' dependence on external markets, making them more vulnerable – contrary to the project's intended objective.
18. The project includes an extensive awareness-raising component through training and community engagement activities, ensuring that farmers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to address climate threats and adopt risk-reduction measures.

#### 1.2.2. Mitigation impact potential

19. The project is expected to permanently remove 1.99 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent through large-scale agroforestry initiatives, particularly the planting of over 5.3 million trees across 26,402 ha. This represents a meaningful contribution to global climate mitigation efforts by promoting carbon sequestration.
20. The project used the EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT) to estimate GHG emission reductions. The key methodological details necessary to understand the anticipated level of

reduction, including the steps taken and the assumptions considered, are provided in annex 14a of the funding proposal. However, with regard to the intensity of chemical fertilizers, the situation has been oversimplified by considering the fertilizer scenario for maize cultivation, whereas the reality in Burundi is different, as farming systems are generally more diverse.

21. By integrating agroforestry and low-emission farming practices, the project avoids lock-in to high-emission agricultural systems. The introduction of sustainable technologies and farming methods will reduce reliance on emission-intensive agricultural inputs.

22. The project's agroforestry component plays a pivotal role in enhancing forest management and reducing emissions from land degradation. This effort contributes to soil stabilization, reforestation, and long-term carbon capture.

23. The adoption of solar technologies by rural households, promoted through the project, helps reduce reliance on traditional energy sources, thereby contributing to lower household energy intensity and emissions.

24. Overall, the project demonstrates a strong adaptation impact by significantly reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience for smallholder farmers in Burundi. It also contributes meaningfully to global mitigation efforts through large-scale agroforestry. However, the primary focus remains on adaptation, with mitigation results from the adoption of low-emission technologies and practices.

25. The independent Technical Advisory Panel (iTAP) considers the proposed project's impact potential to be medium.

### 1.3 Paradigm shift potential

*Scale: N/A for SAP*

26. The project targets smallholder farmers, a segment often underserved in Burundi. It introduces climate-smart agricultural inputs and agroforestry, focusing on scaling up access to climate-resilient farming technologies such as drought-resistant seeds and sustainable agroforestry practices. Farmers are empowered as co-innovators, testing new products and providing feedback to refine training materials. In relation to the latter, as mentioned in paragraph 16 above, it would be important to consider a format that also takes into account the education level of the vast majority of the targeted smallholder farmers.

27. The project includes a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan, leveraging randomized control trials and feedback loops from farmers to ensure continual learning and improvement. Best practices will be disseminated through National Advisory Council meetings and workshops, with manuals on financing and agroforestry being shared with stakeholders to drive sector-wide transformation.

28. Farmer contributions to input costs ensure that the project remains financially sustainable. The model ensures that revenue from farmers is reinvested into future projects, reducing dependency on external funding. The sustainability of services is underpinned by a proven track record of input recovery rates exceeding 98 per cent, ensuring continued financial and operational viability beyond the project duration. While the repayment schedule is flexible and well-established (until the end of the cropping season), there is room for improvements to reduce the financial burden on the most vulnerable farmers, particularly in years of poor harvests due to climate variability and change and climate-related diseases and pests.

29. By proving the feasibility of sustainable agriculture, the project is expected to create new market opportunities for microfinance institutions (MFIs) and private-sector actors in agricultural extension services. This will not only expand the agricultural value chain but also attract investment into climate-resilient farming technologies.

30. The project will reduce financial and knowledge-based barriers to the adoption of climate-resilient technologies by introducing climate-smart agricultural training and facilitating access to creditworthiness certificates for smallholder farmers, enabling them to engage with financial institutions.
31. The project is envisaged to contribute to an enabling policy in Burundi (but there is a lack of details as stated in para. 15), aligning with national priorities such as Vision 2025 and the national development strategy. The project's engagement with the government ensures that lessons from the project are embedded in national climate adaptation frameworks, influencing future policies and regulatory decisions.
32. By demonstrating the economic benefits of climate-resilient practices, such as increased income and lower risk profiles for smallholder farmers, the project shifts market incentives toward low-carbon development. This shift is facilitated by agroforestry and sustainable land-management practices, which provide long-term financial and environmental benefits.
33. The project will achieve scale by leveraging existing infrastructure and partnerships with local institutions, ensuring that its expansion does not result in proportional cost increases. This scaling approach maximizes impact, while maintaining cost-efficiency, benefiting both farmers and other key stakeholders.
34. By establishing proof-of-concept models for agroforestry and climate-smart agriculture, the project will reduce perceived risks associated with investing in sustainable agriculture in developing countries like Burundi. These models demonstrate the viability of long-term climate resilience investments.
35. The project demonstrates good potential to catalyse a paradigm shift through its scalable, and sustainable model, which reduces risks, creates new markets, and advances low-carbon development in Burundi.
36. The iTAP assesses the paradigm shift potential of the proposed project as medium to high.

#### 1.4 Sustainable development potential

*Scale: N/A for SAP*

37. The project promotes positive environmental externalities, notably through its large-scale agroforestry component. By planting 5.3 million trees over the project period, it will significantly improve soil quality by reducing soil erosion and enhancing organic matter. Additionally, agroforestry will improve biodiversity and water retention, creating more resilient ecosystems. The use of climate-smart agricultural practices, such as composting and minimal fertilizer application, will further improve soil health and air quality by minimizing chemical use.
38. The project will generate key social co-benefits, particularly in terms of health and food security. Through increased access to climate-resilient inputs and improved farming practices, the project will lead to a 25 per cent reduction in the number of farmers experiencing moderate to severe hunger. The expected increase in household income will also improve health outcomes, particularly by enabling families to spend more on education and health care. Additionally, the project's focus on gender inclusion will ensure that over 60 per cent of training attendees are women, promoting greater equality and empowerment.
39. The project will create over 1,100 new full-time jobs, with an additional 600 jobs in rural areas. These jobs will particularly benefit young Burundians under 35 years of age, providing professional development and career growth opportunities. The project will also lead to an expected 12 per cent increase in household income and will support farmers in generating USD 1,500 in assets over two years, further driving poverty alleviation. This economic uplift will



have ripple effects across the local economy, increasing market participation and fostering private-sector involvement in agricultural value chains.

40. The project is designed to correct prevailing inequalities in climate-change vulnerability, with a particular focus on women. Seventy per cent of the farming households targeted by the project report that women do the majority of the farming work. The project prioritizes women's participation in training and decision-making processes, ensuring that women benefit disproportionately from the interventions. Through a comprehensive gender action plan, the project also aims to improve women's access to financial services and increase their resilience to climate risk.

41. By addressing climate resilience through agroforestry and improved farming practices, the project will enhance long-term food security and community resilience. The increased soil fertility from agroforestry, coupled with improved farm management practices, will ensure that the land remains productive for future generations. This long-term focus on sustainable land management will help mitigate the risks of soil degradation and climate-induced food shortages.

42. The project offers significant environmental, social, and economic co-benefits, including the improvement of soil and air quality, the reduction of poverty and hunger, and the empowerment of women. Its potential for job creation and the alleviation of inequalities, particularly in terms of gender, strengthens its contribution to sustainable development in Burundi.

43. The iTAP rates the sustainable development potential of the proposed project as high.

## 1.5 Needs of the recipient

*Scale: N/A for SAP*

44. Burundi is among the most climate-vulnerable countries globally, particularly affected by increased rainfall variability, rising temperatures, droughts, and floods. This vulnerability is exacerbated by widespread soil degradation and deforestation, which heightens the risk of landslides and further soil erosion. The project targets smallholder farmers in regions that are especially exposed to these risks, such as Kirundo Province, identified as one of the neediest in the country.

45. Over 86 per cent of Burundi's population relies on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihoods, making the economy and society particularly susceptible to climate change. With 50 per cent of the population experiencing food insecurity and malnutrition, this project will target the most economically and socially vulnerable groups. It addresses the urgent needs of smallholder farmers who face chronic hunger and increasing climate risks.

46. This project aligns with Burundi's Vision 2025 and national development strategy, both of which prioritize agricultural resilience and climate adaptation for smallholder farmers, especially women and children, who are among the most vulnerable. Over 60 per cent of beneficiaries of the project's training programmes will be women, ensuring that gender-focused approaches are integrated into the project's implementation.

47. Burundi ranks among the world's poorest countries, with most of the population living on under USD 2.15 per day. Rural farmers, who constitute the majority of the population, are the poorest and most vulnerable. These farmers experience widespread malnutrition, with over 50 per cent of its children under five years of age experiencing stunted growth. This project is critical for addressing the immediate and long-term food insecurity in these communities.

48. Burundi's farmers face significant barriers to financing, as they have limited access to MFIs and private-sector support. Existing financial schemes are insufficient for their needs. The project addresses this gap by providing agricultural inputs and advisory services on a

reimbursable basis, enabling farmers to increase productivity without relying on external financing that is typically inaccessible to them.

49. The project addresses acute climate vulnerability in one of the world's poorest and most climate-exposed countries. It tackles multiple dimensions of vulnerability – economic, social, and environmental – while directly addressing the financing gap that prevents smallholder farmers from accessing climate-resilient agricultural practices. By focusing on the most vulnerable populations, including women and children, the project demonstrates a strong alignment with national priorities and a high potential for long-term resilience.

50. The iTAP assesses the needs of the recipients of the proposed project as high.

## 1.6 Country ownership

*Scale: N/A for SAP*

51. The project is closely aligned with Burundi's Vision 2025, the national development strategy, NDCs, and NAP. These documents emphasize food security, household income improvements, and rural agroforestry as national priorities. By planting 5.3 million trees and improving smallholder farmers' climate resilience, the project will directly support these objectives, particularly the development of rural agroforestry, which is highlighted in the NDCs as a priority.

52. The project has received strong support from the Burundian MINEAGRIE, which has signed a five-year renewable memorandum of understanding with the project's AE (1AF). This formal agreement ensures that the project will operate within the government's institutional framework and policy goals, enhancing its long-term stability and alignment with national climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

53. One Acre Fund has a proven track record in Burundi, having worked with over 276,000 smallholder farmers since 2011. The organization has demonstrated its capacity to deliver climate-smart agricultural inputs and agroforestry support, leading to substantial improvements in farm yields and resilience to climate impacts. Their long-standing presence and successful model underscore their ability to implement this project effectively.

54. The project was developed following consultations with various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil-society groups, and local communities. However, upon reviewing section 4.5.2 of annex 2 of the funding proposal, which includes, among other things, the list of participants in the regional workshop held in Gitega on 3 April 2024, it was noted that there was an absence of farmers' and women's associations.

55. The National Advisory Council, which includes government representatives, will play a key role in guiding the project throughout its implementation. Furthermore, the project incorporates a comprehensive gender action plan, ensuring that women's voices are heard and that decision-making responsibilities are shared with local institutions.

56. The project demonstrates strong alignment with Burundi's national climate strategies and has received considerable support from key government institutions. One Acre Fund's extensive experience in the country and the stakeholder engagement processes underscore the good level of country ownership and capacity to implement this project effectively.

57. The iTAP assesses the country ownership of the proposed project as high.

## 1.7 Efficiency and effectiveness

*Scale: N/A for SAP*

58. The project's financial structure, with a total budget of USD 35 million, including USD 25 million in grant financing from GCF, is appropriate for addressing the significant barriers faced by smallholder farmers in Burundi. The grant structure is essential due to the country's extreme

poverty and limited access to financing for agricultural inputs. The inclusion of farmer contributions (with more flexibility in the repayment schedule) helps ensure that the financial structure remains efficient and aligned with the project's objectives.

59. By introducing farmer contributions to agricultural inputs, the project demonstrates a commitment to minimizing concessionality. This approach fosters a sense of ownership among farmers and promotes long-term sustainability, ensuring that the project delivers its outcomes without creating excessive dependency on external financing.

60. The project will avoid crowding out private investment by creating opportunities for MFIs to participate in financing agricultural inputs. It also aims to strengthen public-private partnerships, ensuring that private and public-sector investments are catalysed rather than displaced. This approach encourages long-term private-sector engagement in Burundi's agriculture sector.

61. The project leverages an additional USD 10 million from co-financing sources, including private foundations. While the co-financing ratio is moderate (1:0.4), this is reasonable given Burundi's economic conditions and the high level of need for grant-based funding. The leveraged finance from both public and private sources demonstrates the project's capacity to mobilize additional funding in support of its objectives.

62. The project is designed to catalyse additional private-sector investment by demonstrating the viability of climate-smart agriculture and agroforestry. By providing farmers with creditworthiness certificates, the project will increase their ability to access financial services, thereby encouraging further investment in the sector.

63. The project offers substantial economic and social returns, with an estimated social return on investment of 1:5.4. This means that for every USD 1 invested, the project generates USD 5 in new income for smallholder farmers, contributing to long-term economic growth and poverty alleviation in rural Burundi.

64. The project demonstrates a good level of efficiency and effectiveness and ability to leverage additional public and private financing. However, the repayment schedule must be adjusted to reduce the financial burden on farmers, particularly the most vulnerable, during seasons of low productivity due to adverse climatic conditions.

65. The iTAP considers the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed project to be medium to high.

## II. Overall remarks from the independent Technical Advisory Panel

66. The proposed project employs a comprehensive strategy to enhance climate resilience for Burundi's smallholder farmers, while simultaneously contributing to GHG emission reductions through agroforestry and climate-smart agricultural practices. The project aligns well with Burundi's national priorities, including its NAP and NDCs. With high potential for sustainable development, the initiative is expected to significantly improve food security, adaptive capacity, and environmental sustainability across 11 provinces, directly benefiting 1.54 million people. The project, through its co-construction approach and strong institutional partnerships, demonstrates the capacity to address both climate adaptation and mitigation challenges in a highly vulnerable context.

67. To enhance the project, the iTAP suggests that the AE takes the following aspects into consideration:

- (a) **Tailored input provision:** To avoid potential mismatches between agricultural inputs and the specific needs of various agroecological zones, the AE should develop a more localized approach to input distribution, ensuring that inputs are adapted to the

- unique climatic and ecological conditions of each region. This could be achieved through phased scaling to ensure effective implementation and avoid maladaptation;
- (b) **Training consistency:** The AE should customize training content and delivery methods to address differences in field officers' expertise and the cultural relevance of the materials. This could include capacity-building programmes for field officers and the development of region-specific training materials that are culturally sensitive and clear, ensuring consistent adoption of climate-smart practices;
  - (c) **Strengthening government partnerships:** The AE should have greater detail on the practical aspects of collaboration with the national government, particularly in terms of knowledge-sharing, coordination, and creating an enabling environment for project implementation. A clear governance framework should be established to ensure effective long-term cooperation and support;
  - (d) **Adjustment of the repayment schedule:** The AE should consider adjusting the repayment schedule for farmer contributions, particularly for the most vulnerable farmers. This could include not only shifting repayments to a few months after harvest periods instead of during the agricultural seasons, but also introducing greater flexibility in the repayment terms during years of poor harvests caused by climate variability, diseases, or pests, reducing the financial burden and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the financial model;
  - (e) **Adaptation of climate information:** To ensure that climate information is effectively shared with farmers of different educational backgrounds, the AE should develop simplified communication tools and formats, such as visual aids or participatory workshops, tailored to the social realities of the most vulnerable farmers, ensuring inclusivity in decision-making processes; and
  - (f) **Mitigating risks of hybrid varieties:** To reduce the risk of dependence on external markets due to the introduction of hybrid seed varieties, the AE should prioritize locally adapted and resilient seed varieties and provide training on self-sustaining agricultural practices, ensuring farmers can maintain long-term independence, while improving their climate resilience.
68. Based on the analyses presented in the above paragraphs, the iTAP recommends that the Board approve this funding proposal.

## Response from the project-specific assessment approach applicant to the independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment (SAP045)

Proposal name:	Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders
Project-specific assessment approach applicant:	One Acre Fund
Country:	Burundi
Project/programme size:	Small

### Impact potential

One Acre Fund acknowledges that the overall impact potential is assessed as **medium** by iTAP, and appreciates the conclusion that, while the primary focus remains on adaptation, the project will also create a meaningful mitigation impact.

### Paradigm shift potential

One Acre Fund acknowledges that the paradigm shift potential is assessed as **medium to high** by iTAP.

### Sustainable development potential

One Acre Fund acknowledges that the sustainability development potential is assessed as **high** by iTAP.

### Needs of the recipient

One Acre Fund acknowledges that the needs of the recipient are assessed as **high** by iTAP, and looks forward to the partnership with GCF in particular because of these needs in Burundi, and given the impact it will have on the lives of so many of that country's farm families.

### Country ownership

One Acre Fund acknowledges that the country ownership is assessed as **high** by iTAP. It understands the suggestion that it offer more detail during project implementation on the governance framework, that will include details on the methods of collaboration with the national government.



### **Efficiency and effectiveness**

One Acre Fund acknowledges that the efficiency and effectiveness is assessed as **medium to high** by iTAP. It appreciates the understanding of the high relative value of the co-financing and the overall grant funding of the project – provided within a model that still minimizes concessionally through significant farmer contributions - given Burundi’s economic conditions and the extreme poverty of the populations served.

### **Overall remarks from the independent Technical Advisory Panel:**

One Acre Fund appreciates the time iTAP took to review the proposal and offer its thoughtful considerations, which it will strive to implement. It acknowledges iTAP’s overall assessment and recommendation to the Board.



# Simplified Approval Process Annex 4: Gender assessment and action plan



GREEN  
CLIMATE  
FUND

Prepared by Susan A. Markham

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## Introduction

One Acre Fund has submitted a proposal for the Green Climate Fund (GCF): *Scaling up Climate Resilience Solutions for Burundian Smallholders*. This gender analysis and gender action plan are submitted as an annex to that proposal, and seek to address gender dynamics in relation to the scope of the project, namely how the collection of sex-disaggregated data and the integration of gender into monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes will unlock knowledge regarding a deeper level of impact and empowerment for the female smallholder farmers One Acre Fund serves, and overcome any lingering barriers to program participation.

## Context

### **One Acre Fund (1AF)**

1AF is a non-profit delivering a bundled solution to the low-income, staple-crop farming families. 1AF serves 1.5M+ farm families directly in nine countries in rural East and Southern Africa, offering support for agricultural inputs, input distribution and climate-smart training in order to build resilience. To implement this project, 1AF will utilize the one-time mobilization of working capital to create a 'revolving fund' that enables 1AF to source high-quality agricultural inputs, and create long-term impact through the annual recovery of input support at proven low levels of 'leakage' of <2%.

1AF is a 501c(3) nonprofit corporation founded in Kenya and registered in the U.S. The Burundi 1AF branch is the executing entity for this project, currently with 1000+ in-country staff members, and headquartered in Muramvya in Muramvya Province, Burundi. 1AF operates in Burundi under the local brand Tubura. This program includes loans for seed, fertilizer and products like farming tools, physical distribution of farm inputs, climate-smart training on agricultural techniques, and market support to maximize harvest profits. It boosts farmer yields enough to improve food security and household incomes, enabling new productive investments that lift smallholder farmers out of poverty over time. 1AF recognizes the critical role women's empowerment plays in driving social and economic returns.

1AF has coordinated an internal Gender Working Group since 2022 that is headed by a global gender monitoring and evaluation expert, who leads monitoring and reporting of gender outcomes for Burundi from the central level. This team is building a more robust centralized repository for gender resources across 1AF - both gender programming and gender mainstreaming data. 1AF utilizes gender-sensitive approaches to help further drive female participation and benefits in Burundi. These include small introductory input support sizes for agricultural inputs to build financial literacy and avoid over-indebtedness; group trainings on climate-smart agriculture to provide support while aligning with cultural norms; oral and pictorial-based training to account for rural women's comparatively low literacy rates; and a high proportion of female field extension agents. The MEL team conducts annual demographic surveys to understand differences in male and female enrollment and participation rates, and more.

## Burundi

Burundi is a landlocked Central African country bordered by Tanzania, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>1</sup> Located along Lake Tanganyika in the African Great Lakes region, Burundi covers an area of approximately 27,830 sq. km.<sup>2</sup> The economic capital and largest city, Bujumbura, is located in this region.<sup>3</sup> Gitega, the country's administrative capital, is in the Central Plateaus.<sup>4</sup>

Burundi is a democratic presidential republic, wherein the President is both the Head of State and Head of Government.<sup>5</sup> The country's legislature has two chambers, the Senate and the National Assembly. The presidency is determined through a two-round election, and the winning candidate selects their vice-president, prime minister, and cabinet ministers.<sup>6</sup> Members of the 123-seat National Assembly and 39-seat Senate serve five-year terms; National Assembly districts are drawn based on proportional representation, and delegates are publicly elected.<sup>7</sup> Women currently hold 38.2 percent of the seats in the lower chamber of parliament and 41 percent of the seats in the higher chamber.<sup>8</sup> Senators are chosen via an electoral college through "communal councils," which are 116 deliberative bodies situated throughout the country. Council membership is decided by direct election.<sup>9</sup>

Although Burundi has one of the highest population densities in Africa,<sup>10</sup> the population is overwhelmingly rural.<sup>11</sup> As of 2022, roughly 14 percent of the total populace lived in urban areas;<sup>12</sup> however, based on measurements taken the following year, the country is rapidly urbanizing with an annual growth rate of 5.43 percent.<sup>13</sup> Still, most Burundians work in agriculture—a sector that employs approximately 86 percent of the population,<sup>14</sup> which is the highest rate of agricultural employment in the world.<sup>15</sup> Based on 1AF data, many of these agricultural workers are smallholder farmers, each cultivating land totaling less than 0.4 hectares. Moreover, based on the same data, 83 percent of farmers rely on their farms for over half their annual incomes *as well as* for sustenance.

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<sup>1</sup> [Country Reports](#)

<sup>2</sup> [CIA](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Relief Web](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Britannica](#)

<sup>5</sup> [CIA](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Constitution Net](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Index Mundi](#)

<sup>8</sup> [IPU](#)

<sup>9</sup> [World Bank](#)

<sup>10</sup> [World Atlas](#)

<sup>11</sup> [CIA](#)

<sup>12</sup> [World Bank](#)

<sup>13</sup> [CIA](#)

<sup>14</sup> [World Bank](#)

<sup>15</sup> [World Population Review](#)

Burundi has a population of approximately 13 million people, growing at a rate of about 2.7 percent annually.<sup>16</sup> The country has one of the highest birth rates in the world,<sup>17</sup> at about 36 births per 1000 people (based on data from 2023).<sup>18</sup> Burundi is a young country; 42.7 percent of the populace is aged 14 or under. Only 3.3 percent of Burundi is aged 65+. The population is nearly evenly split between men (49.6%) and women (50.4%).<sup>19</sup> The four biggest ethnic groups in Burundi are Hutus, Tutsis, Twa People, and South Asians. The official languages are Kirundi, French, and English; English is the least spoken of the three. Swahili is spoken in the country as well, although it is not an official language. The majority of Burundians, at about 59 percent, are Catholic, followed by Protestants at around 35 percent. A significant minority of Muslims live in Burundi as well, constituting 3.4 percent of the population.<sup>20</sup>

The overwhelming majority of Burundians—roughly 86 percent of the population, as of 2022—are engaged in agricultural work<sup>21</sup> on 85 percent of the 2.6 million hectares of arable land in Burundi<sup>22</sup>. Per 2021 data, Burundi is the country with the highest rate of employment in the agriculture sector.<sup>23</sup> Most of these people operate smallholder farms in rural areas, dependent on their land for both sustenance and income; per 1AF research, 83 percent of Burundian farmers fit this description. Moreover, 90 percent of Burundian *households* practice sustenance farming.<sup>24</sup> (Note: “Households” is not meant to denote individual citizens.) On average, these farms are small—only about 0.4 hectares each on average, according to 1AF findings. (Some sources, such as the International Fertilizer Development Center, determine the usual farm size to be 0.5 hectares.)<sup>25</sup> These farms are rain-fed, meaning they do not rely on irrigation;<sup>26</sup> This makes them susceptible to adverse weather conditions such as drought, which can delay planting and affect germination.<sup>27</sup> Over 55 percent of Burundi’s agricultural workforce is women, which is the 8<sup>th</sup> highest percentage worldwide.<sup>28</sup>

Although the majority of Burundi’s population is engaged in agricultural work, the country is experiencing high rates of food insecurity. According to 2019 estimates, 86 percent of Burundians are dependent on agriculture; however, Burundi faces low per-farm productivity combined with a low total arable land area.<sup>29</sup> Overall, the World Food Programme (WFP) classified 41.2 percent of the country’s population (5.4 million people) as food insecure in 2023

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<sup>16</sup> [World Bank](#)

<sup>17</sup> [World Population Review](#)

<sup>18</sup> [MacroTrends](#)

<sup>19</sup> [UNFPA](#)

<sup>20</sup> [CIA](#)

<sup>21</sup> [World Bank](#)

<sup>22</sup> [WFP Burundi Country Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#)

<sup>23</sup> [World Population Review](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Springer](#)

<sup>25</sup> [IFDC](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Springer](#)

<sup>27</sup> [Fews](#)

<sup>28</sup> [FAO](#)

<sup>29</sup> [World Food Programme](#)

and noted that this value could worsen over time.<sup>30</sup> The Global Hunger Index categorizes the hunger situation in Burundi as “alarming”.<sup>31</sup> In the peak of the lean period from April-May 2023, 2.3 million people experienced high levels of acute food insecurity.<sup>32</sup> Approximately 15 percent of the populace is facing acute food insecurity, per World Food Programme data. Burundi also has the world’s highest rate of chronic childhood malnutrition, at 55.9 percent.<sup>33</sup>

According to the World Economic Forum (2023) Global Gender Gap index, Burundi ranks 35th globally and fifth among sub-Saharan African countries, which is a fall from the 2022 report ranking. Burundi scores at 81 on economic participation and opportunity, where women’s labor force participation is 78.25, which is almost equal to that of men (78.94). Burundi is also only one of two countries where the wage gender gap is more than 80 percent closed. Burundi scores 120th for educational attainment, however, as women’s literacy rate and tertiary school enrollment significantly lag behind men’s. As in most countries, gender-based violence (GBV) is an important issue. In Burundi, 46.7 percent of women face some type of GBV in their lifetime.<sup>34</sup> According to a 2023 report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Burundi ranks first among African countries in the percentage of rural women reporting sexual violence since 2015 (54%).<sup>35</sup>

## Gender and Agriculture

### **Gender**

In order to address issues facing women in the agricultural sector, it is important to understand concepts of sex, gender, equity, and equality. While the program will measure the number of women engaged in various agricultural activities, it is because of gender issues that they often do not participate or benefit equally in these activities.

“Sex” is the biological characteristics which define humans as female or male. “Gender” is a socio-cultural concept which refers to socially constructed relationships based on sexual distinction. Because of gender, the social, economic and political differences between women and men are acquired. What is acceptable due to gender can change over time and is widely variable inside countries and among different cultural, political and socio-economic contexts. Gender impacts the living conditions, status, function and social position of men and women. The disparities, inequities, relations and discrimination that exist between men and women are commonly called "gender inequalities" or "gender issues".

The concept of equity refers to the conditions which allow women and men to enjoy the same opportunities with regard to access to and control of development resources. For example, in the education sector, equity consists of guaranteeing all students (girls and boys) the same opportunities to access a quality education whatever their origin, geographical location, socio-

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<sup>30</sup> [WFP](#)

<sup>31</sup> [Global Hunger Index - Burundi](#)

<sup>32</sup> [WFP Burundi Country Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#)

<sup>33</sup> [WFP Country Brief January 2024](#)

<sup>34</sup> [World Economic Forum Report](#)

<sup>35</sup> [FAO](#)



economic situation, state of health, convictions or beliefs. Equity is a means to achieve equality and involves the implementation of compensatory measures.

Equality between women and men means that men and women have the same status in a given society, and equal conditions to fully exploit their human rights. They contribute equally to economic, social and cultural development and must profit equally. The equality of rights between women and men is thus enshrined as a fundamental principle by the Burundian Office for Protection of Environment, which, in its actions, endeavors to identify the legal, economic, political and social or cultural barriers to be removed in order to ensure the full enjoyment of their rights by women and men.<sup>36</sup>

### **Agriculture**

There are five dimensions to gender inequality in agriculture: land rights, productive resources, unpaid work, employment and decision making.<sup>37</sup> A 2023 report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides a comprehensive picture of the status of women working in agriculture globally; shows how the creation of work in agrifood systems for women in many countries enhances their well-being and provides opportunities for economic growth, incomes, productivity and resilience; and provides analyses about the challenges women face.<sup>38</sup>

Globally, agrifood systems are a major employer of women and constitute a more important source of livelihood for women than for men in many countries. Despite the importance of agrifood systems, however, women's roles tend to be marginalized and their working conditions are likely to be worse than men's: that is irregular, informal, part-time, low-skilled, labor-intensive and vulnerable. Women's access to land, inputs, services, finance and digital technology continues to lag behind that of men. Discriminatory social norms and rules affecting women and girls are at the heart of gender inequality and are slow to change. Challenges to women's full and equal employment in agrifood systems hold back their productivity and sustain wage gaps. Globally, the gender gap in land productivity between female and male-managed farms of the same size is 24 percent.<sup>39</sup> Women's empowerment is key to economic and social outcomes. Benefits from projects that empower women are higher than those that just mainstream gender. Increasing attention has been placed on addressing constraints created by discriminatory social norms and gender-blind policies and laws in agrifood systems.

Key findings from the FAO report:

- Closing the gender gap in farm productivity and the wage gap in agrifood-system employment would increase global gross domestic product by 1 percent (or nearly USD 1 trillion). This would reduce global food insecurity by about 2 percentage points, reducing the number of food-insecure people by 45 million.

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<sup>36</sup> [Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, Burundian Office for Protection of Environment Gender Strategy](#)

<sup>37</sup> [IISD](#)

<sup>38</sup> [FAO](#)

<sup>39</sup> [Ibid.](#)

- If half of small-scale producers benefited from development interventions which focused on empowering women, it would significantly raise the incomes of an additional 58 million people and increase the resilience of an additional 235 million people.<sup>40</sup>

### Burundi Gender Profile

The following country analysis is based on the model used by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as it is described in its policy manual, ADS 205. Gender analysis is socioeconomic analysis of quantitative and qualitative information to identify, understand, and explain gender gaps between individuals, which typically involves examining 1) Differences in the status of women and girls, men and boys and their differential access to and control over assets, resources, education, opportunities, and services; 2) The influence of gender roles, structural and systems barriers, and norms on the division of time among paid employment, unpaid work, and volunteer activities; 3) The influence of gender roles, structural and systems' barriers, and norms on leadership roles and decision-making; constraints, opportunities, and entry points for narrowing gender gaps and empowering women; and 4) Potential differential impacts of development policies and programs on women and girls, men and boys, including unintended or negative consequences.<sup>41</sup> As 1AF continues to expand its work on gender equality and women's empowerment, they will continue to review how this context impacts both internal operations and external programs.

### **Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices**

This section is focused on the laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices that influence the context in which men and women act and make decisions because it provides a framework within which women farmers live and work. It covers gender equality laws broadly and several gender strategies under implementation by the government.

The Government of Burundi has subscribed to many international agreements and conventions to promote women's rights and gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1992), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). CEDAW is an international legal instrument that requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes women's and girls' equal rights. It is often described as the international bill of rights for women. Regular reports regarding CEDAW's implementation in Burundi are submitted to the UN on a regular basis. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by 189 countries, is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 addresses two critical issues—the inordinate impact of violent conflict and war on women and girls, and the crucial role that women should, and already do play in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In addition to these international agreements, in 2003, Burundi ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Maputo Protocol) that went into effect in 2005 and guarantees comprehensive rights to women.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> [USAID](#)

<sup>42</sup> [African Union](#)

The Constitution of Burundi includes several articles that guarantee the equality of all citizens in law and in dignity. Article 13 states: "All Burundians are equal in merit and dignity. All citizens enjoy the same rights and are entitled to the same protection of the law. No Burundian will be excluded from the economic or political social life of the nation because of his race, language, religion, sex or ethnic origin". Article 20 states: "All citizens have rights and obligations". Article 22 states: "All citizens are equal before the law, which affords them equal protection."

The Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights, and Gender established and currently implements the National Gender Policy (2012–2025). This policy aims to effectively address inequalities and discrimination between men and women, to advance gender equality throughout Burundi, and provides a substantial gender-responsive budget to do so.<sup>43</sup>

The Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights, and Gender established and currently implements the National Gender Policy. At the provincial and municipal levels, the Ministry runs family and community development centers (CDFCs), now known as the Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Development (PDFSD), to provide support services to GBV survivors and to mobilize, train, and support savings groups.<sup>44</sup>

The Burundian Office for Protection of Environment within the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock issued a Gender Strategy in 2020. The objectives of this strategy include 1) Bring gender equality in the Office's development actions to a strategic level in all its projects and programs; 2) Promote women through positive discrimination to promote equal opportunities with men; 3) Ensure the participation of women at the strategic level in the steering, coordination and monitoring bodies of projects and programs; and 4) Make gender and equality between women and men a tool for poverty reduction and climate change mitigation.<sup>45</sup>

Somewhat contradictory, the Code of Persons and the Family, Article 122 establishes the husband as the head of the household, stating, "He performs this function to which the wife contributes morally and materially in the interest of the household and children. A wife undertakes this function when the husband is absent or prohibited from doing so."<sup>46</sup>

With regard to gender-based violence (GBV), the government of Burundi adopted the Law on the Protection of Victims and the Prevention and Punishment of Sexual and GBV in 2016. The law provides a comprehensive definition of GBV along with an approach to address the investigation, prosecution, and punishment of perpetrators, and protection and support services for victims, including legal aid and compensation. The law prohibits domestic violence, rape (including spousal rape), and sexual harassment with penalties of up to 30 years' imprisonment, and either a fine or 3 to 5 years' imprisonment for conviction of domestic abuse of a spouse. There are, however, inconsistencies between this GBV law and the 2017 revised Penal Code.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> [UNDP](#)

<sup>44</sup> [SEEP](#)

<sup>45</sup> [BOPE](#)

<sup>46</sup> [Equality Now](#)

<sup>47</sup> [Amnesty International](#)

Burundi's Vision 2025 includes gender as a cross-cutting issue and the document states, "Burundi has registered the advancement of women among its priorities." Solutions for greater gender equality put forward in the document include setting up a proactive policy for the promotion of women through the improvement of their access to education, ensuring an increase in the economic participation of women, and initiating an input support policy focused on micro-credit and other innovative types of financing.<sup>48</sup> The National Plan for the Development of Burundi (2018-2027) includes projects to facilitate equitable access to economic opportunities between men and women.<sup>49</sup>

### **Cultural norms and beliefs**

Every society has cultural norms and beliefs about what are appropriate qualities, life goals, and aspirations for men and women. Gender norms and beliefs are often supported by and embedded in laws, policies, and institutional practices. They influence how women and men behave in different domains. Norms and beliefs go beyond what formal laws say to govern daily lives. For women farmers, this may impact whether they are the members in the program, what productive inputs are purchased and what crops and trees are grown. The attitudes towards women in Burundi can be described by the following proverb: "Umukobwa ni akarago k'abaraye," which means "Women and girls were created to provide pleasure to men."<sup>50</sup>

Cultural norms and beliefs are rooted in the country's strong patriarchal system and often relegate women to the domestic sphere and to unpaid or low-paid activities. According to CARE International, "It is a society where we still see male domination. Men dominate in decision making, in the management of household assets. The division of labour is not equitable. The woman takes care of the household. It is the man who is the breadwinner, he is the only one who earns money, except in the more educated milieu."<sup>51</sup> Parenting practices in Burundi dictate that a girl should receive proper training in "female" tasks such as household work and raising children, be taught to respect men, and be prepared to work in the fields.<sup>52</sup> Women generally require their husband's permission to engage in any activity that involves a transaction and often need their husband's engagement to manage money and sales. Men often also manage household budgets, regardless of who earned the income.<sup>53</sup>

A 2017 CARE report states that because land generally belongs to men, the women who work on farms are considered to be working for their husbands. Consequently, the revenue from agriculture is the main household income, which puts men in the position to decide how the household expenditures are made. During male-only focus groups, most of the men

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<sup>48</sup> [Vision Burundi 2025](#)

<sup>49</sup> [National Plan for the Development of Burundi](#)

<sup>50</sup> [CARE](#)

<sup>51</sup> [Euronews](#)

<sup>52</sup> [Search for Common Ground](#)

<sup>53</sup> [SAGE](#)

participating stated that they believe that the income generated from the farms belongs to the men and that they should be entitled to decide on how it is spent.<sup>54</sup>

A CARE report stated that all are socialized to view violence as a normative part of life. “Domestic violence is not only a pervasive problem, but a mainstream expectation within family life.”<sup>55</sup> However, cultural norms around GBV have shifted in recent years. Data from a 2016-2017 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) show a decrease in acceptance of certain forms of GBV, such as intimate partner violence, since the 2010 DHS. In 2016-2017, 62 percent of women and 35 percent of men considered it acceptable for a husband to beat his wife for at least one reason. Previously, in 2010, 73 percent of women and 44 percent of men considered it acceptable.

### **Gender roles, responsibilities, and time use**

The most fundamental division of labor within all societies is between productive (market) economic activity and reproductive (non-market) activity. This central social structure is often linked to gender-specific activity. It is one of the most basic questions: how we spend our days. For women farmers, these issues get to how much time they spend doing agricultural work versus work for the home (caring for children and older family members, cooking, cleaning).

Commitment to girls’ education is often an early indicator for women’s gender roles. Gender inequalities in education persist globally and at all levels of education, despite improvements in the last two decades. Progress in gender parity has been more consistent in primary education than in secondary and tertiary education, including across regions. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to score the lowest in gender parity in both secondary and tertiary education. In Burundi, girls enter secondary school at slightly higher rates than boys, according to official statistics; however, they are more likely to drop out of school as they become older.<sup>56</sup>

Global patterns in time use demonstrate the existence of substantial gender disparities in time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, such as cleaning, cooking, caring for household members and water collection, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. As previously described within gender norms, the typical division of labor among Burundians is highly gendered, as men and women assume different gender-normative roles. On average, women spend 5.5 more hours per day on household tasks and care work than men.<sup>57</sup>

Burundian women, particularly in rural areas, provide unpaid agricultural labor for agricultural tasks perceived to be physically less demanding (such as planting, weeding, cultivating, and harvesting) and working on household plots owned by their husbands or male relatives. Their labor accounts for 62–70 percent of total farmwork hours.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> [CARE](#)

<sup>55</sup> [CARE](#)

<sup>56</sup> [CEDAW](#)

<sup>57</sup> [CARE](#)

<sup>58</sup> [Feed The Future](#)

## **Access to and control over assets and resources**

A key component of gender analysis is an examination of whether women and men own and/or have access to and the capacity to use productive resources: assets (land, housing), income, social benefits (social insurance, pensions), public services (health, water), technology and information necessary to be a fully active and productive participant in society. For this program, this aspect of gender equality impacts how women farmers interact with 1AF itself, accessing support for productive inputs and attending training sessions.

Compared to men, women have limited access to the inputs and resources needed for agricultural production and income-generating activities. Such inputs and resources include access to credit, land, training, information, and loans. Without access to land because of formal inheritance laws, women are less likely to have the necessary collateral to obtain credits and loans.<sup>59</sup> According to UN Women, 40.1 percent of the people in Burundi with “secure tenure rights to land” are women and half of the people with legally recognized documentation of their rights to land are women.<sup>60</sup> Despite support for women’s equality in general (81%), an Afrobarometer survey in 2012 indicated that a majority of Burundians (57%) say that girls and women should not have the same right as their brothers to inherit their family’s land.<sup>61</sup>

A 2016 CEDAW report raises a concern that there are no laws regulating inheritance in Burundi. “Women continue to face barriers to their economic empowerment, given their poor socioeconomic condition and the stereotypes against them, in addition to their limited access to credit for failure to meet banks’ requirements and the right to land tenure owing to unequal inheritance rights.”<sup>62</sup>

More broadly, women have limited or no influence in decision-making about how land and resources are managed. If women do cultivate their own plots, it is typically for household food consumption. Regarding livestock ownership, cows are usually owned by the male head of household, though women may own small livestock. However, a husband can use his wife’s livestock for any purpose he deems necessary.<sup>63</sup> When women engage in income-generating activities, they seldom exercise authority over how to spend the resulting income.

Globally, major constraints to women’s access to financial products and services include lack of resources (e.g. income or assets), discriminatory social norms and policies and, often, the identification documents required to open a bank account.<sup>64</sup> Women in Burundi also have less access to finance and banking. A 2012 national financial inclusion survey found that men were twice as likely as women to have an account with a formal financial institution.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> [SAGE](#)

<sup>60</sup> [UNWomen](#)

<sup>61</sup> [Afrobarometer](#)

<sup>62</sup> [OCHR](#)

<sup>63</sup> [USAID](#)

<sup>64</sup> [FAO](#)

<sup>65</sup> [Survey](#)



## **Patterns of power and decision-making**

This domain of gender analysis examines the ability of women and men to decide, influence, and exercise control over material, human, intellectual, and financial resources, in the family, community, and country. While women farmers may share equally in the agricultural work, this questions who makes key decisions between farmers who are married and who controls the income that is created through their efforts.

Culturally, most of the time within a Burundian household, either the husband or the eldest son holds decision-making power as the head of the household. Economically, the imbalance in asset ownership within households results in men having financial power over women. A study conducted on behalf of CARE Burundi revealed that young men in general are against gender equality because it would lead to equal access to inheritance and property ownership between men and women.<sup>66</sup>

Women are fairly well-represented in public life. There is a 30 percent quota for women's representation in the executive branch, parliament, and community councils and women currently hold 38.2 percent of the seats in the lower chamber of parliament and 41 percent of the seats in the higher chamber.<sup>67</sup>

Focus groups conducted by 1AF in early 2024 confirmed much of the desk research regarding women's status and gender issues. With regard to equality between women and men, one participant said, "Normally it should be equal, but seeing that the tasks are more numerous for women than for men, it's really impossible." When asked why more women do not participate in 1AF Burundi programs, a participant stated that women prioritize "what they are told to do by their husbands."

In both male and female-only groups, there was a consistent rhetoric in these focus groups, that "In most families, women are not free. They are under the control of their husbands." When asked what their opinion would be of a household where men and women jointly made the decision on farming practices, and investments, the male-only group and one of the female-only groups responded "The man here is not free"; however, all groups agreed this demonstrated "peace and love in these families" and "well-organized families".

## Methodology

This gender analysis was carried out by an independent consultant retained by 1AF in March 2024. The development of the analysis is based on a literature review of national strategy documents, and reports by governmental, multilateral and civil society organizations. Secondary research was conducted through a review of more than twenty resources focused on gender and agriculture, and internal 1AF documents. Primary research included interviews with five 1AF staff members. Information collected from focus groups with both 1AF Burundi field officers and farmers in Burundi was also included to support the desk research.

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<sup>66</sup> [CARE](#)

<sup>67</sup> [IPU](#)

The issues addressed in the gender analysis are aligned with the issues outlined by the GCF, including the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other. Specifically, the main issues guiding the gender analysis:

#### *Context*

- What is the adult literacy rate, poverty rate, labor force participation rate, employment rate?
- What is the legal status of women?
- What are commonly held beliefs, perceptions, and stereotypes related to gender?
- What is the division of labor among women and men?
- What are some of the inequalities that exist between women and men?
- What resources (economic, financial, physical, natural, other assets) do women and men have access to? Who manages or controls access to these resources?
- Do women have equal access to education, technical knowledge, and/or skill upgradation?
- To what extent do women and men from vulnerable communities participate in decision-making processes? What type of decisions are made by women?
- What are the constraints (social, cultural, economic, political) that restrict women's active participation in household and community level decision – making processes?

#### *Project*

- What roles are women and men anticipated to play in the context of the project?
- What will these roles entail in terms of time commitment and need for mobility?
- What are the differential needs/priorities of women and men in the context of the project? Will the project be able to address their respective needs and priorities? If so, how?
- Do women and men have equal access to information and opportunities necessary to participate and benefit fully from the anticipated outcomes of the project?
- Will services and technologies provided by the project be available and accessible to both women and men?
- Has the project recognized the distinct vulnerabilities of women and men and developed specific response strategies for each target group?
- Are the specific knowledge and skills of women and men, especially from vulnerable groups, being utilized to contribute to project outcomes and solutions?
- Has the project identified opportunities to challenge gender stereotypes and increase positive gender relations through equitable actions? If so, what are these opportunities and actions?

## **Gender Action Plan**

### **Current Work on Gender**

#### *Globally*

1AF has been considering the impact of gender issues and women's empowerment in its internal operations and programs for several years, across its nine countries of operation.

Previous research includes a 2019 report by Value for Women (VFW) which carried out an applied research initiative aimed at assessing the 1AF model, documenting its then-current state and how it fared from a gender inclusion lens. In 2020, Dalberg conducted a Global Gender Audit and Rwanda Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) Study. The audit found that over 80 percent of staff surveyed believe that 1AF is a gender equitable organization.<sup>68</sup> Another key finding was that female representation in Burundi lagged the other core 1AF countries of operation. Compared to other countries where representation was between 50 and 55 percent, female staff in Burundi made up only 40 percent of the overall staff.<sup>69</sup>

In 2021-2022, 1AF laid out a vision for change with regard to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and made important progress on equity in pay and benefit structures. In 2022, in a presentation to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), gender was listed as a long-term strategy priority of 1AF; this included an external memo “Gender at One Acre Fund”, which included the commitment to integrating a gender lens across 1AF’s operations.<sup>70</sup> In 2023, the organization focused on consistent and objective performance management. 1AF also invested in areas where the organization had made less progress since 2021, such as gender representation and farmer-facing team inclusion.

1AF has a Gender Working Group that was formed in 2022 and is led by a global gender monitoring and evaluation expert. The goals of the working group: 1) begin research to capture and understand the reality for women farmers when it comes to accessing inputs and information, division and time spent within different categories of labor, household decision-making and control of income and land rights of women; and 2) assess the understanding, knowledge and skills that 1AF employees have on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and on the 1AF’s gender architecture and gender policy.

Currently, the team is building a robust centralized repository for gender resources across 1AF, covering issues of gender with regard to internal policies and employment, gender-mainstreaming in programs and the collection of sex-disaggregated data. Specific goals currently include attracting women to work for 1AF and ensuring equal representation at all employment levels, and monitoring outcomes over time to ensure equity and inclusion. Some of the specific issues to be addressed by the organization to “set women up for success at 1AF” are the challenges of relocation; long work hours for field staff members and the risk of having money at home. A global, holistic gender strategy is under development with the goal of completion in the first half of 2024. 1AF is currently working to hire a Global Gender Lead to design and implement gender strategies across all of its countries of operations. A job posting will be listed on its public website soon. This person will be working directly with all of the gender champions across the organization and will supervise the work on the ground in Burundi. This includes the work of an Innovations Program Associate, a dedicated staff person in Burundi who will ensure the Gender Action Plan for the project is carried out in a way that is integrated into the core operations of the project

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<sup>68</sup> [Dalberg Gender Audit](#)

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> [Gender at One Acre Fund](#)

### *Internal Operations in Burundi*

With regard to internal policies, 1AF Burundi has a zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment at the workplace: Sexual harassment includes sexual advances committed by a colleague, supplier, or partner in exchange for favors, as well as any behaviors creating a hostile work environment. While it is impossible to describe all the behaviours of sexual harassment, it includes: physical conduct, verbal or nonverbal conduct of a sexual nature and not limited to: verbal: unwanted propositions or pressure to have meetings of a sexual nature; physical: intended bodily contact, lustful regards; non-verbal: unwanted emails, discussions or presents; displaying suggestive sexual images' and the implicit or explicit promise or threat concerning current or future employment status.

There is also a comprehensive family leave policy which includes time off for marriage (4 days), a spouse's death (4 days), a child's marriage (4 days), a child's death (4 days), a parent's or grandparent's death (4 days), the death of in laws or siblings (2 days), and relocation for work (4 days). Paternity leave is four days, Maternity leave is 12 weeks, extendable to 14 weeks, of which six must be taken post-partum. For the six months after birth, breastfeeding mothers have a right to one rest hour per day.

In order to increase the number of women on staff in Burundi, there is a policy of always having at least one female on the panel when recruiting. Moreover, there is a target of minimum 30 percent of the recruits being female and that if man and woman have the same competences, they will hire the female.

Currently, the Burundi staff breakdown includes the follow percentages of women, representing a degree of progress since the Dalberg report referenced above:

- 45% of field officers in 1AF Burundi are women
- 47% of staff in the top 1.5% leadership positions (JL9+) are female.
- 71% of staff in the steering committee are female.
- Percentage of top/manager Field Officers in 1AF/1AF Burundi that are women (47% female FOs, 41% female Field managers, 40% Assistant Field Directors, 33% Field directors)

As the job levels or seniority increases, the percentage of women reduces, apart from in the most senior (JL9+) positions.

### *Data Collection*

For all of its projects, 1AF gathers extensive data each season on farmer harvests, profits, quality of life, nutrition, program satisfaction, soil health, and more in Burundi.

Gender-disaggregated data collected to date on programs:

- 76% of 1AF clients say that women are carrying out the majority of farming labor
- 44% of 1AF contract signers are women
- 62% of those attending 1AF climate-smart trainings are women

Focus groups were designed in collaboration with female staff in Burundi, including Annaise Kwizera, FOPS lead, Ornella Hatungimana, GR lead and Lucy Swain, Innovations Program Associate. These focus groups, conducted in March and April this year, focused on better understanding the level of baseline gender awareness and perspectives on barriers and potential entry points from 1AF Burundi staff, and are informing this gender analysis and additional research. The field staff, being the closest to farmers, have valuable insights into the lives of female farmers and their participation in the project. By the end of April 2024, ten focus groups had taken place with both 1AF staff and members. Eight female and four male staff participated in the initial pilot activity. In late April, eight focus groups took place in four collines with female and male farmers. In the following months, the refined focus group guide will be rolled out with an additional four staff focus groups, and four farmer focus groups.

The MEL team also conducts annual demographic surveys to understand differences in male and female program enrollment and participation rates, and more.

#### *External/Programs*

In Burundi, there is a dedicated staff member who leads monitoring and reporting of gender outcomes for Burundi. To that end, 1AF utilizes gender-sensitive approaches to help further drive female participation and benefits in Burundi. These include small introductory input support packages to build financial literacy; group climate-smart training sessions to provide support while aligning with cultural norms; oral, pictorial, practice-based training to account for rural women's comparatively low literacy rates; and a high proportion of female field extension agents.

#### **Technical Review Response**

##### *On environmental and social safeguards, and gender:*

A global, holistic gender strategy is under development with the goal of completion in the first half of 2024. It will include a gender theory of change, a plan to build gender-focused technical expertise through specialist recruitment and staff training, and implementation activities around gender-inclusive human resources policies and procedures. Moreover, the process has begun to hire a Global Gender Lead to supervise these efforts. "One Acre Fund is committed to building its capacity and fostering partnerships to bring the needed technical, strategic and financial resources to bear on delivering greater economic and social returns for Africa's female smallholders."<sup>71</sup>

#### **Expanded Work on Gender**

##### *Internal Operations in Burundi*

As previously noted, 1AF Burundi currently operates under detailed family leave and sexual harassment policies and is implementing a recruitment strategy to increase the number of women on staff at all levels.

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<sup>71</sup> [External memo](#)

In addition to these policies, the Tubura Women Leaders Committee (FTC) is an initiative aimed at helping women overcome their disadvantages and grow within 1AF Burundi and in their personal lives. The goals of the FTC: 1) Improve team well-being and health; 2) Professional development tips tailored to women; and 3) Support for women to advocate for themselves and others, including by letting them know what behaviors violate the rules, and how these behaviors can be reported and avoided.<sup>72</sup>

There has also been set up a “mutual savings fund” called "Solidarity of working women" created by and made up of the women of One Acre Fund and those who adhere to these regulations.<sup>73</sup> The main objective of the Fund is the social and professional promotion of its members through the following actions: promoting member savings; the granting of loans for the realization of projects; and providing training to help members improve professionally.

Any new organizational policies and procedures will integrate gender issues into them rather than create ones specific to women staff members.

#### *Data Collection*

For all of its projects, 1AF gathers extensive data each season on farmer harvests, profits, quality of life, nutrition, program satisfaction, soil health, and more in Burundi. To unlock a deeper level of impact and empowerment for female smallholders served, and overcome the lingering barriers to program participation, 1AF is currently collecting sex-disaggregated data for the previously mentioned metrics with analysis available in the summer. A new methodology that includes age data will begin in June with analysis available later this year. This information will identify how the results vary between male and female clients. This data collection will also help 1AF gain a better understanding of the gendered barriers women face to full program participation.

In collaboration with female staff in Burundi, including Annaise Kwizera, FOPS lead, Ornella Hatungimana, GR lead and Lucy Swain INN associate, 1AF will integrate a gender lens into MEL processes (e.g. tracking gender-responsive metrics, introducing a women’s empowerment survey), which will be leveraged to improve program design for women. The Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), created by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), measures women’s empowerment based on interviews of women and men within the same household.<sup>74</sup> It can be used to assess women’s empowerment as well as compare it to men’s. An abbreviated version of the WEAI is currently being conducted in Burundi. The roll out of a full version that includes age data will take place for the Burundi program in 2025. This will equip the organization to then tailor program components to better meet the needs of female farmers, driving productivity and income generation.

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<sup>72</sup> Presentation Comité des Femmes Leaders Tubura

<sup>73</sup> [Reglement Caisse des femmes](#)

<sup>74</sup> [WEAI](#)



### *External/Programs*

As previously stated, there are five dimensions to gender inequality in agriculture: land rights, productive resources, unpaid work, employment and decision making.<sup>75</sup> These dimensions of inequality are addressed here separately but are also mainstreamed throughout the 1AF program and activities outlined in the proposal logical framework. The activities outlined here seek to integrate gender issues throughout rather than create separate programs focused on women farmers. The impact of these activities will be increased farmer yields to improve food security and household incomes, enabling new productive investments that lift smallholder farmers, both men and women, out of poverty over time. The outcomes will include improved knowledge to overcome barriers to program participation, such as credit, inputs, and training, and an increase in the number of female smallholder farmers served by One Acre Fund. See *below and the attached table per the GCF template.*

### **Cross-Cutting Component: Partnership**

1AF programs complement the broader smallholder agricultural sector/ecosystem in Burundi, which includes interventions from civil society members, international organizations, embassies and, as explained previously, the Burundian government.

1AF will investigate governmental and civil society organizations that are already working on gender and agriculture in Burundi to explore collaborations on data, training materials, service delivery, etc. As 1AF builds its knowledge about and capacity to implement programming that addresses the needs of women farmers, it will look to international and local organizations with experience in this area, specifically regarding initiatives that challenge gender norms that perpetuate gender inequality. Besides the offices included in the concept note, the Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights, and Gender currently implements the National Gender Policy with gender focal points or gender units within ministries. In addition, the Burundian Office for Protection of Environment within the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock has a gender strategy. The reports cited in this analysis provide a starting point for potential partners: FAO, USAID, CARE, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Catholic Relief Services. They are often looking for private sector partners. 1AF Burundi has already had some exploratory exchanges with a number of these entities.

### **1AF Component #1: Sustainable Access to Climate Resilience Inputs**

CHALLENGE 1a: Women farmers often do not have secure or formal land rights due to cultural norms and informal marriages. This lack of land rights can impact their access to credit due to lack of collateral.

ACTIVITY OUTCOME:

Women farmers have increased access to credit outside of 1AF's program.

OUTPUTS:

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<sup>75</sup> [IISD](#)

- Creditworthiness certificates that help member farmers access commercial credit (outside of 1AF input support program);
- Increased awareness among staff about the benefits of formalized marriages for women's land rights (with the possibility of expanding the awareness-raising to members if this pilot is successful); and

#### ACTIVITIES:

- Creditworthiness certificates offered to farmers who successfully reimburse 100% of their total input support packages (i.e. reimbursing 1AF for agricultural inputs) for six seasons.
- Awareness raising training conducted for 1AF staff to educate them about the benefits of formalizing marriage, including land tenure.

#### INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

- % of 1AF women members; Target: 40%
- # of certificates distributed (data disaggregated by sex); Target: 40% of certificates distributed are to women
- % of 1AF staff educated about the benefits of formal marriages with regard to women's land rights; Target: 100%
- Total USD value of input support disbursements: Target 40% of value

#### TIMELINE:

- Certificate distribution underway: By end of 2026
- Staff education: By end of 2025

#### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Gender expert/specialist

**CHALLENGE 1b:** Women farmers do not access/purchase as many productive resources (1AF “inputs”) that increase farm productivity.

#### ACTIVITY OUTCOME:

Women farmers have increased access to and purchase more inputs/productive resources.

#### OUTPUTS:

- Input distribution schedules take into account women's timing and mobility constraints;
- Input marketing takes into account gender aspects of labor saving tools;
- 1AF product bundles include mechanized tools; and
- Climate smart inputs are appropriately marketed to women to increase uptake.

#### ACTIVITIES:

- Offer flexibility in picking up inputs and/or allow a representative to pick up farmers' inputs.

- Integrate gender lens scoring sheets into product review processes for rating new and existing products such as hoes, watering cans and harvest drying sheets.
- Offer, on a trial basis, maize shellers or another product focused on saving the time of women farmers, in the product bundle.
- Improve marketing of climate smart inputs to women farmers.

#### INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

- % of distribution schedules allowing flexibility; Target: 100%
- Scoring sheets integrate gender into product reviews; Target: Yes
- Maize shellers or other time saving product trialed; Target: Yes
- % of climate smart inputs marketed to women; Target: 100%
- % of women farmers who purchase inputs/productive resources; Target depends on baseline
- % of inputs/productive resources purchased by women farmers; Target depends on baseline

#### TIMELINE:

- Distribution schedules flexibility: By end of 2025
- Product evaluations include gender score: By end of 2025
- Trial time saving product: By end of 2025
- Climate smart inputs marketing improved for women: By end of 2026

#### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Gender expert/specialist

### ***1AF Component #2: Climate Extension & Farmer Advisory***

**CHALLENGE 2a:** Women farmers are deterred from attending climate-smart training sessions in the same numbers as men due to social norms, time constraints, and relevancy of content.

#### ACTIVITY OUTCOME:

More women farmers attend more climate-smart training sessions.

#### OUTPUTS:

- Capacity-building and gender-sensitization training for 1AF Burundi staff;
- Training methods and content use a training andragogy suited for the low literacy levels faced by women (eg. heavy use of pictures and minimal technical terms);
- Training content that holds relevance for women farmers (e.g. content is unbiased towards crops/technologies that are typically adopted by men); and
- Topics on gender equality including training sessions (including gender-based violence, joint decision-making in the HH); assuming an appropriate partner can be found.

#### ACTIVITIES:

- Create and implement capacity-building and gender-sensitization training for 1AF Burundi staff.

- Review current climate-smart training methods and content to ensure that they are appropriate for women farmer’s education and literacy levels. Revise if necessary.
- Review current climate-smart training content to ensure that it holds relevance for women farmers (e.g.content is unbiased towards crops/technologies that are typically adopted by men). Revise if necessary.
- Revise training material content to include topics on gender equality including training sessions (including gender-based violence, joint decision-making in the HH); assuming an appropriate partner can be found.

#### INDICATORS AND TARGETS:

- % of farmers attending training sessions that are women; Target: 70%
- % of staff receiving capacity-building and gender-sensitization training; Target: 100%
- % of training methods and content appropriate for women farmer’s education and literacy levels; Target: 100%
- % of training content that has been ensured is relevant for women farmers; Target: 100%
- Training material content includes topics on gender equality; Target: Yes (assuming an appropriate partner is found)
- % of women beneficiaries adopting climate-resilience practices: Target: 40%

#### TIMELINE:

- Capacity-building and gender-sensitization training: By end of 2026
- Appropriate level training methods and content: By end of 2025
- Relevant training content: Trial by end of 2025

#### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Gender expert/specialist

CHALLENGE 2b: Women farmers are not able to maximize harvest profits due to crop selection and market access.

#### ACTIVITY OUTCOME:

1AF is more knowledgeable about the gender differences in obstacles, motivations, and factors affecting crop selection and market access.

#### OUTPUTS:

- Report regarding the crops men and women farmers grow and their market values;
- Report regarding market access for men and women farmers; and
- Gender and age analysis regarding the gender differences in obstacles, motivations, and factors affecting crop selection and market access.

#### ACTIVITIES:

- Conduct data collection regarding the crops men and women farmers grow and their market values.

- Conduct data collection regarding market access for men and women farmers.
- Analyze data regarding the gender and age differences in obstacles, motivations, and factors affecting crop selection and market access.

**INDICATORS AND TARGETS:**

- % of surveys collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data regarding crops; Target: 100%
- % of surveys collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data regarding market access; Target: 100%

**TIMELINE:**

- Data collection regarding the crops: By end of 2026
- Data collection regarding market access: By end of 2026
- Gender analysis of data: By end of 2027

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Gender expert/specialist

***1AF Component #3: Agroforestry***

**CHALLENGE 3a:** Women farmers are not able to maximize harvest profits and benefit more broadly due to decision-making processes regarding the planting of agroforestry trees that deliver improved soil fertility, fruit, ready medicinal value and timber.

**ACTIVITY OUTCOME:**

1AF is more knowledgeable about gender issues impacting decision-making processes regarding the agroforestry trees that are grown.

**OUTPUTS:**

- Report regarding the gender issues impacting decision-making processes regarding the agroforestry trees that are grown.

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Conduct data collection regarding the agroforestry trees men and women farmers grow.
- Conduct data collection regarding decision-making processes about the agroforestry trees that are grown.
- Analyze data regarding the gender and age differences affecting the agroforestry trees that are grown.

**INDICATORS AND TARGETS:**

- % of collines collecting sex-disaggregated data regarding agroforestry trees; Target: 100%
- % of collines collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data regarding decision-making processes about the agroforestry trees that are grown; Target: 100%

**TIMELINE:**

- Data collection regarding agroforestry trees: By end of 2025
- Data collection regarding decision-making: By end of 2026
- Gender analysis of data: By end of 2026

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Gender expert/specialist



Gender Action Plan:

Activities	Indicators and Targets	Timeline	Responsibilities
<p><b>Impact Statement:</b> increased farmer yields to improve food security and household incomes, enabling new productive investments that lift smallholder farmers, both men and women, out of poverty over time</p>			
<p><b>Outcome Statement:</b> improved knowledge to overcome barriers to program participation, such as credit, inputs, and training, and increased number of female smallholder farmers served by One Acre Fund (Targets: 40% of 1AF members are women; 40% of total USD value of input support disbursements to women; increased % of women farmers who purchase inputs/productive resources (Target depends on baseline); increased % of inputs/productive resources purchased by women farmers (Target depends on baseline); 70% of farmers attending training sessions are women; 40% of women beneficiaries adopt climate-resilience practices)</p>			
<p><b>Output Statement 1a:</b> Creditworthiness certificates; and Increased awareness among staff about the benefits of formalized marriages for women's land rights</p>			
<p>(i) Creditworthiness certificates offered to farmers who successfully reimburse 100% of their total input support packages (i.e. reimbursing 1AF for agricultural inputs) for six seasons. (ii) Awareness raising training conducted for 1AF staff to educate them about the benefits of formalizing marriage, including land tenure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● # of certificates distributed (data disaggregated by sex); Target: 40% of certificates distributed are to women</li> <li>● % of 1AF staff educated about the benefits of formal marriages with regard to women's land rights; Target: 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By end of 2026</li> <li>● By end of 2025</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender expert/specialist</li> </ul>
<p><b>Output Statement 1b:</b> Gender-informed input distribution schedules; Gender-informed input marketing; 1AF product bundles include mechanized tools; and climate smart inputs marketed to women</p>			
<p>(i) Offer flexibility in picking up inputs and/or allow a representative to pick up farmers' inputs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● % of distribution schedules allowing flexibility; Target: 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By end of 2025</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender expert/specialist</li> </ul>

<p>(ii) Integrate gender lens scoring sheets into product review processes for rating new and existing products.</p> <p>(iii) Offer maize shellers or another product focused on saving the time of women farmers, in the product bundle.</p> <p>(iv) Improve marketing of climate smart inputs to women farmers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Scoring sheets integrate gender into product reviews; Target: Yes</li> <li>● Maize shellers or other time saving product trialed; Target: Yes</li> <li>● % of climate smart inputs marketed to women; Target: 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By end of 2025</li> <li>● By end of 2025</li> <li>● By end of 2026</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Output Statement 2a:</b> Capacity-building and gender-sensitization training for 1AF Burundi staff; Gender-informed training methods; Gender-relevant training content; and Gender-integrated training content</p>			
<p>(i) Create and implement capacity-building and gender-sensitization training for 1AF Burundi staff.</p> <p>(ii) Review current climate-smart training methods and content to ensure that they are appropriate for women farmer's education and literacy levels. Revise if necessary.</p> <p>(iii) Review current climate-smart training content to ensure that it holds relevance for women farmers (e.g. content is unbiased towards crops/technologies that are typically adopted by men). Revise if necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● % of staff receiving capacity-building and gender-sensitization training; Target: 100%</li> <li>● % of training methods and content appropriate for women farmer's education and literacy levels; Target: 100%</li> <li>● % of training content that has been ensured is relevant for women farmers; Target: 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By end of 2026</li> <li>● By end of 2025</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender expert/specialist</li> </ul>

<p>(iv) Revise training material content to include topics on gender equality including training sessions (including gender-based violence, joint decision-making in the HH); assuming an appropriate partner can be found.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training material content includes topics on gender equality; Target: Yes (assuming an appropriate partner is found)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trial by end of 2025</li> </ul>	
<p>Output Statement 2b: Report regarding the crops men and women farmers grow and their market values; Report regarding market access for men and women farmers; and Gender analysis regarding the gender differences in obstacles, motivations, and factors affecting crop selection and market access</p>			
<p>(i) Conduct data collection regarding the crops men and women farmers grow and their market values. (ii) Conduct data collection regarding market access for men and women farmers. (iii) Analyze data regarding the gender differences in obstacles, motivations, and factors affecting crop selection and market access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of surveys collecting sex-disaggregated data regarding crops; Target: 100%</li> <li>• % of surveys collecting sex-disaggregated data regarding market access; Target: 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By end of 2026</li> <li>• By end of 2026</li> <li>• Gender analysis of data: By end of 2027</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender expert/specialist</li> </ul>
<p>Output Statement 3a: Report regarding the gender issues impacting decision-making processes regarding the agroforestry trees that are grown</p>			
<p>(i) Conduct data collection regarding the agroforestry trees men and women farmers grow. (ii) Conduct data collection regarding decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of collines collecting sex-disaggregated data regarding agroforestry trees; Target: 100%</li> <li>• % of collines collecting sex-disaggregated data regarding decision-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By end of 2025</li> <li>• By end of 2026</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender expert/specialist</li> </ul>

<p>processes about the agroforestry trees that are grown. (iii) Analyze data regarding the gender differences affecting the agroforestry trees that are grown.</p>	<p>making processes about the agroforestry trees that are grown; Target: 100%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By end of 2026</li></ul>	
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