

**Commitment
towards
farmer-centric
solutions**



Acknowledgements

To the people behind our progress

The impact reflected in this 2025 Annual Report is the result of long-term commitment, continuity, and the collective effort of many partners who share our vision for sustainable agriculture and stronger smallholder livelihoods across Africa.

We thank our funders and strategic partners for the trust and investment that allow us to stay on the course. Your support makes it possible to test new ideas, incubate them into viable solutions, and scale them for sustainability. Because of you, we've strengthened seed systems, advanced climate-smart practices, expanded opportunities for agri-entrepreneurs, improved nutrition, recommended policies, and built inclusive finance models grounded in evidence.

We also appreciate our collaborators; national and county governments, research institutions, private sector partners, civil society, and development agencies. Your technical expertise and commitment to practical, field-level solutions create the synergy we need across our streams of work. Together, we reach pre-commercial smallholders with innovations in seeds, soils, and digital tools that wouldn't move forward without shared ownership.

To our Board of Directors, thank you for your steady guidance during a year of growth and transition. To the entire SAF-Africa team across all countries and programmes, thank you for your professionalism and innovation, which continue to drive our mission forward.

As SAF-Africa grows as an independent, African-led organization, we remain committed to partnerships and to the belief that sustainable agriculture can unlock lasting opportunity for smallholders.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Letter from the Board Chair	5
Note from the Executive Director	6
2025 Impact at a glance	7
01 Research & Development	9
Exploring Africa-China Agricultural Prospects	10
02 Seed Systems Development	13
Helping Smallholder Farmers Access Better Seeds	14
03 Agri-entrepreneurship	17
Smallholder Farming, Regenerative Practice, and Market Access in Nakuru and Nyandarua	18
Turning Conservation into a Smallholder Strategy	20
Building an Inclusive Barley Value Chain in Narok County, Kenya	22
Strengthening Urban Nutrition Systems for Improved Nutrition and Livelihoods	24
Ensuring No One is Left Out and Everyone Benefits	27
Building a Continent-Wide System for Smallholder Inclusion	29
04 Climate Resilience And Inclusive Finance Solutions (CRIFS)	31
Inclusive Finance for Climate-Resilient Smallholder Farming in Zambia	32
Turning Climate Data into Decisions	35
05 Sustainable Agriculture Foundations International Association (SAFIA)	39
Strengthening Africa's Voice in a Global Smallholder Movement	40
06 People & Culture	43
07 Business Development	47
Financial Performance	49
Success Stories	50
Key Events in 2025	52

Executive Summary

Rooted in Communities. Driven by Impact.



Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Africa (SAF-Africa) is a Kenya-based non-profit organization with an African mandate to strengthen smallholder farming and sustainable agriculture. Working at the grassroots level, **SAF-Africa bridges the gap between smallholder farmers and key partners by improving access to and adoption of relevant innovations, addressing barriers across agricultural value chains, and expanding market opportunities.** Through climate-smart agriculture, inclusive partnerships, and scalable delivery systems, we improve farmer incomes, enhance food security, and empower women, youth, and marginalized communities to build more resilient livelihoods.

Thematic Areas: Food and Nutrition Security; Climate Adaptation and Risk Mitigation; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Agroecology; Soil Health; and Agri-Entrepreneurship.

Our Approach

We implement an integrated approach to strengthen farming and food systems in Africa by partnering with diverse stakeholders to co-design and deliver scalable solutions for smallholders.

We Focus on;



Rural Agri-Entrepreneurship: Developing local agri-entrepreneurs to deliver essential inputs, advisory services, water solutions, and market access to smallholder farmers, with emphasis on youth and women empowerment, enterprise development, and rural job creation.



Climate-Resilient Finance: Designing and scaling inclusive financial solutions to address climate risks, improve farmer resilience, and enable investment in sustainable agricultural production and agribusiness growth.



Seed Systems Development: Expanding access to high-quality, nutritious, climate-resilient, and affordable improved seed varieties through strengthened seed systems and partnerships.



Nutrition: Increasing demand for and availability of nutritious foods through agroecological production, diversified farming systems, and strengthened nutrition-sensitive value chains.



Climate-Smart and Agroecological Practices: Promoting sustainable agricultural practices that enhance productivity, conserve natural resources, strengthen climate resilience, improve water management, and support environmental and biodiversity conservation.



Market Linkages: Strengthening market systems and building strategic partnerships that connect farmers, producer groups, agribusinesses, processors, exporters, and buyers to profitable local, regional, and international markets.



These pillars are reinforced by **Research & Development (R&D):** Identifying challenges, testing and validating innovations, generating evidence, and informing policy and investment decisions that strengthen markets, promote climate adaptation, and unlock opportunities for smallholder farmers, youth, and women.

OUR VISION: A world where smallholders, communities, and nature thrive together.

MISSION: Scaling up collective action on markets and innovations so that farming can better serve smallholder families, rural communities, and nature.

CORE VALUES: Innovation, Passion, Collaboration, Reliability, Respect, and Growth.

- Find out more about our transitions:**
- History and timelines 1981-2024: [Our History - Sustainable Agriculture Foundation](#)
 - SFSA Legacy book: [Legacy Book](#)

Letter from the Board Chair



Building Resilience - A Task We Mustn't Fail In

Recently, I found myself reflecting on the life of my late grandmother, my agricultural and life role model. As I delved into her life and times, the word 'resilience' emerged as a dominant theme in my recollections. You see, despite being a small-scale farmer, she was ambitious, calculated, and diligent. Remarkably, throughout her nearly 99 years on earth, she consistently managed to secure a harvest during both prosperous and challenging times.

At SAF-Africa, we take the responsibility of supporting smallholders in Africa very seriously and understand that we cannot afford to fail them. In the past year, our teams have extended themselves to ensure that farmers have access to advisories, inputs, services, and resilience-building tools whenever they need them. The outstanding impact we've achieved is evident in the number of farmers we've reached, the agripreneurs we've supported, and the growth in youth participation. These achievements are a testament to our unwavering commitment.

Despite the challenges and demands of 2025, our team demonstrated remarkable determination in delivering our mission. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to each member of our team for their unwavering presence and dedication.

To our partners, board, and management, we express our deepest gratitude for your unwavering confidence in us. **"We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to write a new chapter in the story of resilience together."**

Mandla Nkomo

BOARD CHAIR, SAF-AFRICA

Note from the Executive Director



At SAF-Africa, we remain deeply committed to working at the grassroots level, listening to communities, understanding their challenges, and co-creating practical solutions that respond to their realities.



Akinyi Linda Koi

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SAF-AFRICA

Through 2025, I have had the privilege of engaging closely with farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, community leaders, partners, and our dedicated team across different regions. These interactions continue to reaffirm why our work matters. Behind every programme and partnership are real people working hard every day to bring our vision to life, feed their families, improve their livelihoods, and build more resilient communities.

At SAF-Africa, we remain deeply committed to working at the grassroots level, listening to communities, understanding their challenges, and co-creating practical solutions that respond to their realities. Whether through strengthening seed systems, supporting agri-entrepreneurs, promoting climate-smart agriculture, advancing nutrition, or leveraging digital tools to improve access to services and markets, our focus remains on creating sustainable and inclusive impact for smallholder farmers.

This year has also reminded us of the importance of partnerships and collective action. The progress we continue to make would not be possible without the support and collaboration of our donors, government partners, private sector actors, communities, and friends of the Foundation. Your trust and shared commitment continue to inspire us.

I am especially proud of the dedication and resilience demonstrated by the SAF-Africa team. Their passion, innovation, and unwavering commitment, particularly throughout this transition period, have been truly inspiring and instrumental in ensuring the continued delivery of our mission and support to the communities we serve.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Board of Directors for the trust and confidence placed in me to serve in the capacity of Interim Executive Director during this important transition period. I deeply appreciate their guidance, support, and stewardship as we continue strengthening the Foundation and advancing our shared mission.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on deepening our impact, strengthening local delivery systems, and expanding opportunities for women, youth, and rural communities across Africa. We believe that sustainable agriculture is not only about food production; it is also about dignity, opportunity, resilience, and hope for future generations.

**Thank you for walking this journey with us.
Kazi lendelee! The Work continues!**

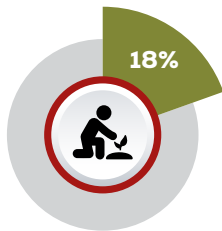
2025 Impact at a Glance

Numbers are Important, But this is about People and Their Livelihoods

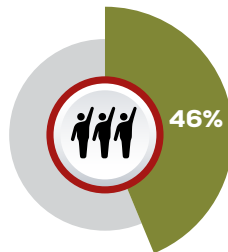
Across each measure, 2025 represents a year of meaningful and, in several areas, substantial progress. During the year, SAF-Africa extended direct support to more than **710,000 smallholder farmers**, a **55% increase** from 2024. Support, in this case, is the provision of access to affordable, sustainable solutions and services addressing production and market challenges. This encompasses agronomic training, improved seed varieties, mechanisation, digital tools, agri-insurance, and market linkages delivered through a network of **631 enterprises**.

Sales of products and services facilitated through this enterprise network were valued at **USD. 3.1 million**, generating measurable economic benefit at the local level. SAF-Africa is developing an integrated monitoring and evaluation system to capture these figures in real time going forward.

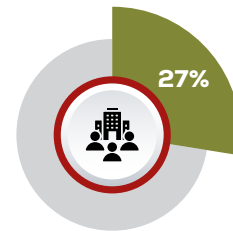
Gender equity remains a central organisational commitment. Resultantly, the proportion of female beneficiaries across programmes increased by **19 percentage points** to **44% in 2025**, up from **25% in 2024**. This trajectory reflects sustained investment in women’s empowerment initiatives and positions the organisations to achieve the target of **50:50 gender parity by 2030**.



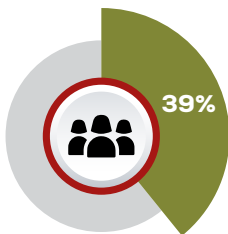
Youth Smallholder Farmers Supported



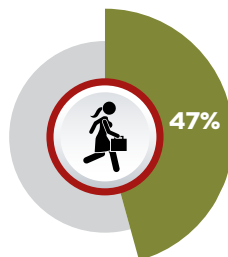
% Jobs Created for Youth



Youth Owned Enterprises



Women Owned Enterprises



% Jobs Created for Women



1028
Direct Jobs created,
482
Indirect jobs created



1,717
PWD Smallholder Farmers Supported



710,000
Smallholder Farmers Supported





01

Research & Development

Exploring Africa-China Agricultural Prospects

Can African smallholders turn China’s growing demand into opportunity?



Underdeveloped value chains and markets hinder farming improvements and food security efforts across Africa. A SAF-Africa project funded by the Gates Foundation aims to strengthen agricultural cooperation with China. It focuses on selected crop value chains that benefit smallholders. By enhancing productivity, quality, and profitability, the program seeks to increase farmers’ income.

In Tanzania, agriculture contributes nearly one-third of GDP and employs almost two-thirds of the labour force. The study identified strong export potential, supported by bilateral trade protocols signed in 2024. China presents a significant market opportunity: annual avocado demand, for example, is estimated at almost **44,000 metric tons (MT)**. At recent prices, that volume represents a value of about **\$134 million**. However, export growth remains constrained by infrastructure gaps, compliance requirements, and limited value chain coordination.

Avocado is the most developed value chain. **In 2019, Tanzania exported 5000 MT** for about **\$30 million**. By 2023 these figures had risen to **30,000 MT and \$120 million**. Smallholders contribute about **90%** of production. Avocado plays a major role in farmer livelihoods: It can generate approximately **\$3,800 per acre** in annual revenue; in high-performing districts, return on investment (ROI) can reach **more than 500%**.

5,000 MT

Avocados exported to China in 2019 at a value of **\$30M**

30,000 MT

Avocados exported to China by 2023 at a value of **\$120M**

“ Our researchers reviewed crops already exported to China, and those with the potential to join them. They mapped export-ready crops and other major produce in Kenya and Tanzania to China’s import needs. In particular, the team analyzed the markets for cassava, avocado, and dried red chilies.

Akinyi Linda Koi
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SAF-AFRICA





Cassava also shows strong production figures. Tanzanian smallholders grow about four to eight million tons per year. Modern varieties yield **20–45 tons per hectare**, compared to about seven for conventional varieties. Net returns can reach **\$600 per acre**. Chilies are a smaller crop, with **15.8 thousand tons produced in 2022**. However, demand is growing and export markets are profitable.

Despite the potential, several constraints limit exports. Cassava farmers receive as little as **TZS 100/kg** in export markets compared to **TZS 300–500/kg locally**, due to weak market linkages, middlemen exploitation, and limited processing capacity, which force them to sell at lower prices. Avocado exports are heavily concentrated, with **85%** destined for European markets. Further challenges include low productivity, limited access to certified seeds, inadequate cold storage, and weak market linkages. Addressing these gaps through investment in processing, infrastructure, farmer training, and compliance systems is critical to scaling exports and improving returns.

Kenyan profitability varies widely.

In Kenya, smallholders contribute **over 70%** of agricultural production and play a central role in exports. Avocado is the most export-ready crop. **More than 122,000 MT went abroad in 2023**, generating approximately **\$130million**. China bought **5000 MT for \$8 million**. By comparison, chili exports were relatively small at **1,347 MT**. Cassava exports account for only about **\$1.1 million**, reflecting limited integration into international markets.

Profitability varies significantly across the crops. Avocado exports deliver high returns, driven by strong international demand. Farmers can achieve **up to 180% ROI**, despite heavy compliance costs. Output increased from **317,000 MT in 2018** to **over 632,000 MT in 2022**. Dried chili represents moderate profitability at **over 71% ROI**, while fresh chili is less competitive at **under 21%**.

Challenges in this crop include price volatility and quality inconsistencies. Cassava offers strong returns of up to **167% ROI**, supported by low production costs. However, commercial potential remains underexploited due to limited processing facilities and market access.

Export growth is constrained by stringent market requirements, infrastructure gaps, and weak value chain coordination. For example, avocado exports to China face a **7% tariff** and strict phytosanitary protocols, including mandatory fumigation, which affects product quality. Across value chains, challenges include limited cold chain infrastructure, inadequate processing capacity for cassava and chili, and compliance issues such as pesticide residue limits. Smallholders, who dominate production, also face limited access to inputs, financing, and training. Strengthening post-harvest infrastructure, spreading **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)**, and improving market linkages are all needed to enhance Kenya's export competitiveness.

Stakeholders share lessons and recommendations.

Kenya and Tanzania each hosted a stakeholder forum in 2025. Based on the in-depth research, speakers shared insights on the readiness of avocado, cassava and red chilli for export to China. Stakeholders shared lessons and experiences, for example, with bottlenecks inhibiting export investments. The discussions attracted some 130 farmers, exporters, regulators, researchers, and private sector investors. Together, they validated the study findings and emphasized the strong export potential. The stakeholders also identified persistent barriers in compliance, infrastructure, certification, and market linkages.

The forums concluded with recommendations to accelerate Africa’s agri-export readiness to China. Key proposals included establishing a multi-stakeholder implementation team to coordinate follow-up actions, developing national platforms for continuous collaboration, and launching an export readiness support program. This initiative would span compliance, technical training, traceability systems, and post-harvest investments. SAF-Africa was tasked with convening and supporting these initiatives, while government agencies were urged to streamline export protocols and address policy gaps. Private sector actors were encouraged to integrate smallholders through fair contracting and transparent pricing.

Selected potential avocado exporters from Kenya and Tanzania will visit China this year. Their aim is to better understand market requirements and explore potential investment opportunities. Tour coordinator is the Joy Wing Mau group, a leading company in the fruit sector.



Disclaimer: The findings and conclusions described here are from SAF-Africa’s research. They do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Gates Foundation, which funded the work. AA



“ Chillies and cassava are among the emerging crops that can have great value for this country of Kenya. Their production is below expectation and yet there is existing market both locally and externally. **”**

Eng. Laban Kiplagat
 AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING
 SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT
 FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE
 MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND
 LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT

The Stakeholder Forum attracted **Over 130** farmers, exporters, regulators, researchers, and private sector investors from **Kenya & Tanzania.**

PROJECT PARTNERS

Gates Foundation



02

Seed Systems Development

Helping Smallholder Farmers Access Better Seeds

Seeds2B

Across the developing world, **450 million smallholder farmers** provide approximately **80%** of the food consumed in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, despite decades of investment in public sector breeding, the seeds produced by that science rarely reach the farmers who need them most.

Adoption of improved varieties in Sub-Saharan Africa remains stubbornly low, **below 35% across 14 key crops**. In many areas, quality seeds are only available for **up to 10% of the land under production**, meaning a smallholder farmer is more likely to plant a variety similar to one cultivated by previous generations than a climate-resilient, high-yielding modern one.

The barriers are systemic. Formal seed markets are geographically remote and unaffordable for many. Regulatory frameworks remain fragmented. Breeder pipelines take years to reach the field, and when improved varieties are finally released, awareness and uptake remain low.

Women farmers, who produce a substantial share of household food, face compounded obstacles from limited mobility to exclusion from extension services. Yield gaps of **50% - 70%** persist between what smallholders harvest and what the same land could produce with good seed.

Seeds2B exists to build inclusive, functioning seed markets that deliver quality seed to smallholder farmers, especially women, at the right time, place, and price. The intervention works at the intersection of seed systems, market development, and inclusive finance to create durable and systemic change.

Rather than replacing markets, Seeds2B catalyses them by crowding private investment, building local capacity, and embedding gender-responsive practices at every step. Furthermore, partnerships with governments, national research organisations, breeders, seed companies, NGOs, and farmer organisations ensure Seeds2B scales and sustains beyond project lifespans.

In **Tanzania** and **Nigeria**, the **Accelerated Varietal Improvement and Seed Systems in Africa (AVISA)** project set out to fundamentally change how smallholder farmers access quality seed. It focused on common beans, groundnuts, cowpea, and sorghum, crops that are central to household food security and income. The project tackled the full seed system from early generation seed production to market development, and policy reform.

3 Levels of Intervention



1 Supply Chain Strengthening

Linking seed companies with agro-dealers and last-mile distributors to ensure quality seed is physically available where farmers are.



2 Demand Building

Running farmer awareness campaigns and demonstration trials for smallholder farmers to see, trust, and choose improved varieties.



3 Enabling Environment

Supporting seed policy reform and regulatory harmonisation to reduce the time and cost of bringing new varieties to market.

AVISA implemented **Community Managed Seed Supply (CMSSM)** and **Quality declared Seed (QDS)** models increasing the availability, accessibility, and affordability of certified seed at the community level.

Through partnerships with national research agencies such as **TARI** and **NAS**, private seed companies, cooperatives, NGOs, and farmer organisations, AVISA built a resilient, multi-stakeholder seed ecosystem.

It also delivered technical training in seed production, certification, agronomy, and business management with women and youth comprising **30%-43% of participants**.

On the side of market linkages, AVISA connected off-takers, including traders, exporters, and processors, with seed producers and promoted licensing and commercialisation of publicly bred varieties.

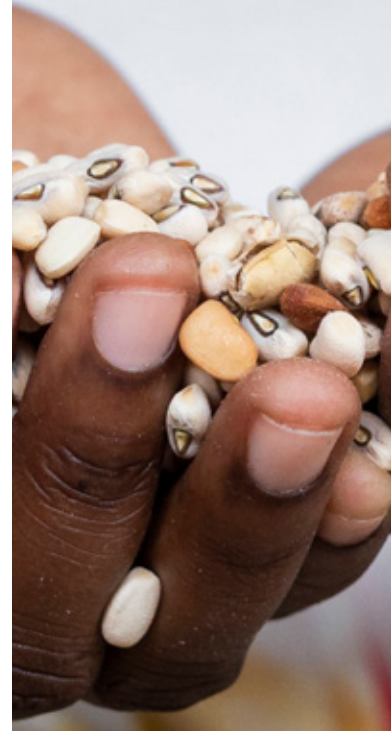
Another key activity of the programme was the support for early generation seed (EGS) production through technical assistance, infrastructure investment, and risk mitigation models. From this, seed companies such as **DASPA** are now investing in mechanisation and irrigation to scale multiplication. AVISA also contributed to improved seed sector policy including plant variety protection frameworks and registration toolkits, creating a more enabling regulatory environment.

In Tanzania, the project supported the production and sale of over **300 metric tonnes of QDS and basic seeds**, valued at approximately **USD. 96,000**. In Nigeria, **over 286 tonnes** of improved seeds worth **USD. 269,000** reached farmers. Grain aggregation through Farmer Hubs in Nigeria alone generated more than **USD. 1 million** in revenue directly strengthening farmer incomes and market participation. More than **50,000 farmers** were reached through demonstration plots, seed fairs, exhibitions, and small pack distributions.

In Kenya, where potato is Kenya's second most important food crop after maize, supporting approximately **2.5 million people** across the value chain and generating an estimated **USD. 500 million annually**, growers face a persistent threat in the potato cyst nematode (PCN), a microscoping pest that invades roots, stunts growth, and slashes yields.

In 2025, Seeds2B successfully drove the completion of Kenya's National Potato Trials of Malaika and Glen, two new potato varieties that were then listed on Kenya's National Variety List. Both varieties were developed by The **James Hutton Institute** in Scotland specifically to resist PCN. Through a close collaboration between **James Hutton**, researchers at the **International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)**, and the Seeds2B team, the varieties were supported through Kenya's full regulatory registration process.

More than
50,000
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demonstration plots, seed fairs, exhibitions, and small pack distributions.



PROJECT PARTNERS

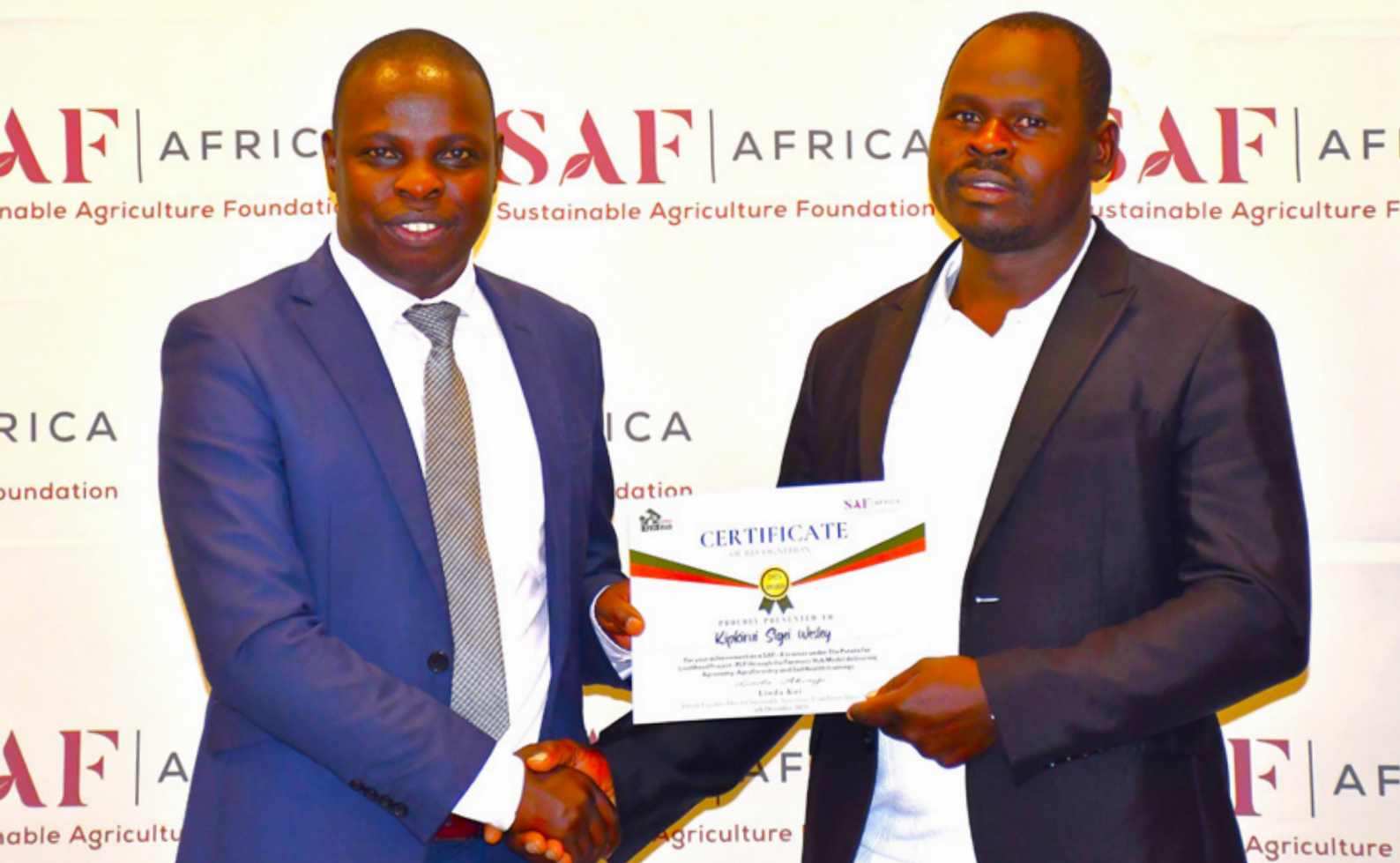


THE NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE



SAF | AFR

Sustainable Agriculture Found



03

Agri-Entrepreneurship

Smallholder Farming, Regenerative Practice, and Market Access in Nakuru and Nyandarua

Central Highlands Eco region Foodscapes (CHEF)

The CHEF pilot was launched in January 2025 to address a set of deeply interconnected challenges facing smallholder farming communities in Kenya's central highlands. Declining water resources, extractive agricultural practices, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and fragile market linkages leave farmers in **Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties** in Kenya increasingly exposed to both environment and economic shocks.

Against this backdrop, CHEF, implemented in partnership with **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)**, delivered an integrated response by promoting regenerative agriculture, improving access to quality inputs and markets, and strengthening last-mile service delivery systems that smallholder farmers depend on.

The project's service delivery model centred on a network of Farmer Hubs. The network is made of agri-entrepreneurs trained to provide extension services, business development support, and market linkages to smallholder farmers in their localities. Originally scoped at **25 hubs**, the network grew to **32** during implementation with **7 additional hubs** onboarded from Laikipia and Nyandarua Counties – 2 of them women-led and 1 youth-led. **2 Network Managers** oversaw and coordinated the broader network.

All 32 Farmer Hubs and both Network Managers received training in regenerative agriculture approaches, business development services, and market facilitation. **18 agri-entrepreneurs** received continuous mentorship in strategic planning, financial forecasting, market analysis, and agribusiness management. At least **18 hubs**, which surpassed the **70% target** – were directly linked with new private and public sector partners, strengthening their capacity to sustain service delivery beyond the life of the project.

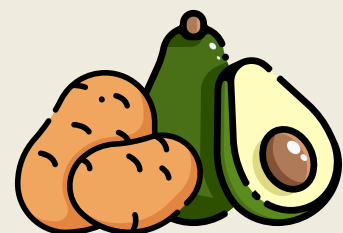
A total of **5,006 smallholder farmers** were recruited, registered and georeferenced across the project counties, marginally exceeding the target of **5,000 farmers**. The georeferencing exercise enabled more precise service targeting and established a baseline for longer-term environmental monitoring. Of those registered, **42%** were women, against a

40% target, 9% were youth, and **2%** were persons with disabilities, reflecting the project's commitment to inclusive development.

5,068 farmers were trained through demonstration sites, field days, and formal regenerative agriculture workshops. This was crucial in building their capacity in soil health restoration, composting, water management, and biodiversity conservation.

ACROSS THE 2 COUNTIES,

32 Irish potato and **15 avocado** demonstration plots were established, each **showcasing a range of regenerative practices** including **minimum tillage, mulching, beneficial microbial applications, biodiversity buffers, push-pull pest management systems** and **water retention technologies**.





These plots served as practical learning sites and generated visible proof points for neighbouring farmers considering adoption.

The pilot also established a Centre of Excellence focused on innovations including potato rooted apical cuttings propagation, avocado seedling production, organic input production, and certified potato seed multiplication. A landmark moment came during field days marking the release of PCN-resistant potato varieties, **Malaiika and Glen**, which were specifically developed to counter the potato cyst nematode, one of the most significant production constraints in the region.

5,192 indigenous and fruit tree seedlings were distributed through the Farmer Hub network, alongside beekeeping equipment, an investment in biodiversity, pollination, and household income diversification that will continue to yield returns well beyond the pilot period.

Furthermore, the CHEF project facilitated 11 field days, **6 market activation forums**, and a series of farmer exchange visits, collectively reaching over **2,700 farmers** and creating direct touchpoints with input suppliers, off-takers, and financial institutions. These were structured platforms for establishing the commercial relationships that smallholder farmers need to translate improved productivity into improved incomes.

By the close of the pilot, strong working relationships had been established with more than **28 value chain actors, 18 input suppliers, 7 off-takers, 5 mechanisation service providers, 5 financial institutions, and 3 county governments**. This ecosystem of partners collectively strengthened farmer access to quality inputs, agricultural technology, credit, a supportive policy environment, and guaranteed market demand.

PROJECT PARTNERS



Turning Conservation into a Smallholder Strategy

Potatoes for Livelihood Project, Kenya



The relationship between farming communities and the forests that border their land is rarely simple. Forests are reserves of biodiversity and watersheds that sustain the broader environment. But, for households living at the edge of subsistence, forests are also a resource of last resort. When inputs are too expensive yields are low and incomes fall short, the forest absorbs the price. Land is cleared, trees are felled, and water catchments are degraded.

This is the logic that the Potatoes for Livelihoods Project (PLP) set out to interrupt. Implemented by the SAF-Africa and financed by IDH, PLP was implemented from **January 2024 to December 2025** to improve productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers while supporting environmental conservation.

The communities surrounding Kenya's forest reserves in Nakuru and Kericho faced a convergence of pressures. Potato yields were low, averaging **3.2 tonnes per acre**, held back by poor access to certified clean seed, limited knowledge of soil health and water conservation, and minimal extension support. Without reliable income from their farms, households had little buffer against seasonal shocks and few alternatives to forest land when they needed to expand production.

Compounding this was the near absence of formal financial services. Without credit, farmers could not invest in better inputs. Further, the lack of market linkages made bumper harvests more of a liability.

Without co-operatives, savings groups, and aggregation points, individual farmers had little negotiating power in a value chain that consistently favoured buyers over producers. Women and youth, who represent a significant share of the farming population, were further marginalised by social and structural barriers to participation.

To address the challenge, **20 Farmers' Hubs** were established and operationalised across the project area, each anchored by a trained Agri-Entrepreneur (AE) responsible for delivering inputs, coordinating produce aggregation, facilitating training, and connecting farmers to financial and market partners. The hubs exist as community-embedded agribusinesses with structures designed to outlast the project. Each AE underwent business coaching and mentoring alongside technical agricultural training to build their managerial competence to run a viable enterprise. A total of 3,265 farmers were trained, reaching 115% of the target.

They received capacity building in good agricultural practice, climate-smart agriculture, and agroforestry. The curriculum deliberately integrates conservation practice into productivity training. Soil health management, water conservation techniques, and agroforestry promotion are taught as fundamental of sustainable yield improvement. This approach ensures that farmers produce more sustainably, therefore reducing the pressure on surrounding forest land.

Youth participation was notably strong at **67%**, building conservation habits in the generation that will manage the landscapes for decades to come.

Additionally, **20 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)** were formed, with 16 now registered, providing community-based credit access that bypasses the collateral requirements of formal banking. Smallholder farmers in the area have gotten access to **KES. 1.29 million** in loans to finance inputs, equipment, and post-harvest management.

2 co-operatives, Kabongoi and Kiptororo, have been formally registered. This gives farmer groups the legal standing to negotiate market terms and access institutional finance collectively.

The headline productivity result from the project is a **136% increase** in average yields from 3.2 tonnes per acre to 7.56 tonnes per acre. This was driven by access to clean seeds, improved soil management, and adoption of good agricultural practice. Demonstration plots reached **8.3 tonnes per acre**, serving as practical benchmarks within communities.

Across the project, **8,540,148 kg** was aggregated, reaching 89% of the targeted. Hub level business generated annual revenues of USD. 137,908, translating productivity gains into real household income.

Women made up **38%** of recruited farmers and **63%** of those trained. The **3,158 farmers recruited**, 100.5% of the target, include a meaningful proportion of women and youth who might otherwise be excluded from agricultural support.

Taken together, these results make the case that given the tools, training, and financial infrastructure to thrive, farming communities are less incentivised to place destructive pressure on the forests beside them.

PROJECT IMPACT

3,265 farmers were trained

67% Youth participation

20 VSLAs established

KES 1.29M in loans accessible to small holder farmers

136% increase in average yields from **3.2 tonnes/acre** to **7.56 tonnes/acre**

137,908 \$ Amount generated in annual hub-level business



PROJECT PARTNERS



Building an Inclusive Barley Value Chain in Narok County, Kenya

Shayiri Pilot Project



In Narok County, Kenya, the smallholder farmers in the barley-growing wards of Olorropil, Melili, Olokurto, and Olposimoru have long operated at the margins of the value chain. Difficulty accessing certified seeds, unstructured markets, largely inaccessible credit, and exclusion of persons with disability plagued smallholder farmers, reducing their returns. Launched in January 2025, the Shayiri Pilot Project set out to change the circumstance by building a model capable of addressing the challenges from the ground up.

It was implemented by SAF-Africa in partnership with the **United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK)**, **East Africa Breweries Limited (EABL)**, and the **Narok County Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries**. Financing was provided by **Sightsavers** and **East Africa Breweries Limited (EABL)** through **Diageo**.

Project Shayiri established and operationalised **4 Farmers' Hubs** across the target wards. Each of the hubs was anchored by a trained agri-entrepreneur recruited from within the community. These agri-entrepreneurs were set up as local business operators responsible for delivering inputs, coordinating aggregation, organising training, and connecting farmers to buyers and financial institutions. Crucially, each hub was formally registered as a business entity and opened a bank

account, establishing the structural foundation needed for long-term commercial viability.

The agri-entrepreneurs underwent a rigorous onboarding process followed by continuous business development services coaching and good agricultural practice training. Over the pilot period, **28 coaching and mentoring sessions** were conducted. This rhythm ensured hubs remained operationally strong and that individual agri-entrepreneurs developed the managerial competency to run sustainable enterprises beyond the life of the project.

A defining feature of the model was its emphasis on formalised partnership with external actors. Contract agreements with EABL gave hub farmers access to certified barley seeds – a previously elusive input that is critical to meeting EABL’s off-take quality standards. A formalised supply relationship with Grebe Enterprises ensured that quality inputs flowed reliably to hub members throughout the season.

On the financial side, the project brokered linkages with KCB Bank and Equity Bank, with the latter conducting structured financial literacy training directly with farmers. These linkages opened pathways to credit that had previously been structurally inaccessible to the majority of hub members. Access to mechanisation was expanded through a partnership with Hello Tractor, reducing the labour burden associated with land preparation and improving production efficiency.

By the close of the pilot phase, hub farmers had clearer routes to market, more reliable input supply, and tangible connections to formal financial services.



One of the most deliberate design choices of the Shayiri Pilot Project was its commitment to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. In standard agricultural programming, minimum land-holding requirements frequently excludes persons with disabilities (PWDs), who often farm smaller parcels. The project addressed this directly by reducing the minimum land threshold from **10 acres to 5 acres**. This policy adjustment removed one of the most common structural barriers to PWD participation.

Working closely with the United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK), the project intentionally targeted **60 PWDs** for direct programme engagement. These individuals were enrolled as active participants in hub-based services, with tailored support where required. This approach reflects a model of inclusive agribusiness that is replicable and scalable and demonstrates that disability inclusion in agricultural value chains is not only possible, but also commercially and socially valuable.

PROJECT SHAYIRI IMPACT

4 Farmers’ Hubs across the target awards.

28 coaching and mentoring sessions conducted.

60 PWDs enrolled as active participants in hub-based services.

PROJECT PARTNERS



Strengthening Urban Nutrition Systems for Improved Nutrition and Livelihoods

Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) Project



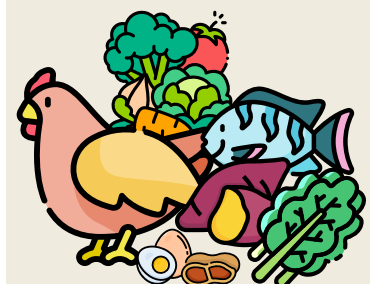
Urbanisation is reshaping food systems across East Africa, but not always for the better. In Kenya’s secondary cities, households face overlapping forms of malnutrition alongside a growing burden of diet-related diseases. Farmers supplying these cities grapple with climate variability, limited access to certified seed, and fragmented market systems that make it difficult to get safe, nutritious food to the people who need it.

These pressures are acute in Bungoma and Busia Counties, Kenya. Weak governance frameworks, gaps in food safety infrastructure, and low consumer awareness of agroecological produce have combined to leave urban food environments poorly equipped to support good nutrition. Yet the building blocks for change are there.

The **Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE)** project supports secondary cities in Kenya to strengthen urban food systems through coordinated governance, agroecological practices, and inclusive participation.

2025

The year the **County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP)** and the **County Agri-Nutrition Implementation Strategy (CANIS)** in **Busia County** were officially launched.



Working alongside county governments and community partners, The NICE project operates across three interconnected areas, with women and youth central to all interventions:

4 Levels of Intervention

 <p>1 Governance and Systems</p> <p>Women and youth are involved in urban governance structures that incentivize food systems for improved nutrition.</p>	 <p>2 Availability, Production & Value Chains</p> <p>City populations enjoy the enhanced availability of nutritious foods produced using agro-ecological practices.</p>	 <p>3 Knowledge & Demand</p> <p>City populations knowledge increases, and demand is created for the consumption of nutritious foods produced using agro-ecological practices.</p>	 <p>4 Policy, Learning & Scale-up</p> <p>'Knowledge hubs' ensure exchange within and between cities, helping shape urban-rural food environments and inform national and global policies.</p>
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2025 marked a significant step forward in both project counties. In Busia County, the **County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP)** and the **County Agri-Nutrition Implementation Strategy (CANIS)** were officially launched, providing a coordinated framework that integrates nutrition into agriculture, health, and community systems. These instruments guide implementation and resource allocation, giving the county a clear roadmap for sustained action.

In Bungoma County, the **Food Safety Policy** was launched alongside continued legislative support for the Food Safety Bill, contributing to a safer food environment and stronger consumer protection. Together, these policies create an enabling environment for access to safe, nutritious, agroecologically produced food and strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration for long-term impact.

The large-scale behaviour change campaign, **Mizizi Ya Afya** (meaning Roots of Health) continued to promote healthy diets and build the link between agroecological producers and urban consumers. The campaign worked to shift demand, raise awareness of locally produced, nutritious food, and create new market opportunities for Farmer Hubs already investing in sustainable production practices.

A significant innovation in 2025 was the introduction of the **Fynka App**, enabling Farmer Hub members to track sales, monitor income, and improve overall business management. For many farmers, the app replaced paper-based record systems and brought real-time financial visibility within reach, even for those managing operations remotely.



The application is very timely as we now do not need to be carrying around books. I can even key in my records for my business as they happen as I am able to share the account with my worker who inputs the sales and I can view them at a click, even when far from home.

Phanice Ilamwenya,
BUNGOMA FARMER HUB
MEMBER



The **NICE Project** expanded its collaborative footprint in 2025 with the establishment of a new partnership with **Murang'a County Government** and the **Diabetes Awareness Trust** to implement the **Food Farmacy Initiative**. The initiative links health and food systems by improving access to safe, diverse, agroecologically produced foods alongside practical nutrition advisory services. It supports local producers and vendors, strengthens market linkages for indigenous vegetables, herbs and spices, and advances Murang'a's own agroecology agenda through county-led collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Beyond county level, The **NICE Project** contributed to national and global dialogue through participation in the Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference and the Kenya National Food Systems Summit, supporting knowledge exchange and policy influence across the region.

Across both **Bungoma** and **Busia Counties**, women Farmer Hub members have been at the forefront of adopting agroecological practices including composting, cover cropping, and integrated pest management, and translating those practices into improved nutrition and livelihoods for their households and communities.

Notably, progress in 2025 was real and significant but faced some challenges. Limited access to certified seed, particularly orange-fleshed sweet potato, continues to constrain production. Climate variability disrupts planting seasons and yield predictability. Financial constraints among Farmer Hubs limit their capacity to invest and scale. Also, gaps persist in agroecological input supply systems.

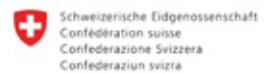


"We are proud to offer our community African leafy vegetables that are grown through agroecological practices such as composting, cover cropping and utilising integrated pest management techniques. Our women have benefitted tremendously, not just in terms of income, but also in improving their nutrition and overall health. Our work has created a ripple effect in Busia, inspiring others to join the cause."

Catherine Otaga,
BUSIA FARMER HUB
MEMBER



PROJECT PARTNERS



Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



Ensuring No One is Left Out and Everyone Benefits

Economic Empowerment Project in Mkalama District, Tanzania



Sorghum has always grown in Tanzania's **Mkalama District**, but it hasn't always been followed by prosperity. The smallholder farmers of **Iguguno**, **Senene**, and **Lukoko**, particularly women and those living with disabilities, that gap between what the land can yield and what reaches their households has been wide and persistent.

Farmers have been plagued by unreliable access to quality seeds, minimal post-harvest infrastructure, climate variability, and exclusion from formal markets. Traditional agricultural programmes, meanwhile, have often reproduced the same exclusion they sought to address by setting land-holding thresholds that lock out PWDs, designing training that doesn't account for physical or social barriers, and measuring success in yields alone.

Financed by **Sightsavers Tanzania** and implemented by the **SAF-Africa**, the **Economic Empowerment Project (EEP)** took a different approach. It assembled a broad coalition including the **Tanzania Albinism Society (TAS)**, **Serengeti Breweries Limited (SBL)**, **Care International**, **Advanta Seeds**, **Anaby Green Company Ltd.**, the **Women Empowerment and Legal Aid Organisation - Ilongero Polymachinery**, and **government offices** spanning ward, district, and regional levels. They all came together under the conviction that economic transformation in agriculture is most meaningful if it reaches those most often excluded from it.

Sorghum is well suited to the semi-arid conditions of Mkalama District. It is drought-tolerant, nutritious, and increasingly in demand from commercial off-takers. Yet the farmers best positioned to grow it face significant barriers. Persons with disabilities encounter social stigma and physical access barriers, but many programme designs do not account for their circumstances. Women navigate gender norms that restrict their agency over land, income and decision-making. And all smallholders contend with limited access to quality seeds, inadequate post-harvest infrastructure, and the absence of reliable routes to market.

These are interconnected challenges that reinforce each other and require deliberate intervention. The EEP was structured to address them in combination, recognising that productivity gains without inclusion would leave the most marginalised behind, and that inclusion without productivity would offer little economic transformation.

Of the **360 farmers** registered for the EEP, **81 were PWDs**. Almost **50%** of the programme’s participants were women.

This outcome was the product of intentional recruitment and involvement with partners bringing specialist knowledge of the barriers facing women and PWDs to the project’s design. The project also took concrete steps to ensure that its gains outlasted the funding period. At close out, project assets including **1,140 kg of certified sorghum seeds** and **4 irrigation pumps**, were formally handed over to farmer groups.

Between **Year 1** and **Year 2**, production acreage increased by **389%** as more farmers adopted improved practices and expanded the area under sorghum cultivation. Harvested volumes grew by **142%**, and marketable surplus increased by **203%**, reflecting not only higher yield, but also reduced post-harvest losses enabled by hermetic storage bags, moisture metres, and improved handling practices.

Beyond the numbers, the project generated observable improvements in food security and household incomes across participating communities.

Farmers who had previously operated at a subsistence level found themselves with surplus to sell. Women participants reported greater agency over household income. Persons with disabilities engaged in agribusiness on terms that acknowledged their circumstances and supported their full participation. These shifts, though difficult to capture in a single metric, are the true measure of the EEP’s impact.



81/360 Farmers who registered for the EEP were PWDs.

50% of the participants were women.

1,140kg of certified sorghum seed were distributed.

4 irrigation pumps were handed out.

PROJECT PARTNERS



Building a Continent-Wide System for Smallholder Inclusion

Global Agri-Entrepreneurship Academy (GAEA)



Across Africa, there is no shortage of people who want to farm better. What is often missing is someone who can help them do it by showing them which seeds to use, where to sell, how to protect their harvests, and what financial tools are available to them.

Launched in September 2024, the **Global Agri-Entrepreneurship Academy (GAEA)** was built to change that by training and supporting a new generation of Agri-Entrepreneurs. It helps them stay locally rooted and commercially viable; while ensuring they are equipped to deliver the services smallholder farmers need right at the last mile.

GAEA is a joint initiative of the **International Finance Corporation (IFC), Corteva, SAF-Africa, and Sustainable Agriculture Foundations International Association (SAFIA)**. SAF-Africa leads the Academy's Sub-Saharan Africa operations, working alongside partners from the private sector, NGOs, and governments. Over its **10-year mandate**, GAEA aims to train **500,000 Agri-Entrepreneurs** and reach **100 million smallholder farmers**.

What sets GAEA apart is its franchise model. Rather than each organisation building an Agri-Entrepreneur programme from scratch, GAEA provides a ready-made operating system of training curricula, standard procedures, digital tools, and global alumni network. These are the building blocks that allow partners to launch and manage AE networks quickly and at lower costs.

An AE trained through GAEA arrives in their community ready to run a small business and to connect farmers to certified seeds, climate-smart advice, and crop insurance. These services are, at present, not reliably available to many smallholders.

Launched in Sept. 2024
with a 10 Year mandate.

500,000
agri-entrepreneurs targeted

100 million
small holder farmers targeted.

While GAEA Africa was still building its pipeline in 2025, the global GAEA initiative made strides that directly strengthen the platform SAF-Africa will deploy in 2026 and beyond. In 2025, GAEA was formally registered as an independent foundation in Basel, Switzerland, establishing it as a credible and permanent institution, rather than a project housed within a larger organisation.

At the global level, GAEA also initiated projects in 2025 in partnership with **ADIC**, **Corteva**, and the **Gates Foundation** in Cambodia and India, targeting **4,200 agri-entrepreneurs** and **710,000 smallholder farmers**. These milestones are proof points for the franchise model and a source of tested tools, refined curricula, and accumulated learning that GAEA Africa will apply. The operating system being tested in Asia is the same one that will power the African chapter's deployment.

Looking Ahead

That inheritance starts in 2026 with two projects that will mark GAEA Africa's first full deployments under the franchise model. Together, they will show the range of what the system can deliver.

In Tanzania, the **Feminist Entrepreneurs Growing Green Economies (FEGGE)** project, funded by **MEDA**, will deploy **24 Agri-Entrepreneurs** in the sunflower value chain, reaching more than **2,500 smallholder farmers** with gender and environmental impact built into the project's design from the outset. Alongside productivity and market access, FEGGE explicitly targets women's economic empowerment and the adoption of climate-smart, eco-friendly farming practices.

In **Rwanda**, the **Tubura Agri-Entrepreneurship Program**, funded by **One Acre Fund**, takes a complementary approach. **60 Agri-Entrepreneurs** will be trained to serve **7,000 smallholder farmers** across cash crop value chains as market architects who identify commercial opportunities and lead service delivery at village level. Input access, including a credit option, will be availed directly through Tubura-trained entrepreneurs.

GAEA's **10-year horizon** allows it to build a self-sustaining system of trained, certified, community-embedded entrepreneurs who are supported by shared tools and a growing global network. The Academy will continue to deliver impact long after any single funding cycle ends. For the **100 million targeted smallholder farmers**, this means a permanent shift in what is available to them, resulting in lasting change in the agricultural landscape.



PROJECT PARTNERS





04

Climate Resilience And Inclusive Finance Solutions (CRIFS)

Inclusive Finance for Climate-Resilient Smallholder Farming in Zambia

Financial Education Window (FEW)



The combined risks of erratic rainfall, drought, soil depletion, and fluctuating commodity prices are well known as affecting smallholder farmers in Zambia. What has been less visible, and therefore less addressed, is the financial vulnerability that makes the environmental and market risks so devastating. Without the knowledge to budget, save, access credit and insurance, a single poor season can wipe out years' worth of progress for a farmer.

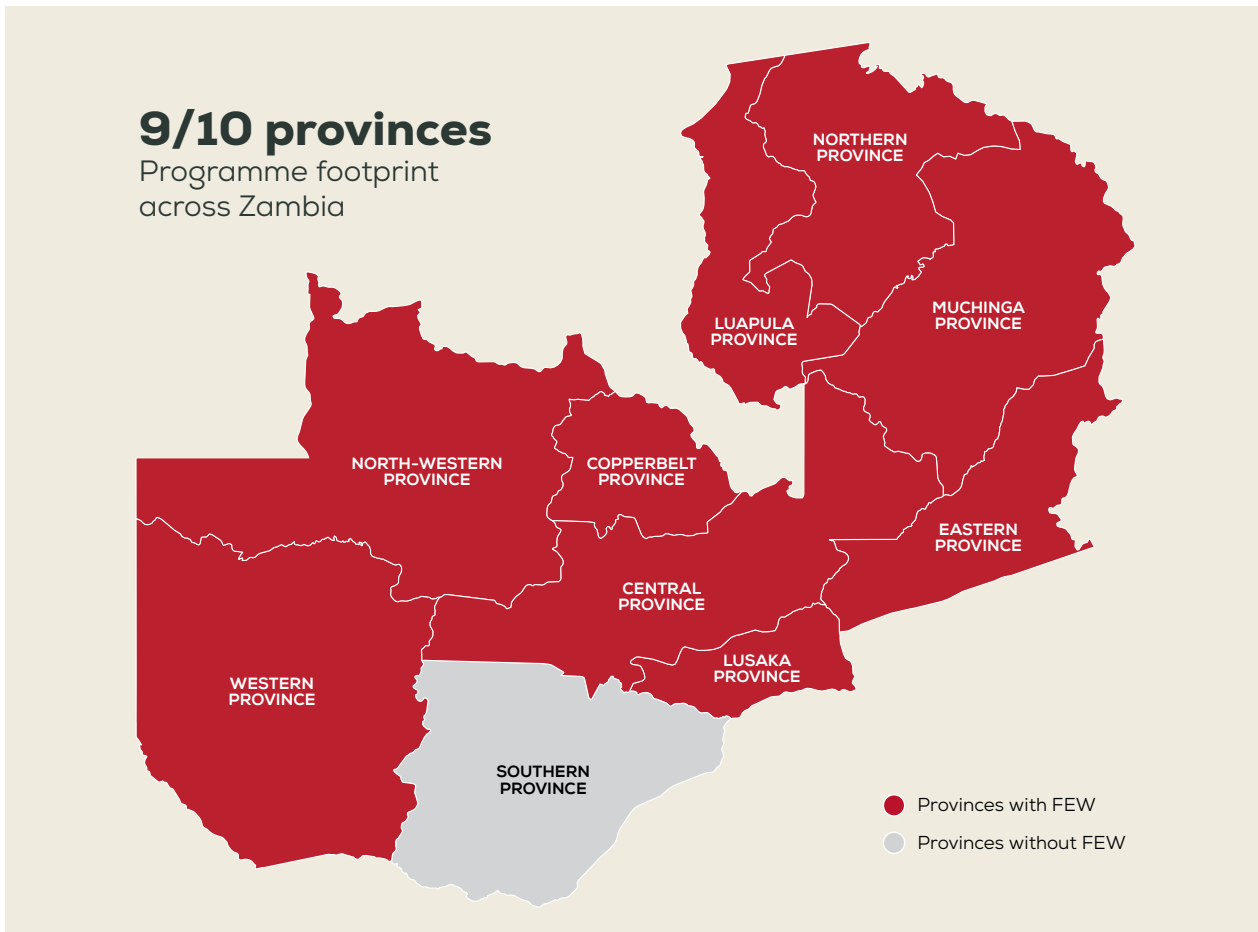
Zambia's smallholder farmers have long faced a well-documented cluster of financial barriers. Access to financial services is limited, and where they exist, low financial literacy means that many farmers cannot evaluate or use them effectively. Agricultural insurance which can protect farmers against climate shocks, is poorly understood, perceived as expensive, and distrusted. Further, the financial education ecosystem is fragmented with little coordination between providers and minimal reach to the last mile.

The impact of this exclusion is felt most acutely when climate shocks strike. Following the severe drought of the **2023/2024** farming season, many farmers reported that crop insurance would have been the single most valuable tool available to them. Unfortunately, most had neither access to it nor prior knowledge of how it worked. Reaching farmers with practical and actionable financial knowledge before the next crisis was, therefore, central to the project's success.

The Financial Education Window (FEW) project was designed to change the status quo by training Village Champions (VCs) who deliver financial education directly to farmers in their own villages.

The project was implemented by SAF-Africa in partnership with **Agora Microfinance Zambia (AMZ)** and financed by the **Swiss Capacity Building Facility (SCBF)**. Working alongside **ACRE Africa** and **Synergy Seeds Zambia**, the programme delivers structured financial literacy training to smallholder farmers across Zambia through a village-based model. By the end of 2025, it spanned **15 AMZ branches** across **9 provinces**.

The FEW operated through a cascading training model where Branch Managers and Client officers at AMZ branches are trained as Trainers of Trainers who then trained and supervised locally recruited community members known as **Village Champions (VCs)**. The VCs delivered financial education directly to farmers in their own villages. Each branch deployed **6 VCs** who were each responsible for reaching at least **350 farmers**.



Campaign Two expanded this structure to **6 new branches** in **Ndola, Mansa, Chongwe, Nyimba, Mkushi, and Kabompo**, following an in-person Training of Trainers conducted in **Lusaka**, and complemented by a virtual refresher for returning branch managers from **Campaign One**.

The training curriculum covered five core areas: crop insurance and climate risk, budgeting and household financial planning, savings methods and institutions, access to credit, and climate smart agricultural practices (CSAPs). Sessions were conducted in Bemba, the dominant local language across the project's geographies, and supported by bilingual training manuals, brochures, and flip charts supplied to every VC.

Monitoring of **Campaign Two** branches confirmed that training materials and operational funds were received and distributed across the monitored site, and that farmer attendance registers were maintained consistently. A striking feature of field delivery was the breadth of institutional support mobilised at the community level. Branch Managers reported substantial backing from District Commissioners, Ministry of Agriculture extension officers, and local headmen. This formed a coalition of local authorities that significantly aided farmer mobilisation and gave the programme credibility in rural communities.

Surveys conducted across both old and new branches revealed clear evidence that the training translated into improved farmer knowledge. Across the 9 districts surveyed in **Campaign One**, over **80%** of the **345** randomly sampled respondents could demonstrate basic understanding of the scope and relevance of climate risk insurance. In the new branches (Ndola and Mansa), this figure rose to **90%**. In both samples, approximately **90%** of farmers who had knowledge of insurance attributed it directly to the SCBF-funded financial literacy training under AMZ.

The results were similarly encouraging on budgeting where **over 90% of trained farmers** reported practicing some of financial planning or budgeting, including estimating income and expenses, tracking expenditure, and limiting discretionary purchases.

Village savings groups emerged as the most widely adopted savings mechanisms among participants, preferred over banks, mobile money wallets, and microfinance institutions. This reflected a practical element between what the training recommended and what is accessible in rural settings. Farmers who engaged with credit showed a clear understanding of the key factors such as interest rates and repayment periods.

Beyond financial knowledge, the training measurably influenced farming practice. **Over 60%** of trained farmers adopted at least one or two climate-smart agricultural practices with crop rotation and conservation tillage being the most widely implemented. Water harvesting techniques, drought-tolerant seed varieties, and integrated pest management also featured, though at a lower adoption rate. Agroforestry, which is more demanding in terms of time and land management, showed the lowest adoption.

Despite its successes, the programme faced some challenges. The most significant gap between knowledge and action is in crop insurance uptake. Despite the strong awareness gains, formal insurance adoption continues to remain low. The barriers include products being perceived as costly and inaccessible to rural farmers, low confidence in insurance institutions, and a continuing perception among many farmers that insurance is unnecessary. Where uptake did occur, it was largely through bundled insurance attached to AMZ's Lima Loan product. While this is a viable entry point, it ties insurance to credit uptake rather than enabling it as a standalone risk management tool.

Operational challenges also shaped **Campaign Two's delivery**. Training sessions competed with crop harvesting schedules, affecting farmer punctuality and in some cases requiring repeated visits by VCs. Bicycle breakdowns, a recurring logistical constraint for VCs covering dispersed rural communities, disrupted planned session timelines. Late disbursement of funds for farmer refreshments also created delays in some branches.

It is important to note that these are implementation challenges, not design failures. Moving forward, scheduling **Campaign Three** for **August and September**, which is the dry season, providing bicycle spare parts to support VCs, and ensuring funds are released on schedule will provide corrective measures for the challenges faced.



PROJECT PARTNERS



Turning Climate Data into Decisions

Africa Agriculture Adaptation (ATLAS)



Africa's agricultural systems are under mounting pressure from climate change. Drought, heat stress, and increasingly erratic rainfall are affecting yields across the continent with projections pointing to declines of **5% to 10% by 2052**. The populations most exposed are also the ones most economically dependent on agriculture, particularly smallholder farmers, women, and rural communities. While governments and development institutions have committed to adaptation, a critical bottleneck between climate science and actionable decision-making persists. The Africa Agriculture Adaptation Atlas (ATLAS) User Adoption and Testing Project was designed to close this gap.

Started in July 2024, ATLAS is being implemented by SAF-Africa in partnership with the **Alliance of Biodiversity International** and **CIAT (ABC)** – the tool's developer – and four specialist partners: the **African Network of Policy Research Institutes (ANAPRI)**, the **Regional Centre of Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD)**, the **African Group of Negotiators Experts Support (AGNES)**, **African Technology and Innovation (ATI)**, and the **African Network of Parliamentary Staff on Climate Change**. The project is financed by the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** and operates across ten countries: **Kenya, Zambia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi, Uganda, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Tanzania**.

Project footprint across
10 Countries



The programme recognises that Africa generates significant volumes of climate and agricultural data but lacks the infrastructure to make the data usable by the people who need it most. Policymakers designing national adaptation strategies, researchers modelling crop vulnerability, parliamentary staff developing climate legislation, and civil society actors implementing local solutions all need climate data for decision making. Existing **Decision Support Tools (DST)** have often been too technically complex for non-specialist users, poorly adapted to local data environments, and disconnected from the policy processes they were meant to inform.

The result is a paradox of abundance of climate science on one side and persistent under-informed decision making on the other.

The **Africa Agriculture Adaptation Atlas (AAA tool)** developed by **ABC**, is a web-based platform that integrates climate projections, agricultural models, socio-economic indicators, and gender-disaggregated vulnerability data into a single navigable interface. Users can explore projected climate impacts at national and subnational levels, identify high-risk areas, evaluate adaptation options, and compare the expected returns on different adaptation investments.

Critically, the tool is designed to make complex spatial and scientific data legible to policymakers, negotiators, and planners who may not have technical backgrounds in climate modelling.

Platform Enhancement and Technical Readiness	Capacity Building and Stakeholder Training	Policy Engagement and Negotiator Support	Cross-Country Knowledge Exchange
<p>Enhanced datasets and updated climate model ensembles, developed in direct response to user feedback, have been generated and transferred to the ABC development team for integration. In Ethiopia, ATI has configured a dedicated server infrastructure to host the Atlas for national-level deployment, enabling the tool to operate within a country's own data environment rather than relying solely on cloud-based access. This national operationalisation represents a significant step toward institutional ownership of the tool.</p>	<p>Workshops and hands-on training sessions have been delivered to government institutions, researchers, and technical experts across the project's implementation countries. This included a national project kick-off in Ethiopia, convened by ATI, introduced key stakeholders to the platform and aligned partners on implementation.</p> <p>AIMS Research and Innovation Centre held a training workshop reaching the scientific community across East, West, Central, and Southern Africa, demonstrating the Atlas' application at continental scale.</p>	<p>Atlas was presented to African climate negotiators and experts at the AGNES Pre-SB62 strategy meeting, directly linking the tool's analytical capabilities to Africa's climate negotiation processes. The engagement positioned Atlas as a tool with direct relevance to how African countries articulate their adaptation needs and priorities in international climate forums.</p> <p>In parallel, national expert teams under the Strengthening Capacities of African Countries on Adaptation Finance (SCACAF) initiative were supported in using Atlas analytical notebooks to assess climate vulnerabilities and develop climate rationales for adaptation project proposals, a practical application with direct implications for climate finance access.</p>	<p>A learning workshop convened in Kigali, Rwanda in November 2025 brought together 40 participants from 13 countries. They included policymakers, researchers, and technical partners from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, USA, and Zambia. The workshop facilitated peer learning and cross-country knowledge exchange, identified data, usability, and gender integration gaps in the platform, and validated Atlas as a tool for evidence-based planning and decision making.</p>

The project’s achievements span technical, institutional and capacity dimensions. The Atlas platform has been technically enhanced through improved datasets and climate model ensembles, strengthening its analytical functionality. National deployment in Ethiopia is operationally ready following ATI’s server configuration. This milestone shifts the Atlas from a globally hosted tool to one embedded within national infrastructure.

Further, 8 Ethiopian institutions have signed Memoranda of Understanding committing to coordinated data sharing and joint use of the Atlas. Awareness and technical capacity have been built among national stakeholders across partner countries, and the Atlas’ visibility has been raised among African climate negotiators whose engagement with the tool has direct implications for how adaptation evidence is used in international policy processes.

Through the project period, national expert teams have been supported in developing climate-informed project proposals using Atlas analytical notebooks, directly linking platform use to climate finance mobilisation. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning instruments have been developed to track awareness, usability, and uptake of the Atlas among scientific and technical communities, providing the evidence base needed to guide continued platform improvement and outreach.

PROJECT PARTNERS







05

Sustainable Agriculture Foundations International Association (SAFIA)

Strengthening Africa's Voice in a Global Smallholder Movement

Sustainable Agriculture Foundations International Association (SAFIA)



In 2025, SAF-Africa became a founding member of the **Sustainable Agriculture Foundations International Association (SAFIA)**, a newly established international federated network bringing together independent agricultural foundations across Africa and Asia. Building on **more than 40 years** of experience and legacy from the **Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture**, SAFIA's mission is to scale collective action on agricultural markets, innovation, and partnerships ensuring that farming can better serve smallholder farmers.

To achieve this, SAFIA supports smallholder farmers through improved access to knowledge, technology, finance, entrepreneurship opportunities, and market linkages. This mandate aligns with SAF-Africa's own priorities across agri-entrepreneurship, climate-smart agriculture, financial support, seed systems, food and nutrition, and carbon credit.

SAFIA operates as a commonly branded federated network in which member organisations maintain their local identity and governance while benefitting from shared services, technical collaboration, strategic partnerships, and a global knowledge platform.

For SAF-Africa, this model strengthens operational effectiveness while keeping the organisation deeply rooted in African farming communities. Membership also reinforces SAF-Africa's transition from the legacy **Syngenta Foundation** structure into a fully independent, African-led institution committed to long-term sustainability and local ownership.

As a founding African member, SAF-Africa contributes practical field experience, locally led innovation, and strong partnerships built in support of smallholder farmers across the continent.

In 2025, SAF-Africa collaborated with SAFIA members and partners to advance climate-smart agriculture, agri-entrepreneurship development, inclusive finance solutions, and regenerative farming approaches. The organisation shared lessons from its work in seed systems, climate resilience, farmers-centred service delivery, and rural enterprise development. By sharing these experiences, SAF-Africa helps shape SAFIA's broader programming and partnership strategies ensuring that approaches proven on the ground in Africa influence the global network's priorities, rather than being imposed from above.

Through its participation in SAFIA, SAF-Africa also gains access to a wider network of expertise, shared learning, and global partnerships that strengthen its ability to deliver on its mission at home.

The federated model where members are locally governed and globally connected reflects the conviction that durable agriculture transformation is built from the ground up, and that the most effective global networks are those that amplify local knowledge instead of replacing it.

Together with fellow SAFIA members active in **Senegal, Mali, Nigeria, Bangladesh, India, and Indonesia**, SAF-Africa remains committed to building a future in which smallholders, communities, and nature thrive together.

SAFIA is open to membership from non-SFSA African and Asian nonprofits, welcoming new partners who share its vision for sustainable agriculture and inclusive growth.



It has been a great honour to witness the entrepreneurial leadership, drive, and commitment to impact of my former colleagues as they successfully move forward in strengthening SAF-Africa and the other SAFIA members. I am privileged to continue providing them with pro-bono support through the global SAFIA platform.

Simon Winter,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SAFIA, BASEL, SWITZERLAND







06

People & Culture

Empowering our People to Transform African Agriculture

Human Resources and People Culture



SAF Africa recognises that long-term value is built through an empowered and inclusive workforce. The diversity in perspective, skills, and experiences across teams sustains the organisation’s operational excellence and impact.

Despite challenges in workforce planning caused by funding fluctuations, HR success in 2025 was anchored in supportive leadership, effective HR structures, and a collaborative culture that promoted transparency and proactive communication.

Workforce Overview

In 2025 SAF Africa’s commitment to investing in its people remained steadfast recognising the workforce as the organisation’s primary driver of programme delivery and impact.

Of the total 25 staff, 40% were female, reflecting an ongoing commitment to gender representation.

Department / Function	No. of Staff	% of Total
Operations	8	32%
Agri-Entrepreneurship	12	48%
Seeds2B Africa	4	16%
CRIFS	1	4%
TOTAL	25	100%

During the year, SAF Africa’s HR department rolled out several key initiatives that strengthened people management and enhanced organisation effectiveness.

The full implementation of the Human Resources Policy established consistency, clarity, and compliance throughout the organisation.

Additionally, a structured performance management system was introduced supporting individual goal setting and accountability to further drive staff development.

The launch of the SAF Africa Pension Scheme further contributed to employee security while reinforcing long-term staff retention.



People remained SAF-Africa’s greatest asset in 2025. Managing talent in a dynamic funding environment required adaptability, empathy, and clear communication. This sentiment underscores the organisation’s reliance on its staff to navigate evolving challenges and opportunities.

Harriet Nasha Porah,
HUMAN RESOURCE / COMPLIANCE MANAGER,
SAF-AFRICA



SAF Africa documented key moments throughout the year that embodied its organisational culture. Staff engagement activities, internal training sessions, and collaborative efforts were captured through photography and video, illustrating the energy and spirit of the team.

Human Resources tracked a series of people-related performance indicators in 2025 including workforce stability, gender representation, training coverage, staff retention, and HR Policy and staff pension scheme implementation.

KPI Area	Metric / Initiative	Status
Workforce Stability	Staff Retention Rate	Ongoing
Gender Representation	40% Female / 60% Male	Tracked
HR Policy Rollout	Full Implementation	Complete
Performance Management	Structured System Introduced	Complete
Pension Scheme	SAF Africa Pension Implemented	Complete
Training Coverage	Internal + External Sessions	Ongoing

HR performance in 2025 reflected the organisation’s ability to balance operational pressures with a continued commitment to its people. Success in organisational stability, employee engagement, and overall performance during 2025 was supported by strong, people-centred leadership committed to staff wellbeing, clear and consistently applied HR systems and policies, and a culture of teamwork, trust and transparency across all functions.

The positive momentum through the year was not without its challenges. For instance, fluctuations in funding posed the most significant challenges. This reinforced the importance of prudent personnel cost planning and budget forecasting, staff-centred transition management during periods of uncertainty, and proactive communication with staff regarding organisational changes.



Looking ahead, SAF Africa’s HR function will focus on:

- 01** Strengthening staff retention strategies and career pathways.

- 02** Scaling training and capacity building programmes.

- 03** Consolidating HR system infrastructure and data management.

People at SAF-Africa

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mandla Nkomo, Chair and member, Board of Directors

Anne Mbaabu, Member, Board of Directors

Akinyi Linda Koi, Member, Board of Directors

OPERATIONS

Akinyi Linda Koi, Executive Director

Rhodah Mutanu Waweru, Finance and Operations Manager

Harriet Nasha Porah, Human Resource / Compliance Manager

Simon M Okoko, Administrative Officer

Elias Mahianyu Wanjohi, Program Finance Officer

Stephen Okeyo Magolo, Manager, MEALC & China-Africa Ag Value Chain Opportunities

***Akinyi Linda Koi served as the Interim Executive Director since 1st July 2025, following the departure of the former Executive Director, Lucy Kioko. The Board of Directors at SAF-Africa announced her appointment as the substantive Executive Director, effective 1st April 2026.

AGRI-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Faith Wanjiku Mbuguah, Head of Business Development and Programmes Support

Emmanuel Chasimba Amboga, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Finance Assistant

Jane May Chapia, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer

Elizabeth A Imbo, Nutrition Technical Lead

Mercelyn Atieno Omondi, Nutrition Assistant

Glory Nkatha, Project Coordinator

Reinhard Kipyegon Koech, Project Coordinator

Daniel Mboya Nyauke, Project Coordinator

Kirui K Julius, Project Administrative Support

Samson Gachiri Mwangi, Agronomist

Mathews Okuku Ochieng, Agronomist

Sammy Bunyali Adieno, Agronomist

Lilian Wanjiru Maina, Communication Assistant

SEEDS2B AFRICA

George Gikuri Njuguna, Program Manager - Seed Systems, Climate Resilience & Adaptation Finance

Manasseh Ndugu Githinji, Seed Research and Development Manager

Patrick Nzula Mutua, Seed Production Officer

Kennedy Mutisya Muindi, Research and Breeding Officer

CLIMATE RESILIENCE & INCLUSIVE FINANCE SOLUTIONS (CRIFS)

Sharon Jelegat, Project Coordinator

Dan K Simotwo, Project Coordinator

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07

Business Development

Be part of the change

Business Development through 2025



In 2025, SAF-Africa strengthened its network of development partners, philanthropic organizations, and private sector collaborators to advance climate-resilient and inclusive agricultural systems. In the storm of a competitive and evolving funding landscape, SAF-Africa continued to position itself as a trusted implementation partner delivering practical solutions that improve smallholder farmer productivity, resilience, and market participation across Africa.

Through the year, SAF-Africa was supported by a growing ecosystem of institutional donors, foundations, and technical partners aligned with its focus on climate-smart agriculture, inclusive finance, and agri-entrepreneurship development. Strategic partnerships with development organizations, research institutions, and innovation platforms enabled SAF-Africa to expand its program pipeline and explore new models that link farmers to technology, finance, and markets.

2025 saw the organization focus on strengthening long-term partnerships while also cultivating new collaborations that support scalable agricultural solutions. Particular emphasis was placed on initiatives that accelerate climate adaptation, strengthen seed and food systems, expand access to agricultural technologies, sustain nutrition, and support youth and women participation in agribusiness. These partnerships are central to SAF-Africa's ability to bridge innovation and practical delivery for smallholder farmers.

Looking ahead to 2026, SAF-Africa will continue to deepen strategic collaborations with donors, private sector actors, national and sub-national governments, and technical partners that share the vision of a resilient African food system.

Priority areas will include scaling climate-smart innovations, improving nutrition, strengthening farmer-led service delivery models, expanding technology adoption through agri-entrepreneurs, and mobilizing partnerships that support long-term sustainability, market integration, and lasting impact for smallholder farmers.

PIPELINE:

Proposals valued at
\$74,536,408.83

Be part of the change

We invite partners to support our impact by codesigning, funding, and implementing flagship programmes that benefit smallholder farmers.

Financial Performance

 Total Revenue
USD 3.9 million

 Total Expenditure
USD 3.5 million

 Grant
USD 3.4 million

 Other Income
USD 0.5 million

Income

During the year ended 31 December 2025, the organization recorded a solid financial performance, achieving total revenue of **USD 3.9 million**. Compared to 2024, overall income declined modestly by 19%, primarily due to the closure of several projects during the year.

Expenditure

Total expenditure declined by **27%**, from **USD 4.8 million in 2024** to **USD 3.5 million**, primarily due to the closure of several projects during the year.

Audit Overview

The 2025 financial statements were audited by an independent auditor, **Lexan & Associates**, who issued an unqualified opinion.



Our commitment to financial compliance is not a checkbox – it is the foundation upon which every transaction, every decision, and every relationship we build is grounded. Integrity is not our policy; it is our culture.

Rhodah Mutanu Waweru,
FINANCE AND OPERATIONS MANAGER,
SAF-AFRICA



Success Stories

Ruth Kabiru and the Power of Agri-Entrepreneurship

When Ruth Kabiru completed her tertiary education in finance, she knew she wanted to work in agriculture. What she did not know was where to start. The path from ambition to action is rarely straightforward for young people in rural Kenya, especially for young women who face barriers that are even higher. Ruth's turning point came at a farmer's exhibition in Njoro, Nakuru County, Kenya where she met a SAF-Africa project officer who introduced her to the **Farmers' Hub Model**.

What followed was an opening. Ruth became a beneficiary of the **Potatoes for Livelihoods Project (PLP)**, which supports forest-adjacent communities in Nakuru and Kericho counties, Kenya with alternative income sources and improved agricultural practices. She received training in potato production, facilitated through connections to government agencies, and quickly began passing that knowledge on to other farmers registered at her hub.

She started with **3,000 apical cuttings** of potato and has grown to where she currently manages five acres under different seed classes, runs **Crop Care Hub**, and supports over **250 smallholder farmers** with farm inputs, mechanisation services, and market linkages.

Although her academic background in finance, it is her agricultural knowledge, built through the project, that defines her role. Her neighbours now look to her as a source of practical expertise and guidance.

Ruth is a testament of what the Agri-Entrepreneur model is designed to make possible. Young people, particularly young women, are equipped with the knowledge, networks, and commercial structures to build lasting enterprises in their own communities.



"SAF-Africa became my destiny shaper."

Ruth Kabiru,
AGRI-ENTREPRENEUR,
NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA



African youths are becoming the new implementors of agricultural innovations. The opportunities are vast and remunerative. Ruth Kabiru is one such young lady transforming her life economically through SAF-Africa innovations and support along agri-entrepreneurship.

Stephen Okeyo,
MONITORING, LEARNING,
EVALUATION AND
COMMUNICATION MANAGER,
SAF-AFRICA



Potato Farmers as Forest Allies

On the 2025 **International Day of Forests**, SAF-Africa and IDH gathered **250 farmers, local leaders and community stakeholders** in **Nakuru County** to consider how potato farming can help protect forests.

The **Potatoes for Livelihoods Project (PLP)** in **Nakuru and Kericho counties**, Kenya, have built Farmers Hubs that now support over **3,000 smallholder farmers** to grow potatoes more profitably and sustainably.

The Forests and Food event in Nakuru had a demo farm showed farmers drip irrigation for water saving and Apical Rooted Cuttings, an innovative technique for producing high-quality seed potato.

Seeing a good idea work on familiar ground is what drives farmers to adopt it. As Lucy Kioko, former Executive Director, SAF-Africa, put it, "Demos like this are crucial for enabling farmer to strengthen both productivity and conservation."

Going beyond potatoes, SAF-Africa distributed **1,900 fruit seedlings** including **pears, avocados, and tree tomatoes**, and showed farmers how to integrate them with their existing crops. By collaborating, the **Nakuru County Ministry of Agriculture, the Ndoinet Community Forest Association, local government, and Farmers' Hub agri-entrepreneurs** are showing that conservation and livelihoods do not have to compete. The PLP is showing what it looks like when they work together instead.



The Potato for Livelihoods Project is testimony to how sustainable agriculture can both drive conservation and improve African livelihoods. PLP is one step among many towards our vision: a world where smallholders, communities, and nature thrive together.

Lucy Kioko,
FORMER EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, SAF-AFRICA



Key Events in 2025

From Launch to Regional Engagement



2025 marked a defining year for SAF-Africa. Following its launch in Nairobi on 22 May 2025, SAF-Africa began to take shape as an independent, Africa-based organisation committed to strengthening sustainable agriculture, food systems, climate resilience, and smallholder farmer livelihoods across the continent.

The year's engagements show an organisation moving across three connected fields: policy influence, knowledge exchange, and farmer-centred implementation. SAF-Africa's 2025 calendar reflected its emerging role as a convener, technical partner, and practitioner in Africa's agricultural transformation.

Establishing SAF-Africa's Institutional Presence

The launch of SAF-Africa in Nairobi on 22 May 2025 marked the beginning of a new locally led, independent chapter rooted in Africa's agricultural realities and committed to practical, farmer-centred solutions.

This moment provided the institutional foundation for the year's wider engagements, positioning SAF-Africa as a Global South-based organisation working at the intersection of smallholder agriculture, food systems, policy, and climate resilience.

Strengthening Policy and Systems Dialogue

Throughout the year, SAF-Africa contributed to conversations shaping agricultural and food systems policy at county, national, and regional levels.

In Nakuru, SAF-Africa contributed technical expertise to the development of the **Nakuru County Agroecology Policy, 2025**, launched on **9 December**. The policy process reflected the importance of county-level action in embedding agroecological principles into local agricultural development.

On **18 and 19 November** at the **International Conference on Contract Farming 2025** in Nairobi, SAF-Africa engaged stakeholders on how contract farming can strengthen market systems for smallholder farmers.

In November 2025, SAF-Africa's George Njuguna moderated a session on the Africa Agriculture Adaptation Atlas during the **African Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institute (ANAPRI) 12th Stakeholder Conference** in Kigali. The session highlighted the role of climate data in guiding policy and investment decisions.

Advancing Food Systems and Climate-Resilient Agriculture



SAF-Africa's participation in major regional and global food systems platforms in 2025 reflected its growing engagement in climate-resilient agricultural transformation.

Elizabeth Imbo, SAF-Africa's NICE Project Kenya Manager, contributed to discussions on food sovereignty, public procurement, and climate-resilient urban food systems at the **Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Global Forum** on **13 October**.

In Nairobi, SAF-Africa joined the **Sustainable Nutrition Initiative, ILRI, and Kenya's Food Systems Technical Working Group** on **1 October** to co-design an Interactive Food System Model for evidence-informed food policy planning.

At the **Africa Food Systems Forum 2025** in Dakar, SAF-Africa participated in sessions on agricultural insurance, youth-led agrifood innovation, and the Agri-Entrepreneurship Development programme.

Translating Programmes into Farmer-Level Impact

Beyond conferences and policy spaces, SAF-Africa's year was grounded in implementation and direct farmer engagement.

SAF-Africa joined the **Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics** for NICE Project Farmer Field Days in Bungoma on 25-26 August, exploring how agents influence farmers' purchasing decisions while showcasing agroecological products at the Farmers' Hub marketplace.

4 December 2025 saw SAF-Africa and IDH mark the graduation of 21 agri-entrepreneurs in Nakuru and Kericho following completion of the two-year **Potato for Livelihood Project (PLP)**, which reached **3,000 smallholder farmers**.

In Zambia, on **4 and 5 November 2025**, SAF-Africa trained **12** Agora Microfinance Branch Managers to equip Village Champions with climate resilience and financial literacy tools, with the wider programme aiming to reach **80,000 rural smallholder farmers**.



Partnerships Across Africa



Partnership remained central to SAF-Africa's work in 2025.

During the Africa Food Systems Forum, SAF-Africa engaged with the **International Potato Centre on the Partnership for Root and Tuber Crops in Africa**, where the registration of two new PCN-resistant potato varieties, **Malaika** and **Glen**, was announced.

At **CIFOR-ICRAF** in Nairobi, SAF-Africa joined regional partners and researchers for a workshop, on **19-20 August**, focused on strengthening agricultural research and collaboration across African contexts.



**Sustainable
agriculture is not only
about food production;
it is also about dignity,
opportunity, resilience,
and hope for future
generations.**

Akinyi Linda Koi

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SAF- AFRICA

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