



Agroecology Fund Awards \$150,000 in Business Planning Grants December 2023

The Agroecology Fund is excited to announce \$150,000 in Business Planning Grants to 15 African-based farmer organizations and non-governmental organizations across the continent. Each organization will receive a business planning grant of \$10,000 to strengthen their analysis, planning, and development of small business and entrepreneurship programming. The Business Planning Grants focus on strengthening community institutions for African investment in local food economies.

The funded plans range from an analysis of how to market a healthy locally sourced and produced bouillon spice for local African families to a cost-benefit analysis of packaging and marketing of products from women's cooperatives, among others. Many of the grants will enable the organization to combine participatory consultation processes with producers with support from technical experts for marketing and processing of products.

To develop this Initiative, AEF consulted with 15 Agroecology Fund partners and other peer organizations. All partners reported promoting small businesses with technical and management services, marketing, product transformation, cooperative organization, and/or saving and credit support. AEF partners highlighted three key bottlenecks to resolve:

1. access to finance and credit,
2. access to markets and marketing, and
3. access to infrastructure for value addition and transformation.

Based on this consultation, experiences during COVID, and research undertaken with the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), AEF has learned that investing in agroecological production businesses, value-addition, cooperatives, and territorial markets can amplify a virtuous cycle of climate resilience, healthier food systems, and local economic control.

Review Process

In August 2023, the Agroecology Fund invited 26 current partners working in Africa to apply for business planning grants. Instead of awarding implementation grants, AEF decided to provide partners with some resources and the time to evaluate and plan a larger initiative based on participatory planning with communities and experts in markets and other necessary planning processes. Through this funding, AEF expects the cohort of organizations will develop plans for Business Development implementation that AEF will consider for follow-on funding in 2025.

The proposals were reviewed by four Africa-based Agroecology Fund Advisors and two outside experts in business and agroecology. The advisors come from Benin, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Organizations Awarded Business Planning Grants

- Center for Food and Adequate Living Rights (CEFROHT), Uganda
- Concertation Nationale des Organisations Paysannes au Cameroun (CNOP-CAM), Cameroon
- Convergence des Femmes Rurales pour la Souveraineté Alimentaire (COFERSA), Mali
- Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmer Forum (ESAFF) Uganda, Uganda
- Fahamu/Nous Sommes la Solution (NSS), Senegal
- Groundswell International, Inc., Mali and Senegal
- Inades-Formation Togo, Togo
- Kenyan Peasants League, Kenya
- MELCA-Ethiopia, Ethiopia
- Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania (MVIWATA), Tanzania
- Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Kenya, Kenya
- Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe
- Seed Knowledge Initiative, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa
- Seed Savers Network, Kenya
- Service d'Appui aux Initiatives Locales de Développement (SAILD), Cameroon