December 2025

Building the impact capital continuum

Being more catalytic in a changing ODA landscape

Recommendations on strengthening business pathways from the interface of investment, implementation, and impact

Development finance is being reshaped by shifting priorities, strained international cooperation, and declining aid budgets. Never before has it been more essential for grant funding to step in as truly catalytic capital, unlocking private investment, and helping scale models that build long-term resilience.

Yet even where commercial potential exists, capital often struggles to flow. Many frontier-market businesses with demonstrably promising business models often struggle to advance through the investment chain.

Through SNV's long-standing work across agri-food, energy, and water systems, we have built a depth of experience in innovative financing mechanisms and market systems development, alongside strong government relationships and private-sector partners. Our **sustained, hands-on engagement with early-stage businesses spans the practical terrain where early innovation grants, blended and concessional instruments, and impact-oriented investment intersect.**

From this vantage point, we see clearly where financing pathways support progress, and where they break down.

Ours is not simply a perspective of scale, but of proximity; a grounded view of how mobilising capital, supported by ongoing technical assistance, across an **impact capital continuum** can truly create the continuity needed for viable models to progress. Bridging early innovation with long-term finance, this prevents businesses from slipping into the "missing middle".

Building on this, the following recommendations sit alongside a wide body of analysis from leading global think tanks, including as ODI Global and Center for Global Development (CGD), major Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), and others, which has been essential in clarifying the policy, incentive, and financing-architecture issues influencing capital flows.

Within this landscape, **our recommendations reflect systemic gaps repeatedly encountered through practical engagement, with an actionable focus on strengthening key connective elements** that determine whether promising early-stage businesses can advance towards long-term investment. These include **visibility and aggregation, continuity, governance and technical assistance, sequencing,** and **measurement.**

1 Establish investment opportunity portals to resolve visibility gaps and small-ticket fragmentation across the pipeline

Across many business pathways, the first barrier is not the lack of capital but the absence of a shared picture of what is truly investable, and at what scale. Following early-stage enterprises from validation to negotiation reveals that they often sit in fragmented programmes, informal networks, or donor-specific pipelines; each credible in isolation, yet ultimately unable to generate the visibility or aggregation needed to attract investors working with minimum ticket thresholds. This fragmentation limits investors' ability to read opportunities as a coherent pipeline, weakening the conditions required for meaningful capital deployment.

A nationally-anchored investment opportunity portal that consolidates investment opportunity information and is reviewed through citizens' assembly–style mechanisms to ensure relevance, transparency, and contextual judgement would help address these constraints directly. **Structured as a single platform and organised by sector, geography, and maturity, such a platform would give public institutions, DFIs, and investors a clearer and more predictable view of a market currently shaped by dispersed small-ticket prospects.** By making patterns visible—clusters of similar business models, shared capital needs, and points where technical assistance or concessional tools could be sequenced more efficiently—it creates the visibility required to move from a fragmented pipeline to an integrated, coherent investment pathway.

2 Align ODA and early-stage grants with the investment pathway so that capital identified upstream can progress with continuity and scale

The visibility created by a consolidated pipeline is only meaningful if businesses can advance through it. Yet early-stage grants and official development assistance (ODA) funded support—while essential to early validation—often operate on timelines, criteria, and objectives not fully aligned with later-stage financing. As a result, businesses that appear as investable in an opportunity portal may still fail to progress because the capital preparing them for investment is fragmented, short-term, or misaligned with the requirements of investors further along the chain.

Establishing shared national criteria, investment-readiness milestones, and structured handover protocols would ensure early-stage grant resources are deployed purposefully: strengthening commercial validation, building underlying investability, and supporting businesses to reach the scale at which concessional and commercial investors can engage. When used in this way, ODA becomes more truly catalytic, reducing risk, improving continuity, and ensuring that businesses identified upstream are able to move through the investment pathway rather than stalling between stages.

3 Allocate a defined proportion of funding for long-horizon technical assistance to enable continuity through critical stages of business growth

Even when strong business models emerge, businesses frequently stall in the gap between early-stage grants and investable scale—a period widely recognised as the valley of death. At this point, risk and evidence thresholds remain unmet, operational systems are still maturing, and deal sizes often still fall below investor minimums. Yet technical assistance—feasibility work, financial modelling, operational strengthening, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and climate-risk integration—is too often under-resourced or ends precisely when it is most needed.

Ensuring that technical assistance facilities are adequately financed and structured to continue through this stage would provide the continuity that both local businesses and global investors require. **Allocating a defined proportion of financing resources to these functions addresses a systemic gap: without sustained support, businesses lose momentum and investment-to-impact pipelines weaken.** Aligning financial instruments with the practical realities of technical preparation strengthens the continuum at one of its most consequential junctures.

4 Develop a shared early-stage origination architecture to ensure that assessments travel across the investment chain without being slowed by duplicative processes

A recurring barrier that emerges while following businesses across multiple engagement points is that even when early feasibility, ESG, due diligence, and climate assessments are strong, they need to be rebuilt for each new investor or institution. This repetition slows movement precisely when businesses gain traction.

A shared origination architecture—a mutually recognised foundation covering core feasibility, ESG, climate-risk, and basic financial assessments—would ensure early work carries forward without being hindered by duplication. This strengthens the capital continuum by preserving momentum rather than restarting it. It reflects a practical insight repeatedly surfaced through hands-on business support; that predictability and continuity are the most effective forms of de-risking.

5 Strengthen coordination around timing and investment criteria, to fix the sequencing gaps that slow business progression

Across the investment chain, institutions act rationally within their mandates. Yet, their decisions often fall out of sequence for businesses navigating regulatory steps, financing windows, and technical support. This misalignment has systemic effects, particularly for early-stage models that rely on predictable pathways.

Strengthening coordination mechanisms, through structured, regular, and shared decision-making forums anchored in existing national platforms will help align timing, incentives, and investment criteria. Improving coherence at these decision points reduces friction across the continuum and creates clearer, more dependable pathways for businesses approaching scale.

6 Adopt integrated measurement frameworks that reflect resilience, adaptation, and productive-use outcomes in investment decision-making

Across sectors, businesses consistently deliver outcomes that matter enormously to long-term national resilience, but remain invisible in investment decision-making. The persisting gap is that businesses delivering high-value outcomes—local resilience, adaptive capacity, stable year-round productive energy or water use, biodiversity gains—often struggle to secure finance because these contributions fall outside conventional investment metrics.

Integrated measurement frameworks correct this by translating cross-sectoral outcomes into indicators that both public and private financiers can utilise. Strengthening measurement is not only about accountability. It ensures that businesses generating the outcomes most aligned with climate and development goals are recognised—and ultimately financed—within the system.

Read the full report

Strengthening catalytic investment pathways in frontier markets

Why catalytic investment matters

Development finance has entered a period of profound disruption. International cooperation and aid budgets are under intense strain, with funding cuts and freezes creating ripple effects across global programmes. In this environment, grant funding must evolve—where it is not deployed towards immediate humanitarian needs, it must become truly catalytic and strategically deployed to unlock private capital, bridge financing gaps, and scale solutions that deliver lasting impact and resilience.

Bridging the missing middle

Yet, without stronger investment pathways into frontier markets, this catalytic intent risks falling short. Many high-potential businesses remain stuck in what is often referred to as a "missing middle": too large for microfinance and too small or too risky for commercial investment.

Mobilising the right type of capital across an **impact capital continuum** bridges early innovation with long-term finance, ensuring no viable solution stalls for lack of funding.

How to create a bridge

The impact capital continuum remains fragmented and not catalytic enough, with early-stage grants, concessional finance, and private investment often operating in isolation. As a result, many promising enterprises remain stranded between pilot and scale. To close this gap, grant resources must be used more strategically: not as tied aid or short-term transactions, but as catalytic capital that unlocks blended and impact-oriented investment.

Our approach

- **Systems-level engagement** with the investment ecosystem to lower barriers for enterprise growth
- A **curated pipeline** of high-impact, de-risked investment opportunities.
- Proven **origination and technical assistance models** to accelerate scale and impact.
- **Investment-ready businesses** aligned with climate, biodiversity, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Local knowledge, global networks,** and on-the-ground technical support.
- **Engagement with investors** from the start, tailored to their criteria.

The challenge

Billions in sustainable capital are seeking impact, yet too little reaches the frontier markets where adaptation, resilience, biodiversity, and inclusive growth are most needed. Capital, in the context of frontier markets, can be seen to be scared rather than scarce.

Important parts of global capital markets have been shifting toward sustainability, but despite strong demand, investment capital remains limited in frontier markets. With ODA under huge pressures and declining, catalytic grants and technical assistance become even more critical to unlock private capital at greater scale.

What is holding capital back?

- **Ecosystem risks**: Frontier markets are unpredictable. Invariably, revenues are in local currency, returns in foreign currency. Exit options are limited, and volatility remains high.

- **Enterprise-level risks**: Many businesses lack audited accounts, governance standards, or a proven track record. These gaps raise investor concerns, but the right technical assistance can turn them around.

- **Costly, fragmented origination**: Investors face scattered opportunities and few trusted intermediaries. The effort to close a US$500K deal is often the same as for a US$5 million or US$50 million one.

- **The missing middle in finance**: Promising businesses sit between the cracks – too big for microfinance, too small for private equity. Local banks offer little working capital. Blended finance can help, but deals are still slow and bespoke.

- **Impact measurement gaps**: Adaptation and resilience results are harder to measure than carbon reductions. Many strong businesses stay "off the radar" as a result.

- **Capital-needs misalignment**: Investors often expect quick returns. Frontier enterprises need patient capital and local understanding. Sector mandates, ticket sizes, and geography limits make it hard for the two to meet.

The capital exists. The businesses exist. The risks exist, too—but not to the extent that businesses cannot succeed. What is often missing, however, is the connective tissue of early origination, grant money designed to be catalytic, trust, tailored technical assistance, de-risking, and local insight.

Key concepts

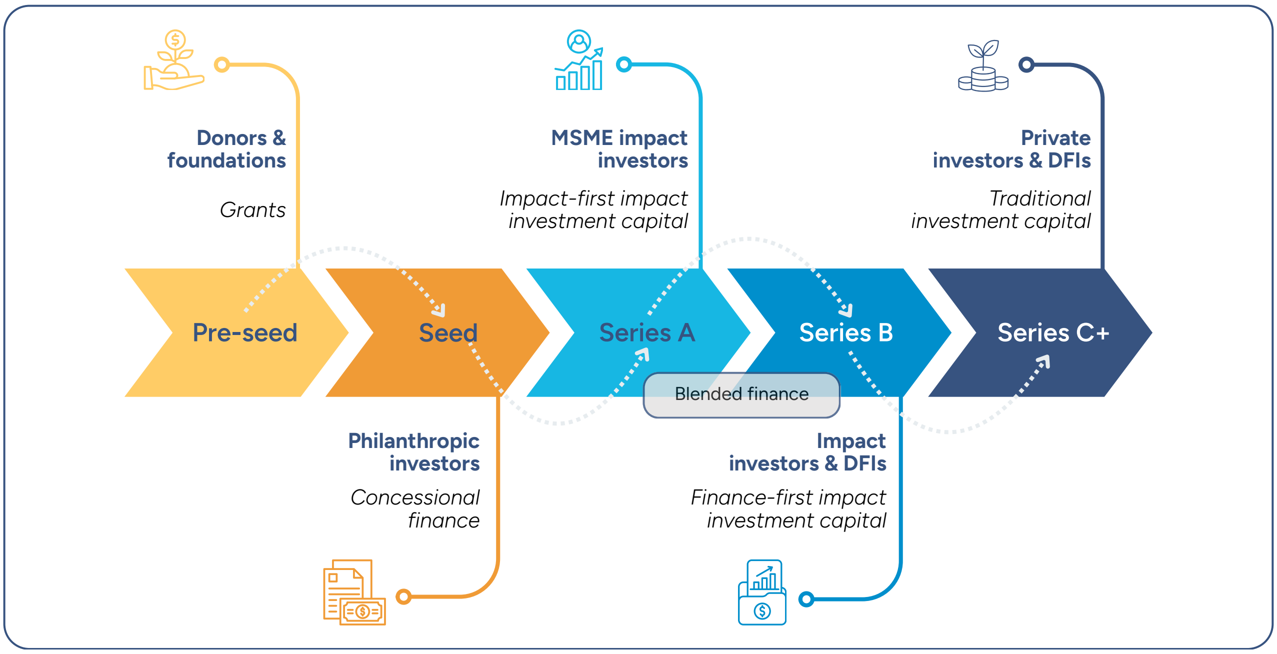
What is origination?
We identify impactful and scalable business models and work with entrepreneurs to shape and structure investable propositions.

What is technical assistance (TA)?
TA means providing hands-on support, including capacity building (from feasibility studies and financial modelling to ESG safeguards) to strengthen the business and reduce investment risk.

What is de-risking support?
De-risking lowers the barriers to private investment, particularly in frontier markets, by addressing technical, financial, environmental, and institutional risks.

What are frontier markets?
Developing economies with high growth potential but higher perceived risk and lower liquidity than emerging markets, offering significant opportunities for impact and investment.

What is the impact capital continuum?
The impact capital continuum is a spectrum of investment approaches, ranging from grants to commercial investments, enabling capital providers to align financial returns with social and environmental impact across different stages of enterprise growth.



Building the impact capital continuum

The impact capital continuum enables investors to align their investment strategies with their values and goals, providing a range of options that drive positive change while achieving financial sustainability.

With ODA monies under massive pressure and needing to be deployed where they can maximise impact, scarce grant resources must work catalytically—bridging early-stage risk, validating business models, and crowding in private finance. At the same time, we must break the cycle of "grantrepreneur" enterprises moving from one donor-funded project to another without achieving investment readiness. Grants should be freed up for humanitarian and life-saving contexts, while catalytic funds should drive sustainability and scale.

An impact capital continuum that sequences grant-funded TA, concessional capital, and commercial investment is vital to move frontier-market solutions from concept to scale.

Drawing on long-term local presence, SNV and other development partners are helping to demonstrate how different programmes can provide complementary support along a business's growth journey. Yet we know these efforts must go further in building on what works to create a more efficient, connected, and catalytic continuum. SNV's work along the impact capital continuum, supporting businesses at various stages, offers an example of how this connection can work in practice.

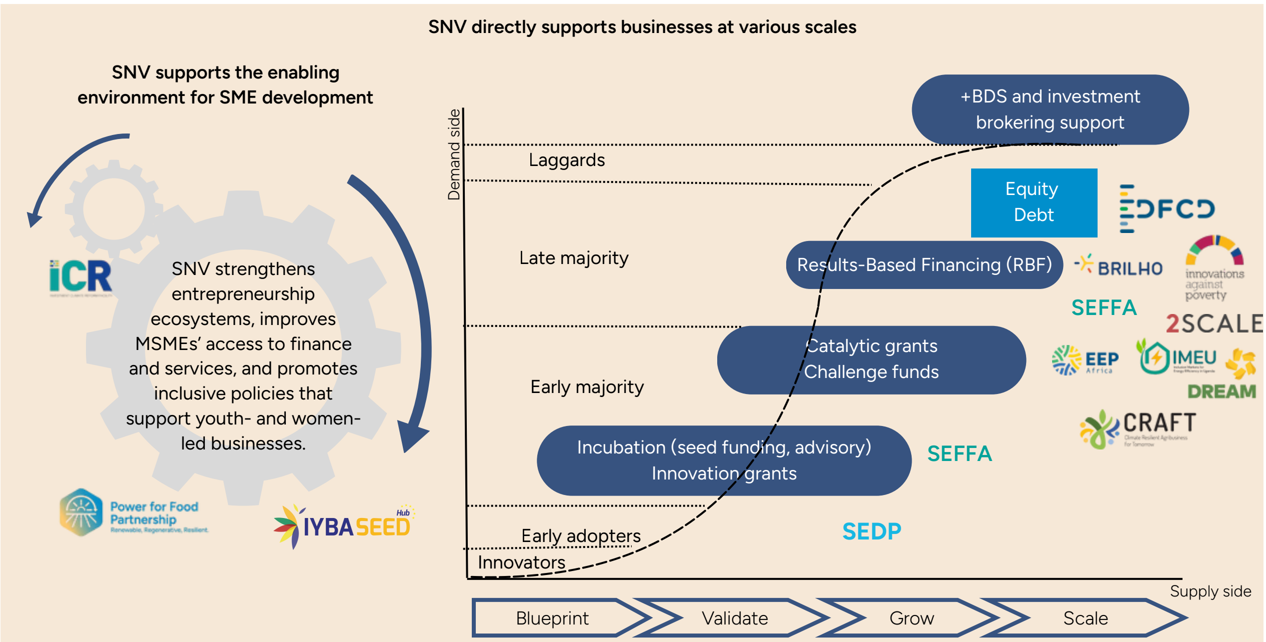


Image 2: Visual of how SNV supports businesses at various scales.

Through grant-financed early-stage programmes such as [Innovations Against Poverty](#) (IAP), financed by Sida, [2SCALE](#) and [Climate Resilient Agribusiness for Tomorrow](#) (CRAFT), financed by the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [BRILHO](#), financed by the UK and Swedish governments, and the [Energy and Environment Partnership Trust Fund](#) (EEP Africa) hosted and managed by the Nordic Development Fund (NDF), SNV and our partners support enterprises to validate business models, strengthen operations and measurement, harness market opportunities, and embed social and environmental goals from the outset.

Building on the foundations laid by these programmes, the Dutch Fund for Climate and Development (DFCD) Origination Facility supports maturing businesses and provides tailored TA and concessional support to mobilise follow-on finance and scale impact.

This layered approach shows how actors can work more intentionally across the impact capital continuum, aligning grants, TA, and investment to bridge the gap between early innovation and commercial capital. Within this model, DFCD Origination Facility-supported businesses alone have already mobilised over €60 million in follow-on investment—strengthening the resilience, inclusivity, and sustainability of enterprises across the agri-food, energy, and water sectors.

Note: These are illustrative examples of how an impact capital continuum can move enterprises from early-stage grant support toward investment readiness and follow-on finance. They demonstrate SNV's role within a wider ecosystem of development partners working to unlock climate-resilient, inclusive growth.

Business	Country	From → To	Investment outcome
SOGE	Cambodia	CHAIN + IAP → DFCD	Preparing US$13M irrigation scale-up
HUSK Ventures	Cambodia & Vietnam	IAP → Mekong Capital Advisors + DFCD	Secured €4.4M in equity investment
AMRU / CACC	Cambodia	IAP → DFCD	US$10M investment by a private investor
Camimex	Vietnam	Inspired by Mangroves and Markets (MAM) → DFCD	Secured US$15M FMO loan, catalysing a further €15M from PROPARCO and €7M from ResponsAbility
East Africa Foods	Tanzania	CRAFT → DFCD	Secured US$2.5M equity (FMO Ventures)
SokoFresh	Kenya	EEP → DFCD	Secured US$500K equity and €750K convertible debt (impact investment fund)
Stewards Globe Limited	Zambia	IAP → DFCD	Investment proposition of US$11.5M prepared, seeking investors
JohnVents & Sterling Bank	Nigeria	2SCALE → DFCD	Ongoing DFCD Origination Facility support; investment proposition in preparation (€15M JohnVents; €25M Sterling)

Table 1: Illustrative examples of SNV's work along the impact capital continuum.

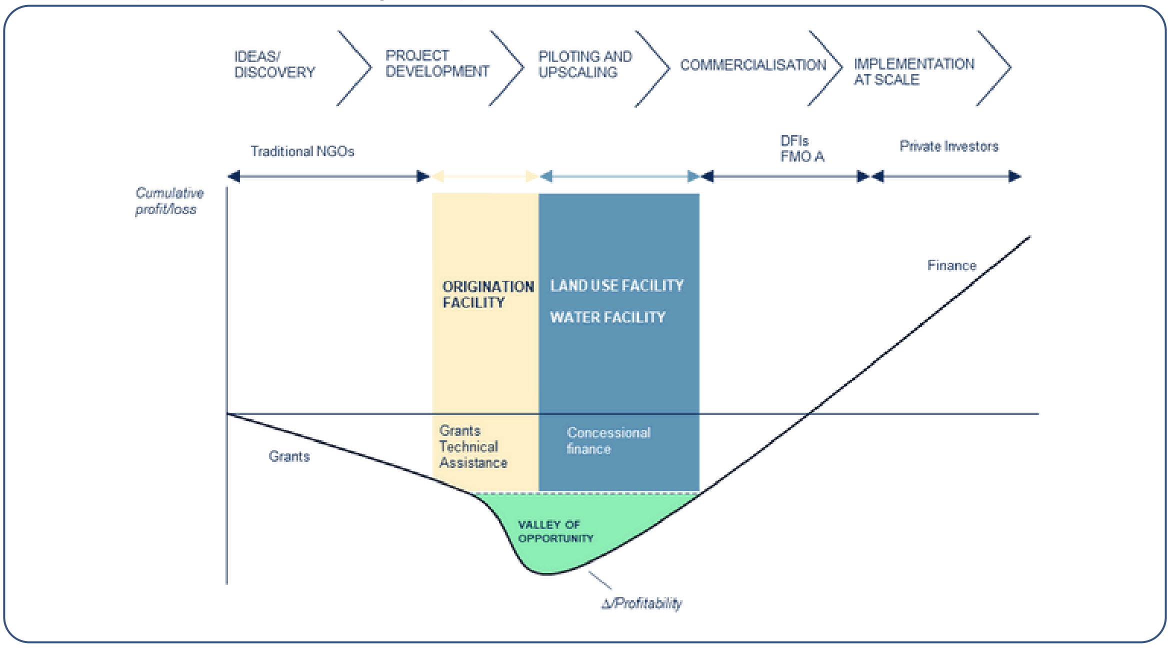


Image 3: The project and finance life cycle. The DFCD's facilities fill a gap for businesses to scale.

Project experience

Table 2: Project examples of funding leverage and investment mobilisation.

Project	Country	Catalytic grants	Leverage
BRILHO	Mozambique	€44.2 million	Over £39.6M in private co-investment
DFCD	23 countries	€70 million	€273.5M mobilised and de-risked in investment capital by OF; entire consortium expected to mobilise €2B in private investments by 2037
IAP	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Zambia	€20 million	€44.7M mobilised in financing
EEP Africa *	17 countries in Southern and East Africa	€10 million	€17.3M investment leveraged in 2024
CRAFT	Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda	€40 million	US$10M private sector investments and US$2M additional financing mobilised
2SCALE	10 countries in West, East, and North Africa	€18.8 million	Expected to mobilise €93M in additional finance

* EEP Africa is hosted and managed by the Nordic Development Fund (NDF)

BRILHO | Mozambique | 2019-ongoing | UKAID and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) | €44.2 million in grants → £39.6 million mobilised in private funding

BRILHO is catalysing Mozambique's off-grid energy market to provide clean and affordable energy solutions to the country's off-grid population. Our overall goal is to improve energy access for households and businesses, leading to cost savings, better well-being, and greater livelihood opportunities for the low-income population. By offering selected companies a unique mix of structured non-reimbursable funding and specialised support, BRILHO de-risks business initiatives that are working to achieve competitive commercial returns and provide off-grid energy solutions to low-income markets.

Impact:

- 350,000 connections made to facilitate access to energy
- 2,401 jobs created
- 3 million people who have gained energy access through solar systems and improved cooking solutions

Dutch Fund for Climate and Development (DFCD) | Countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America | 2019–ongoing | Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) | €70 million in grants and €370 million in investment facilities, including €105 million in guarantee funding by the European Commission → over €273.5 million mobilised and de-risked in investment capital, expected to mobilise €2 billion in private investments by 2037

The DFCD invests in projects enabling climate adaptation, biodiversity preservation, and food security. The DFCD, with an overall fund size of €440 million, was established to increase the resilience of communities and ecosystems that are most vulnerable to climate change. Managed by a pioneering consortium of the Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank (FMO), SNV, the World-Wide Fund for Nature Netherlands (WWF-NL), and Climate Fund Managers (CFM), the DFCD identifies and supports eligible projects to become 'bankable', to increase their potential to receive large-scale funding from the Land Use Facility, Water Facility, or third-party investors. The DFCD's Origination Facility, delivered by SNV and WWF-NL, plays a critical role in preparing businesses for longer-term debt or equity investment. To date, the DFCD has supported more than 50 origination projects across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, mobilising and de-risking €273.5 million in investment capital. By 2037, the investments available for the DFCD investment facilities are expected to have leveraged €2 billion in private investments.

Impact:

- 5 million tCO2e less greenhouse gas emissions per year
- 16 million people benefiting from more climate-resilient livelihoods
- 120,000 hectares of farmland managed sustainably

EEP Africa | 17 countries in Southern and East Africa | 2022–ongoing | Austria, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, NDF, Norway and Switzerland | Since 2018: €51 million committed --> €105 million leveraged

The Energy and Environment Partnership Trust Fund (EEP Africa), hosted and managed by the Nordic Development Fund (NDF), has invested over €50 million in almost 300 pioneering projects in Southern and East Africa. The objective of the fund is to enhance clean energy access, development, and investment, in particular to benefit vulnerable and underserved groups. EEP Africa focuses on three interrelated activities: (1) financing for early-stage, innovative, and locally driven clean energy projects; (2) business development services investment facilitation; and (3) knowledge, learning, and partnerships. Financing is provided through annual competitive calls for proposals and requires co-financing. SNV is the lead organisation for implementation support services across all EEP Africa activities.

Impact in 2024:

- 53 active projects
- €2.9 million disbursements made to 37 companies
- 614 tCO_2e of greenhouse gas emissions reduced or avoided

Investment Climate Reform (ICR) Facility | 77 countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific | 2019–ongoing | €22.75 million in grants

The Investment Climate Reform (ICR) Facility is building an enabling business environment in African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries by supporting public institutions to improve their policies, regulations, and services, including access to finance. The ICR Facility is co-funded by the European Union (EU), the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), together with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the British Council (BC). Implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), British Council, Expertise France, and SNV, the ICR Facility empowers private sector organisations to actively engage in policy discussions and enhance their efficiency. The ICR Facility is working to ensure that these reforms and policies reach and benefit women in the economy, promote equal rights, access to opportunities and green, sustainable growth for all.

Impact:

- 35 business reform programmes have been initiated or implemented
- 65 projects supported in more than 60 ACP countries
- 21 private-public dialogue processes strengthened
- 61 development finance institutions have benefitted from capacity building since 2020

2SCALE | 10 countries in West, East, and North Africa | 2019–ongoing | €18.8 million in grants → expected to mobilise €93 million in additional finance to 345,000 smallholder farmers, 8,200 micro-entrepreneurs, and 450 SMEs

2SCALE offers a range of support services to private partners—small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and farmer groups—enabling them to produce, transform, and supply quality food products for local, national, and regional end-user markets. As an incubator programme, 2SCALE manages a portfolio of public-private partnerships (PPPs) for inclusive business in agri-food sectors and industries, aiming to increase the inclusion of smallholder farmers, women, and youth across businesses.

Impact:

- 1.9 million consumers accessed affordable nutritious products
- €93 million in additional financing for 345,000 smallholder farmers, 8,200 micro-entrepreneurs, 450 SMEs
- 1.1 million smallholder farmers improved agricultural productivity and market access
- 52,500 new value-chain jobs created, including 25,000 women

Innovations Against Poverty (IAP) | Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Zambia | 2017–ongoing | €20 million in grants → €44.7 million mobilised in financing

Innovations Against Poverty (IAP) challenges the private sector to develop products, services, and business models that can contribute to the fight against poverty and catalyse inclusive growth. This specialised fund supports companies to innovate in order to raise people out of poverty while also delivering commercial benefits for the private sector. We provide companies with tailor-made advisory services, including mentorship from impact investors, thus helping them to design and roll out their inclusive business ideas.

Impact:

- 2.2 million people with improved access to basic goods and services
- 17,100 people who have gained new or improved income-generating opportunities
- 694,000 people benefiting from cost savings and higher incomes by using products and services developed
- €20 million in increased sales revenue for IAP-supported companies

Climate Resilient Agribusiness for Tomorrow (CRAFT) | Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda | 2018–2025 | Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) | €40 million in grants → €10 million mobilised in private sector investments and €2 million mobilised in additional financing

The CRAFT project has been implemented in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda to address the growing threats of climate change, including erratic rainfall, droughts, and rising temperatures, on agriculture and food security.

Focusing on smallholder farmers dependent on rain-fed systems, it promoted climate-smart agriculture (CSA) to build resilience, increase productivity, and strengthen agribusiness value chains. Through market-driven approaches, CRAFT supported 300,000 farmers, 80 agri-SMEs, and cooperatives to adopt CSA technologies, enhance business performance through climate investments, and create an enabling environment for large-scale CSA adoption.

Impact:

- 291,000 farmers trained and 243,000 adopted CSA practices
- Crop productivity increased by up to 80% and profitability by up to 80%
- 205,000 farmers reported higher incomes and 220,000 improved climate resilience
- 57 agribusinesses achieved turnover growth between 10% and 45%

Highlighted investment cases

Camimex | Vietnam | US$15 million investment secured | Mangroves & Markets (MAM) → DFCD

Camimex is a leading seafood exporter in Vietnam and was the country's first organic shrimp producer. The company has built a vertically integrated supply chain and strong export presence. However, scaling its climate-resilient and biodiversity-positive practices across its supply chain required meeting rigorous international standards and overcoming investor perceptions of high risk in Vietnam's aquaculture sector.

The MAM projects, implemented by SNV and International Union for Conversation of Nature (IUCN) and funded by the German Environment Ministry's International Climate Initiative, ran in two phases between 2012 and 2020. They demonstrated the viability of integrated mangrove–shrimp farming in Vietnam's Mekong Delta, restoring mangroves while improving smallholder livelihoods and resilience.

Impressed by these results, Camimex sought SNV's support to replicate the model. Through the DFCD Origination Facility, SNV has provided targeted technical assistance and grant support to improve Camimex's internal control systems, conduct biodiversity and gender assessments, and secure organic certification across production zones. Camimex went on to secure a US$15 million senior loan from FMO, scaling operations and deepening its impact.

Expected impact:

- 10,500 new hectares of wetland under sustainable management
- 12,000 individuals benefitted
- Enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem services

Solar Green Energy (SOGE) | Cambodia | US$13 million proposal in progress | CHAIN, IAP → DFCD

SOGE is Cambodia's leading provider of solar-powered irrigation systems, delivering off-grid water solutions to smallholder farmers. Despite a strong product-market fit and demand, the company faced challenges in assessing the feasibility of new irrigation sites, navigating water regulations, and mobilising capital for expansion.

SNV initially supported SOGE through Innovations Against Poverty (IAP), helping the company conduct feasibility assessments, strengthen ESG practices, and engage gender/climate considerations. This de-risking laid the groundwork for a US$490,000 DFCD grant and TA package, which further supported site development, business case refinement, and investment preparation. SOGE is now seeking a US$13 million investment to expand its solar irrigation services across five provinces.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Expected impact:

- 18,250 hectares of farmland supported with solar irrigation
- 10,800+ smallholder households with improved access to water and year-round farming
- 8,000+ tonnes of CO_2 avoided per year through diesel replacement

SokoFresh | Kenya | US$500K equity and €750K convertible debt | EEP → DFCD

SokoFresh is a Kenyan agritech social enterprise offering mobile, solar-powered cold storage solutions, and digital market linkage services for smallholder farmers. The business addresses post-harvest losses and poor market access, especially in remote and underserved regions. However, its early-stage model required validation and de-risking before it could attract commercial investment.

Early support through EEP Africa helped SokoFresh test its cold-chain model and address operational gaps. SNV then supported the company under DFCD, providing TA in financial modelling, impact measurement, and commercial viability testing. With this sequenced support, SokoFresh secured an investment from Acumen Fund and is now scaling across multiple counties.

Expected impact:

- 44,000 smallholder programme participants
- 48,422 tonnes of CO_2 equivalent green house gas emissions avoided annually
- Increased farmer incomes through reduced spoilage and improved market price
- Demonstrated gender and youth inclusion through tailored onboarding

East Africa Foods | Tanzania | US$2.5 million investment secured | CRAFT → DFCD

East Africa Foods is a fast-growing food distribution company improving market access for smallholder farmers and nutritious food availability in urban centres.

The company received early TA through the CRAFT programme, which helped improve operational resilience, sourcing systems, and business strategy. SNV then engaged East Africa Foods through DFCD's Origination Facility to provide tailored support for expansion planning and ESG alignment. EA Foods has secured €2.5 million in equity funding from FMO Ventures.

Expected impact:

- 645,000 tonnes of CO_2 emissions avoided over five years
- Sustainable practices adopted across 25,000 farms by 2026
- Improved incomes and livelihoods for smallholder farmers, with a focus on marginalised groups

Investment opportunities: Illustrative examples

Table 3: Project examples of funding leverage and investment mobilisation

Company code name	Nature of business	Country	Investment need
Climate-resilient seed company	Propagating and processing climate-resilient seed	Zambia	US$11M senior unsecured loan
Cocoa company	Building resilience among farmers dependent on cocoa farming	Nigeria	US$15M senior unsecured loan
Climate-resilient seed company	Enhancement of smallholder farmers' producer model in Northern and Eastern Uganda for resilient and increased production of cereals, legumes, and oil seeds	Uganda	US$10M senior unsecured loan
Dairy company	Raising milk quality and farmer resilience	Kenya	US$4.5M senior unsecured loan
Mango company	Install and scale up puree line for mango, reduce food waste, and improve farmer incomes	Cambodia	US$5-7M senior unsecured loan
Solar irrigation company	Solar irrigation for resilient rice	Cambodia	US$13M private equity
Fruit company	Switching farmers from rice to fruit in highly climate-vulnerable region of the Mekong Delta.	Vietnam	US$5M senior unsecured loan
Milk company	Project school milk. Private equity funding for milk expansion in Indonesia. Development of sustainable independent farmer model and hub and spoke anchor. Famous brand expanding local production.	Indonesia	US$40M private equity

Calling for deepened collaboration along an impact capital continuum

	Development organisations	Private investors and DFIs	Donors and governments
Sourcing	Provision of TA and Market Systems Development Due diligence and validate assumptions of business propositions Mapping the aggregated pipeline and collecting high-level information for investors Organisation of key stakeholder convenings to facilitate pipeline sharing	Share investment criteria Blended and concessional finance instruments Share portfolio investments ready for the next stage of financing or pipeline opportunities for which co-funding is sought	Provide and enable technical assistance and grants to improve investment readiness Joint steering towards investment readiness Develop sectoral and thematic country investment platforms and portals, accessible to investors
Investing	Facilitate introductions between interested capital providers and with broader ecosystem players	Explore co-funding and co-investment opportunities	Provide catalytic and de-risking capital to enable investments

Image 4: Enabling grant monies to be more catalytic through better sharing of private sector engagement, TA, and investment origination.

Across our programmes, SNV has a growing portfolio of private sector partners – most notably, but not exclusively, small and medium enterprises – ripe for investment on the back of extensive due diligence, provisioning of technical assistance, relationship strengthening and the building of market linkages, and the development of bankable propositions. Dozens of other primarily grant-funded and grant-mobilising development actors are doing the same, furthering viable but often disconnected pipelines of investment-ready businesses.

Through the **coordinated sharing of these pipelines** and insights more systematically across institutions, sectors and geographies – by, for example, the establishment of **investment opportunity portals** within country platform structures – and the development of tools that better enable grant financing to be priced into investments, we can collectively **reduce the cost and risk of investment**, enabling grant-financing to be deployed both more efficiently and more catalytically. Such investment opportunity portals, and the information and data they contain, could be governed through a structure that aligns with **country and locally-led principles** through the enabling of access and visibility from across diverse stakeholders (such as a citizens assembly approach).

This, in turn, will enable precious **ODA monies to be more appropriately targeted**; towards the catalytic mobilisation of ongoing investment along an **impact capital continuum**, or directed towards addressing immediate humanitarian needs without the expectation or intention of catalysing additional investment. The opportunity is substantial, the crisis in ODA declines severe; what is needed now is greater collaboration and smarter, **more intentional capital deployment** across the impact continuum.

SNV is a global development partner deeply rooted in the African and Asian countries where we operate. With 60 years of experience and a team of approximately 1,600 people, we strengthen capacities and catalyse partnerships that transform agri-food, energy and water systems. Working on the core themes of gender equality and social inclusion, climate adaptation and mitigation, and strong institutions and effective governance, we tailor our approaches to different contexts to achieve large-scale impact and create sustainable and more equitable lives for all.

Impact that matters