

Request for Proposals

Scaling Climate-Smart Agriculture: Environmental, Social & Commercial Feasibility Study for Cold-Chain Infrastructure Expansion in West Africa

Version 3.11.205

This document serves to provide an overview of the underlying project relevant to the Subnational Climate Fund (SCF), context on data availability and goals of the mandate, as well as an estimated scope of work requested from the consultant. Final details of the mandate should be covered by the subsequent proposal submitted by the consultant.

1. The Subnational Climate Fund

The SCF is a blended finance impact fund formed to pursue attractive risk-adjusted returns for private investors while generating measurable and certified environmental and social impacts. The Fund is focused exclusively on pursuing investments in mid-size climate infrastructure with nature-based solutions in various developing countries across Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, the Mediterranean, and Asia. The Fund is managed by Pegasus Capital Advisors, a commercial Private Equity impact fund manager and further benefits from a separate, grant-funded Technical Assistance facility managed by The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and implemented by Catalytic, IUCN, and Gold Standard.

2. Context of the Potential Study Agreement

The beneficiary is a West Africa-based agritech enterprise founded in 2017 that operates a comprehensive digital platform connecting smallholder and commercial farmers with global buyers. With operations primarily in **Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal**, the company provides through an end-to-end system:

- Agronomic support and precision farming tools
- Access to quality inputs and international markets
- Digital traceability and compliance systems
- Support to meet export standards and secure premium pricing

Current Scale & Impact:

- Engaging over 12,000 farmers
- Managing cultivation across tens of thousands of acres
- Achieving a 90% adoption rate of data-driven cultivation protocols
- Exporting to Asia and Europe
- Enabling farmers to earn substantially above national income averages

Technology Suite:

- Farmer and Buyer Applications for production management and real-time monitoring
- Agent Application for field support to smallholder groups
- Vendor Marketplace linking farmers to input suppliers
- Embedded Finance Solutions including digital wallets and input loans

Proposed Infrastructure Expansion

The company's expansion strategy centers on developing regional fulfillment centers and cold-chain infrastructure to enhance aggregation, quality control, and storage of high-value perishable crops including pineapple, mango, ginger, and chili. These facilities will:

- Strengthen export readiness and market access

- Reduce post-harvest losses (currently achieving up to 75% reduction)
- Improve value capture for smallholder farmers
- Integrate cold storage capacity from 2025 onward
- Serve as hubs for cleaning, packaging, quality certification, and logistics coordination

Development Impact Rationale

Agriculture employs approximately 70% of sub-Saharan Africa's population but faces chronic challenges: limited access to finance, fragmented markets, significant post-harvest losses, and weak logistics infrastructure that constrain smallholder productivity and incomes.

Demonstrated Impact:

- 156% increase in farmer profits
- 18–22% yield improvements
- Up to 75% reduction in food spoilage
- Enhanced adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices
- Improved income stability, resilience, and food security

To support the next phase of growth, the SCF is commissioning a comprehensive feasibility assessment to ensure the infrastructure expansion aligns with sustainability best practices, safeguards local communities, and maximizes positive climate and social outcomes.

3. Scope of Work

The consultant is expected to deliver two assessments, focusing on **Environmental, Social, and Impact** and on **Technical and Commercial Feasibility**.

IMPORTANT: MODULAR BIDDING ENCOURAGED

This RFP covers multiple distinct components. Consultants are explicitly encouraged to bid on individual components based on their specific expertise rather than the full scope. SCF/Catalytic may award:

- A single contract for the complete scope, OR
- Multiple contracts to different consultants for different components

Partial-scope proposals will receive equal consideration to full-scope proposals.

Assessment 1: Environmental, Social, and Impact Study

Item A – Environmental and Social Study

Conduct a comprehensive assessment identifying potential environmental and social risks and impacts arising from the project, including:

- Legacy issues of business partners and stakeholders
- Operational requirements and site-specific risks
- Labor conditions and supply chain risks
- Preliminary supply chain assessment covering sourcing, transportation, and disposal
- Compliance with international ESG standards

Methodology:

- Review existing documents, policies, and procedures (desk research and stakeholder interviews)
- Conduct site inspections at current operations and proposed expansion sites

- Apply IFC Environmental and Social Performance Standards (2012)
- Reference IFC General EHS Guidelines and sector-specific guidelines (as applicable)
- Follow international best practices for cold-chain and agricultural infrastructure

Scope: The study should assess both current operations and potential expansion scenarios, with particular attention to:

- Energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions
- Water use and wastewater management
- Waste generation and management practices
- Biodiversity and ecosystem impacts
- Community health, safety, and security
- Labor and working conditions
- Land acquisition and involuntary resettlement (if applicable)
- Indigenous peoples and cultural heritage (if applicable)
- Stakeholder engagement and grievance mechanisms

Item B – Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESAP)

Based on the ES Study findings, develop a detailed ESAP to address identified risks and impacts, including:

- Clear mitigation measures with assigned responsibilities
- Implementation timeline and resource requirements
- Monitoring and reporting protocols
- Key performance indicators for tracking progress
- Capacity building and training needs
- Budget estimates for implementation

The ESAP must be practical, implementable, and formatted to enable effective monitoring and verification.

Item C – Preliminary Impact Assessment

Identify and quantify potential beneficial impacts of the project, including:

- **Climate Impact:** Conduct a simplified Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) estimating primary GHG emissions (Scope 1, 2, and key Scope 3 categories where feasible within budget)
- **Social Impact:** Quantify employment creation, income improvements, gender inclusion, and community benefits
- **Environmental Co-benefits:** Assess water efficiency, waste reduction, and ecosystem preservation
- **Food Security:** Evaluate contributions to local and regional food systems

Develop associated impact KPIs and monitoring requirements aligned with SCF reporting frameworks and international standards (e.g., IRIS+ metrics, SDG indicators).

Assessment 2: Technical and Commercial Feasibility Study

Objective: Evaluate the market, operational, and financial feasibility of the fulfillment and cold-chain expansion, identifying commercial, risk, and liquidity conditions required for sustainable growth.

Component A – Market and Demand Feasibility

- Assess buyer demand by crop type and export destination
- Document buyer specifications, quality standards, and pricing structures

- Analyze delivery windows, penalties for non-delivery, and contract terms
- Evaluate historical "trial-to-repeat" conversion rates with new buyers
- Build lane-level margin sensitivity models incorporating:
 - Farm gate price fluctuations
 - Logistics and transportation costs
 - Foreign exchange (FX) movements
 - Seasonal demand variations

Component B – Contract and Commodity Risk Assessment

- Review contract protections including deposits, letters of credit, dispute resolution mechanisms, price floors/caps, and pass-through provisions
- Evaluate the company's ability to decline uneconomic deals
- Assess buyer diversification and concentration risk
- Analyze duration and extent of commodity price exposure
- Map pathway to data-driven pricing based on verified production-cost curves and buyer acceptance rates
- Recommend risk mitigation strategies (hedging, insurance, contract structuring)

Component C – Operational Feasibility

- Compare in-house development versus outsourcing of fulfillment and cold-storage infrastructure
- Assess throughput capacity requirements and scalability
- Evaluate power reliability, backup systems, and energy efficiency measures
- Analyze corridor alignment and logistics optimization
- Estimate site-level breakeven utilization rates
- Calculate payback periods under various scenarios
- Identify operational risks and mitigation measures

Component D – Financial Feasibility

- Model the complete cash conversion cycle from farmer payment to customer receipt
- Determine working capital requirements and seasonal financing needs
- Test financial improvements from:
 - Indexed pricing mechanisms
 - Customer deposits and advance payments
 - Trade credit insurance
 - Clear FX hedging policies
- Conduct stress testing for missed contracts, price shocks, and currency fluctuations
- Identify working capital facilities, covenant structures, and banking relationships needed for safe operation
- Assess financial sustainability and scalability

Component E – Integrated Impact Valuation

- Quantify the cost-benefit of environmental and social improvements (energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, gender inclusion)
- Incorporate ESG improvements into the financial model
- Analyze effects on profitability, payback periods, and long-term resilience
- Assess performance under commodity price volatility and currency swings
- Recommend integration of impact metrics into business operations and reporting

4. **Deliverables**

The consultant shall provide the following deliverables:

1. **Brief Inception Note** (Day 5)
 - Concise work plan and methodology (maximum 5 pages)
 - Confirmation of document access
 - Stakeholder engagement schedule
 - Site visit itinerary
2. **Draft Environmental and Social Study & ESAP** (Week 2 - Day 14)
 - Comprehensive ES risk assessment
 - Proposed Environmental and Social Action Plan
 - Key findings and recommendations
3. **Draft Technical and Commercial Feasibility Study** (Week 3 - Day 21)
 - Market, operational, and financial analysis
 - Risk assessment and mitigation recommendations
 - Financial models and sensitivity analyses (Excel format)
4. **Draft Preliminary Impact Assessment** (Week 3 - Day 21)
 - GHG emissions estimates and simplified LCA findings
 - Social and economic impact quantification
 - Impact KPIs and monitoring framework
5. **Final Integrated Report** (Week 4 - Day 28)
 - All components revised based on feedback
 - Executive summary suitable for board presentation (maximum 5 pages)
 - Implementation roadmap with priorities and timeline

5. **Requirements**

Applicants should demonstrate in their proposal that their project team meets the following qualifications:

Note: The qualification requirements below apply to the overall team capability. For partial-scope proposals, consultants need only demonstrate expertise relevant to their proposed component(s).

Technical Expertise

- **Environmental and Social Safeguards:** Minimum 7 years' experience conducting ES Due Diligence and developing ESAPs aligned with IFC Performance Standards, Equator Principles, or similar international frameworks
- **Agricultural Value Chains:** Proven expertise in agribusiness, cold-chain logistics, and post-harvest infrastructure in developing countries
- **Financial Modeling:** Strong capability in financial feasibility analysis, working capital modeling, and commodity risk assessment
- **Impact Assessment:** Experience with GHG accounting, Life Cycle Assessment, and impact measurement frameworks (IRIS+, GRESB, GRI, etc.)

Geographic and Sectoral Experience

- **West Africa Experience:** Demonstrated experience working in Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, or neighboring West African countries, with understanding of local agricultural markets, regulatory environment, and cultural context
- **Agritech and Smallholder Agriculture:** Track record of projects involving smallholder farmer integration, digital agriculture platforms, or inclusive business models
- **Cold-Chain Infrastructure:** Experience assessing or implementing cold storage, pack houses, or perishable logistics projects

Team Composition

- **Team Leader:** Senior professional with 10+ years in feasibility studies for agricultural infrastructure or impact investments
- **ES Specialist:** Professional with IFC PS certification or equivalent, experienced in agricultural operations
- **Financial Analyst:** Expert in financial modeling for agribusiness or infrastructure projects
- **Impact Specialist:** Professional experienced in climate and social impact measurement
- **Regional Experts:** West Africa-based or regionally based professionals with knowledge of local contexts in Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, and/or Senegal

Language Requirements

- Fluency in English (written and spoken) is required
- Fluency in French (written and spoken) is required given operations in francophone countries
- Knowledge of local languages is advantageous

Independence and Objectivity

- Consultants must confirm no conflicts of interest with the beneficiary company, SCF, or related parties
- Must demonstrate ability to provide independent, objective analysis

6. Indicative Timeline

Work is expected to commence immediately after the consultant is appointed. **The assignment must be completed within 4 weeks (maximum 1 month) after signing the service contract.** This accelerated timeline requires a highly responsive team with immediate availability and the ability to deploy resources quickly.

Activity / Deliverable	Indicative timeline
Contract Signing & Virtual Kick-off Meeting	Day 1-2
Establish communication channels, confirm expedited project schedule, review document availability	
Document Review & Stakeholder Mapping	Days 1-5
Brief Inception Note submitted to Catalytic (email format acceptable)	End of Day 5
Site Visits & Field Assessments	Days 6-10
Concurrent site visits to multiple locations to maximize efficiency	
Stakeholder Consultations & Interviews	Days 6-12
Remote and in-person consultations conducted in parallel with site visits	
Draft ES Study & ESAP submitted	End of Week 2 (Day 14)
Draft Technical & Commercial Feasibility Study submitted	End of Week 3 (Day 21)
Draft Impact Assessment submitted	End of Week 3 (Day 21)

Feedback Period	Days 22-24
Rapid turnaround feedback from Catalytic and SCF	
Final Integrated Report submitted	End of Week 4 (Day 28)
All components integrated with revisions based on feedback	

Critical Success Factors for Compressed Timeline:

- Team must have **immediate availability** and dedicate full-time resources
- **In-country presence** or ability to deploy to West Africa (Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal) within 48 hours of contract signing
- Established networks for rapid stakeholder access
- Pre-existing templates and methodologies that can be quickly adapted
- Ability to conduct parallel workstreams (ES assessment, financial modeling, impact assessment)
- Strong project management and coordination capabilities
- Digital collaboration tools for real-time team coordination

Note: Given the compressed timeline, consultants should clearly indicate in their proposal how they will manage this accelerated schedule, including team availability, proposed site visit logistics, and risk mitigation for potential delays. Proposals should demonstrate previous experience delivering quality work under tight deadlines.

7. Proposal Requirements

Please prepare a brief proposal for the performance of this work, including the scope of work, project team and qualifications, and estimated costs. Please prepare a comprehensive proposal (maximum 20 pages excluding CVs and annexes) including:

1) Technical Approach & Scope of Work (4-6 pages)

- **Concise methodology** for each component tailored to 4-week timeline
- Proposed site visits, locations, and duration
- List of key documents to be reviewed
- Streamlined stakeholder engagement approach (remote + in-person)
- Quality assurance processes adapted for rapid delivery
- **Timeline management strategy** – how you will deliver quality work in 4 weeks
- Risk mitigation strategies for compressed schedule
- Optional tasks or value-added services (if any)

2) Project Team & Qualifications (3-5 pages)

- Organizational overview and relevant experience
- Team structure with clear roles and responsibilities
- CV summaries for key personnel (full CVs in annex, maximum 3 pages each)
- Relevant project examples similar to this assignment (2-3 case studies)
- Specific experience in Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, or West Africa
- References from previous clients (minimum 3)

3) Work Plan & Timeline (1-2 pages)

- **Detailed Gantt chart** showing parallel workstreams for 4-week delivery
- **Team availability confirmation** – specify % time allocation per team member
- Resource allocation by task
- Key milestones and deliverable dates

- Quality control checkpoints
- **Contingency plans** for potential delays in this compressed timeline

4) Financial Proposal (2-3 pages)

Provide a total not-to-exceed cost estimate in **US Dollars** for your proposed scope, with detailed breakdown by component. If bidding on partial scope, clearly indicate which components are included and price each separately to facilitate modular contracting:

Proposed Scope [Specify: Complete Scope / Assessment 1 / Assessment 2 / Specific Components: _____]				
Cost Category	Description	Unit	Rate (USD)	Total (USD)
Direct Labor Costs				
Team Leader	Number of days × daily rate			
ES Specialist	Number of days × daily rate			
Financial Analyst	Number of days × daily rate			
Impact Specialist	Number of days × daily rate			
Local Expert	Number of days × daily rate			
Subtotal Direct Labor				
Direct Costs				
Site visits (transport, accommodation)*				
Stakeholder workshops				
Other (specify)				
Subtotal Direct Costs				
TOTAL PROJECT COST				

Notes:

- International and domestic travel costs will be reimbursed separately by SCF based on actual expenses incurred, subject to prior approval and SCF travel policy. These should NOT be included in the consultancy fee.
- Per diems are not an eligible expense under our travel policy.
- Catalytic is exempt from VAT; proposals should NOT include VAT.
- Payment currency: USD (specify if you require protection against currency fluctuation)

5) Contract Terms & Payment Schedule

The contract will be based on Catalytic's standard terms of engagement, with a fixed lump-sum consultancy fee in US Dollars. Given the compressed 4-week timeline, an expedited payment schedule is proposed:

- 30% advance payment upon contract signature (to enable immediate mobilization)
- 40% upon delivery and approval of draft reports (Deliverables 2, 3, 4 - Week 2-3)
- 30% upon delivery and approval of final integrated report (Deliverable 5 - Week 4)

Consultants may propose alternative payment structures in their proposal if needed to support rapid mobilization.

6) Declarations

Please include:

a) Conflict of Interest Declaration Confirm that your organization and team members have no conflicts of interest with the beneficiary company, SCF, Catalytic, IUCN, Pegasus Capital Advisors, or related parties, and can provide an adequate, accurate, and objective review.

b) KYC Documentation (for shortlisted candidates only)

- Extract from commercial registry
- Passport copies for key personnel
- Professional certifications or licenses (as applicable)

c) Data Protection & Confidentiality Acknowledgment that all information received during the assignment is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without prior written consent.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following weighted criteria:

Criteria	Weight
Technical Quality – Methodology, approach, and understanding of assignment	35%
Team Qualifications – Expertise, experience, and track record	30%
Relevant Experience – Similar assignments and West Africa experience	20%
Financial Proposal – Value for money and budget reasonableness	15%

Minimum technical score of 70% is required to be considered for contract award.

8. Submission

Deadline: Please submit your proposal by **15 November 2025, 23:59 GMT**

Submission Email: project@catalyticfinance.org

Subject Line: "RFP – West Africa Agritech Feasibility Study – [Your Organization Name]"

Required Format:

- Single PDF file containing complete proposal
- File naming: "Proposal_[OrganizationName]_WestAfrica_Agritech_2025.pdf"
- Maximum file size: 15 MB

Submission Contents:

1. Technical and Financial Proposal (as outlined in Section 7)
2. Signed cover letter on organization letterhead
3. Conflict of Interest Declaration (signed)
4. Full CVs for all key team members (annex)

Questions and Clarifications

Proposed Scope Declaration: Clearly state in your cover letter and executive summary which component(s) you are proposing to deliver - If proposing partial scope, explain your coordination approach with potential other consultants.

Questions: Questions regarding this RFP should be submitted in writing to project@catalyticfinance.org by **4 November 2025**. Responses will be shared with all potential bidders to ensure fairness.

Contact Person

Ole Ohlhoff

Grant Officer

Catalytic Finance Foundation

Email: project@catalyticfinance.org