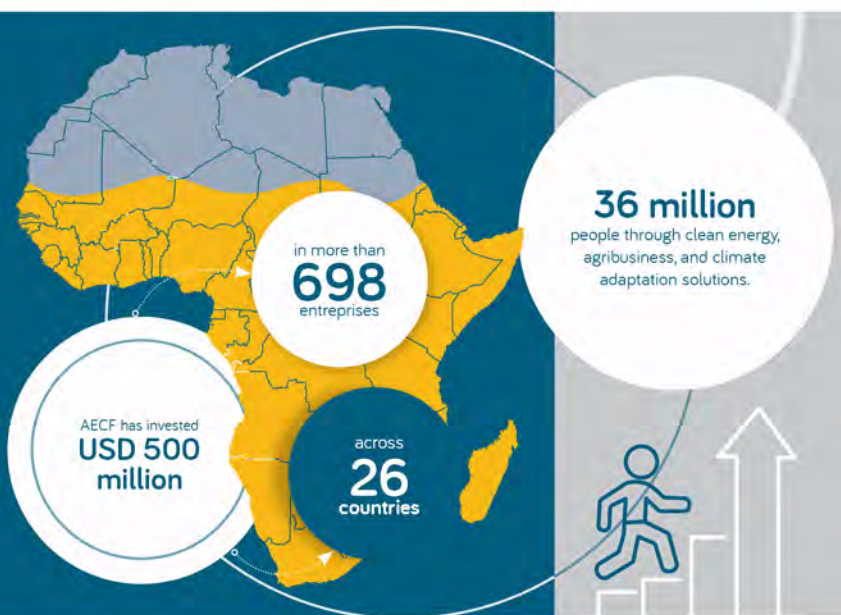




PROGRAM BRIEF

Women ADAPT - Catalyzing Women-Focused Climate-Smart Investments through Climate Adaptation Technologies and Climate Resilience Services



About AECF

The Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF) is a leading development finance organization that supports innovative private-sector companies to drive inclusive growth across Africa.

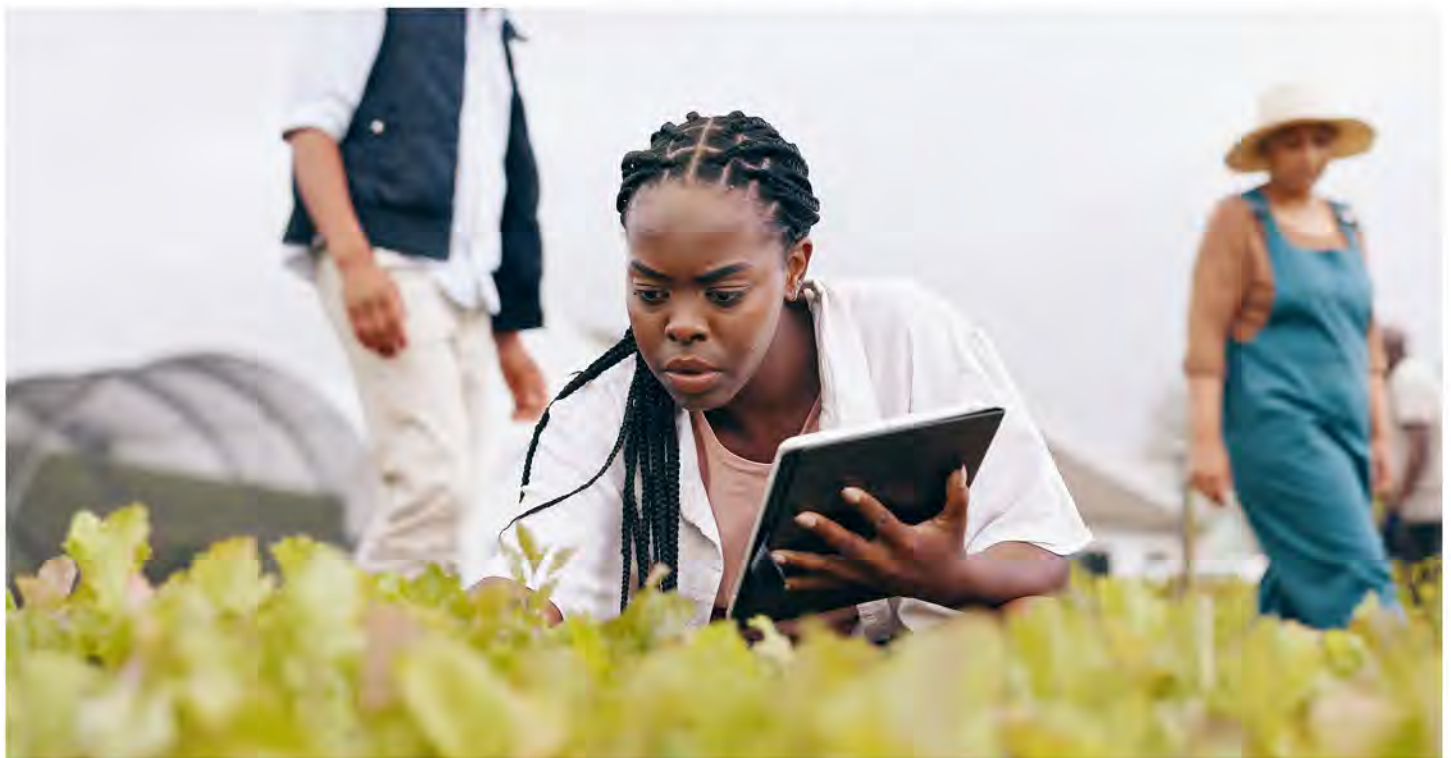
Since 2008, AECF has invested over USD 500 million in more than 698 enterprises across 26 countries, unlocking markets and improving the lives of over 36 million people through clean energy, agribusiness, and climate adaptation solutions.

Program Overview

Women ADAPT is a 2-year program funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and implemented by AECF in Benin and Burkina Faso. The program aims to strengthen the climate resilience of women-led enterprises, cooperatives, microfinance institutions, and smallholder farmers operating in agricultural value chains.

The program responds to persistent gender gaps that limit women's participation in rural agricultural economies, including unequal access to finance, climate-smart technologies, advisory services, climate information, markets, and decision-making spaces.

Women ADAPT builds on the Investing in Women's Entrepreneurship for a Greener Economy in Benin and Burkina Faso (IIW B&BF), a six-year, CAD 16 million program funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and implemented by AECF. By leveraging IIW's established partnerships with women-owned businesses, cooperatives, smallholder farmers, and financial institutions, as well as AECF's existing pipeline and delivery systems, Women ADAPT will accelerate the deployment of practical climate adaptation solutions for women-led businesses and rural communities facing increasing climate risks.



Program Details

Focus Areas :	Climate Adaptation Technologies and Climate Resilience Services; Women's Economic Empowerment	
Duration :	2 Years (August 2026 – August 2028)	
Countries :	Benin and Burkina Faso	
Budget :	USD 1,228,539	
Funding Partner :	Global Environment Facility (GEF)	
GEF Agency	UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)	
Implementing Agency :	Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF)	

Program Objectives

Women ADAPT aims to strengthen the climate resilience of women-led enterprises and smallholder farmers in agricultural value chains by improving access to climate-smart technologies, tailored financial services, climate information, and market linkages, thereby enabling them to adapt to climate risks, improve livelihoods, and contribute to sustainable economic development.

The programme will focus on four main objectives:



Improve access by women-led MSMEs and smallholder farmers to digital platforms providing climate information, technologies, and market linkages.



Strengthen knowledge, financial access, and adoption of climate-smart agriculture by women-led MSMEs, cooperatives, and smallholder farmers.



Support MFIs, cooperatives, and women-led MSMEs to adopt climate risk management frameworks and improve climate-resilient service delivery.



Track, document, and share program learning, results, good practices, and adaptation knowledge across stakeholders and platforms.

Program Approach

The programme will deploy an integrated, locally anchored adaptation approach structured around three mutually reinforcing pathways:



ACCESS PATHWAY

Improve women's access to climate-smart technologies, services, finance, and markets through digital solutions, targeted subsidies, and tailored financial products.



CAPACITY AND AGENCY PATHWAY

Strengthen the resilience, skills, and agency of women-led MSMEs and cooperatives through gender-responsive training in climate-smart agriculture, financial literacy, and participatory learning.



INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE PATHWAY

Reinforce the institutional capacity of key local actors, including MFIs, cooperatives, and enterprises, to assess climate risks and integrate adaptation considerations into their business models, products, and service delivery.

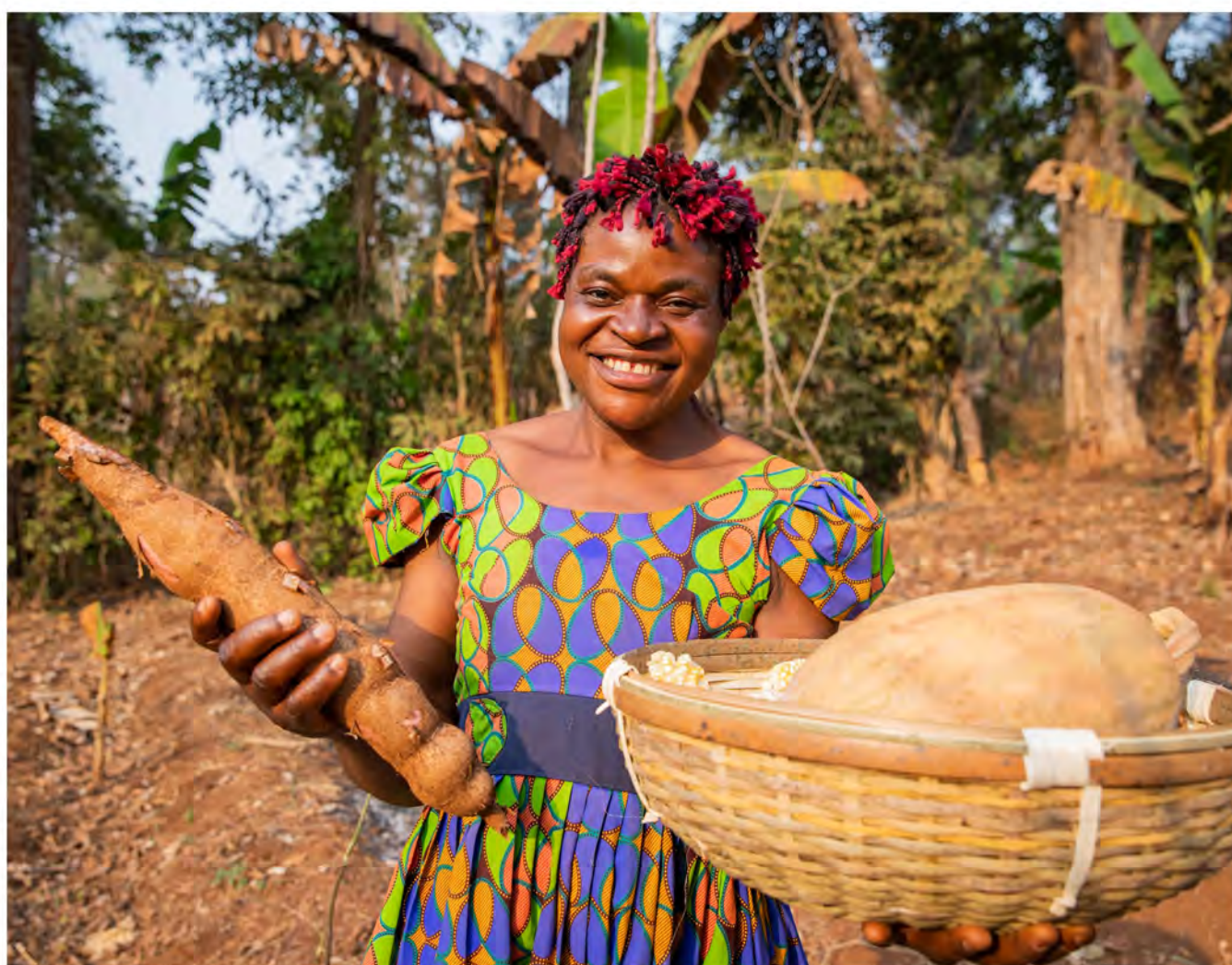


Core Activities

● Digital Access to Climate Information and Markets

Women ADAPT will support the deployment of digital platforms to improve access to climate information for women-led MSMEs and smallholder farmers. The platforms will provide women-led MSMEs and smallholder farmers with access to climate-smart agriculture tools, real-time weather and seasonal forecasts, early warning information, and market intelligence tailored to their crops, locations, and business needs.

The program will also strengthen digital literacy by training participating MSMEs and women farmers to use these platforms effectively to make informed, climate-smart decisions.



● Capacity Strengthening and Knowledge Generation

Women ADAPT will strengthen the technical and business capacities of women entrepreneurs and key ecosystem actors through practical training on climate-smart agriculture, financial literacy, and climate-resilient business planning.

The programme will also generate and disseminate knowledge products that capture lessons, good practices, and evidence from implementation to support wider adoption of climate adaptation approaches across the agricultural sector.

● Targeted Climate-Smart Agriculture Support

The programme will provide targeted financial support to women-led MSMEs and cooperatives to accelerate the adoption of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies and practices. This support will help address upfront investment barriers while promoting practical adaptation solutions that improve productivity, strengthen resilience, and reduce climate-related risks.

Supported investments may include:



Efficient irrigation systems, including drip irrigation and solar pumps



Drought-resistant seed varieties and climate-resilient cropping systems



Modular post-harvest storage solutions



Solar-powered cold chains or drying equipment



Soil fertility enhancement and organic composting systems



Agroforestry or integrated farming systems



Early warning system devices or weather monitoring kits.

Climate Risk Management for MFIs, Cooperatives, and MSMEs

Women ADAPT will strengthen the capacity of microfinance institutions, cooperatives, and women-led MSMEs to identify and manage climate-related risks. Using a locally adapted climate risk assessment toolkit, participating institutions will integrate climate considerations into business planning, product design, and service delivery, enabling more resilient and responsive financial and cooperative services for women entrepreneurs.



Target Beneficiaries

The programme is expected to directly reach at least 4,600 women, including women entrepreneurs and smallholder farmers. The programme will also engage women-led cooperatives, microfinance institutions, extension service providers, and other ecosystem partners to expand the reach and sustainability of climate adaptation solutions.



Expected Results



At least
4,600 women
reached directly



At least **90 hectares**
of land brought under
climate-resilient
management



4,676 people trained in
climate-resilient practices,
with a **50% female**
participation target



At least
20 women-led MSMEs
and cooperatives supported
to strengthen climate resilience.



14 MFIs and cooperatives
with climate risk management
frameworks integrated into
their operations

Delivery Approach

Women ADAPT will use competitive, transparent selection processes to identify digital platform partners and to award climate adaptation support to eligible women-led MSMEs, cooperatives, and smallholder farmers.

Priority will be given to interventions in climate-vulnerable areas that demonstrate clear adaptation benefits and comply with the programme's environmental and social safeguards.



Cross-Cutting Themes

Across all activities, Women ADAPT will integrate gender-responsive and environmentally sustainable approaches. Supported MSMEs and cooperatives will be encouraged to strengthen climate-resilient business models, create green jobs, adopt climate-smart technologies, and improve their capacity to manage environmental and climate-related risks.

Through this integrated approach, Women ADAPT will strengthen the resilience of women-led enterprises, cooperatives, financial institutions, and smallholder farmers while contributing to more inclusive and climate-resilient agricultural value chains in Benin and Burkina Faso.



West End Towers, Kanjata Road Off
Muthangari Drive / Waiyaki Way
Nairobi, Kenya
T: +254111035000
E: WomenAdaptProject@aecfafrica.org

www.aecfafrica.org