

GENDER-SMART ACCELERATOR CHALLENGE



ClimBeR: Building Systemic Resilience Against Climate Variability and Extremes



Gender-Smart Accelerator Challenge Activity Report Activity Report

December 2022



CGIAR
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INITIATIVE ON
Climate Resilience

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About ClimBeR

The CGIAR Initiative on Climate Resilience, also known as ClimBeR, aims to transform the climate adaptation capacity of food and agricultural systems in low- and middle-income countries. Its goal is to tackle vulnerability to climate change at its roots and support countries as they adapt and build equitable and sustainable futures.

About AICCRA

Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) is a project that helps deliver a climate-smart African future driven by science and innovation in agriculture. It is led by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT and supported by a grant from the International Development Association of the World Bank.

Table of Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	4
1. BACKGROUND.....	5
INTRODUCTION	5
CONTEXT ANALYSIS	5
WHY A GENDER-SMART ACCELERATOR CHALLENGE?.....	6
2. ACTIVITY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	6
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS.....	7
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	7
SELECTION CRITERIA.....	9
SELECTION PROCESS.....	10
3. THE GENDER-SMART ACCELERATOR CHALLENGE COHORT	10
PRESENTATION OF THE FINALISTS.....	10
LAUNCH CEREMONY.....	13
PRE-COACHING NEEDS ASSESSMENT	14
4. THE ACCELERATOR CURRICULUM	15
PROGRAM CONTENT	15
<i>Masterclasses.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Coaching sessions</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Climate Change, Climate Smart-Agriculture, Climate information Services</i>	<i>16</i>
TIMELINE.....	16
ATTENDANCE	16
NETWORKING.....	16
EVALUATION	17
5. NEXT STEPS.....	17
PITCH DAY	17
6. CONCLUSIONS	18
7. ANNEXES	19
ANNEX 1: REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS.....	19
.....	20
.....	21
ANNEX 2: SOCIAL MEDIA FLYER	23
ANNEX 3: BROCHURE FOR LAUNCH DAY	24

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADEPME	Agence de Développement et d'Encadrement des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises
Agri-SMEs	Small and Medium Agricultural Enterprises
AICCRA	Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa
Alliance	The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT
ANCAR	Agence nationale de conseil agricole et rural
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
CERAAS	Centre d'études régional pour l'amélioration de l'adaptation à la sécheresse
ClimBeR	CGIAR Initiative on Climate Resilience
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DERFJ	Délégation Générale à l'Entrepreneuriat Rapide des Femmes et des Jeunes
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
FGI	Finance Gestion Intermédiation (Senegal)
GIIN	Global Impact Investing Network
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
I&P	Investisseurs et Partenaires
RFA	Request for applications
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WIC	Women's Investment Club

1. Background

Introduction

The Gender-Smart Accelerator is a challenge that has been launched as part of the project Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA), supported by the World Bank in partnership with the CGIAR Initiative on Climate Resilience, also known as ClimBer. It is dedicated to women entrepreneurs and small and medium agricultural enterprises (agri-SMEs) with a strong gender component that will contribute to scaling climate-smart business models through gender-smart investment in Senegal.

Context analysis

Gender inequality has been estimated to cost sub-Saharan Africa an estimated US\$95 billion each year in lost revenues. For the most part, these costs are because women in the region do not live or operate under the optimal conditions needed to reach their full economic potential.

In Senegal in particular, women's entrepreneurship still represents a vast untapped source of job creation and economic growth, with only 31.3% of Senegalese entrepreneurs being women¹, who generally operate on a small scale or in the informal economy. This is a situation that hinders their ability to grow professionally and economically. 50% of SMEs created by women in Senegal are established as sole proprietorships or as Very Small Enterprises². A study conducted by the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN)³ found that Senegalese businesses are often family owned and do not transfer capital to external structures.

While women are key contributors to agri-food systems, their productivity and ability to innovate, implement, and scale climate solutions is limited due to inequitable access to inputs, information, and finance, credit and/or private capital investment. Women-owned agri-SMEs operating in Africa face a USD 15.6 billion financing gap to grow their businesses and to invest in technology and logistics to reach, service or trade with remote farmers. A World Bank report⁴ published in 2019 indicates that male-owned firms receive on average six times more capital investment than female-owned firms. These gaps are exacerbated by climate change because the same inequalities increase women's vulnerability to climate shocks and lower their adaptive capacity to climate-change challenges.

Women's ability to finance their business activities is hampered by additional constraints, due to investor gender bias, and insensitivity to gender related constraints and responsibilities of women entrepreneurs including (reproductive duties, caretaking of family members), and a perceived risk due to lack of business management skills and financial literacy. They need capacity building in business management, confidence-building approaches, and learning /tools to help them balance personal and professional life to improve their access to finance.

According to the World Bank, previous pandemics have shown that crises affect women and the businesses they lead differently, and often more negatively than they do to men. Whether employed in the formal or informal sector, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected women more severely because their businesses are smaller, they have fewer resources, and lack management training.

¹ <https://wic-capital.net/investors/?lang=en>

² Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Demographie du Senegal <https://www.ansd.sn/>

³ "The landscape for impact investing in West Africa: Understanding the current status, trends, opportunities, and challenges", Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) and Dalberg (2015)

⁴ "Profiting from parity: unlocking the potential of women's businesses in Africa", World Bank's Africa Region Gender Innovation Lab (GIL) and the Finance Competitiveness & Innovation (FCI) Global Practice (2019)

Why a gender-smart accelerator challenge?

The Gender-smart Accelerator was created to evaluate options and opportunities to facilitate the development of agricultural enterprises that are either women owned or that affect a substantial portion of women within the private sector. The accelerator approach aims to address the organizational gaps identify and strengthen the participants’ capacity in business management, financial literacy, investment readiness. The accelerator is implementing recommendations from the “Strategic roadmap on mainstreaming gender-smart investing to scale climate smart agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa”⁵ to address the constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector i.e. by designing gender responsive programs, partnering with private sector actors to structure innovative financial mechanisms and building capacity of SMEs in order to increase their access to finance.

Through the Gender-smart Accelerator Challenge, the Alliance is developing a pipeline of gender-responsive climate-smart agriculture (CSA) business models that can be matched to private investment capital in Senegal. The Alliance is promoting gender-smart investments in partnership with national, regional, and private sector actors to address development and business challenges, particularly those related to identifying and customizing packages of CSA technologies and practices that are ‘gender-smart’ and that help to promote greater inclusion of women and other marginalized social groups. Through the Gender-smart Accelerator, entrepreneurs learn to reshape their business models under climate change, by embracing innovations and sustainable production methods that help them to scale-up their businesses. They receive technical assistance for business development, investment readiness, and CSA and climate information services (CIS). At the end of the accelerator capacity building, a pitch day will be organized in which the entrepreneurs will present their projects to potential investors. Five winners will be selected and each will be awarded a de-risking grant of up to US\$ 25,000.

2. Activity design and methodology

In this section we present an overview of the Gender-smart Accelerator Challenge design and methodology. Figure 1 presents a schema of the activity. WIC Senegal was selected as to co-design and implement the accelerator through a competitive selection process.

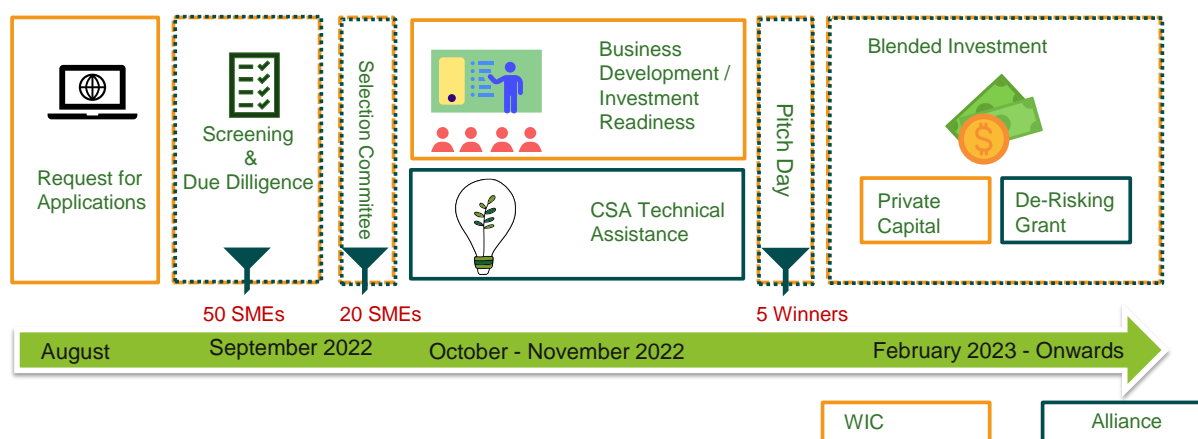


Figure 1. Gender-Smart Accelerator Challenge pathway for application, capacity building and selection

⁵ <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/117686>

Request for applications

The Gender-smart Accelerator Challenge was announced through the Women’s Investment Club (WIC) Senegal and AICCRA networks. An application form was jointly designed by the WIC and the Alliance teams and was shared together with supporting information documents on WIC’s social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter), on AICCRA’s website, and through our respective partners. Figure 2 presents an overview of the number of views and shares for each social media hosting the call.

The call for applications lasted three weeks and was published on various social media twice a week. Potential candidates could express their interest in the challenge by filling out and submitting the online application form.

Two information sessions were organized on August 9 and 16, 2022 to present the Gender-smart Accelerator Challenge in detail and address specific questions. A communication kit was sent to our partners for dissemination among their networks (see Annex 3 for the challenge call flyer). The [second information session](#) was recorded and published on WIC’s YouTube page.

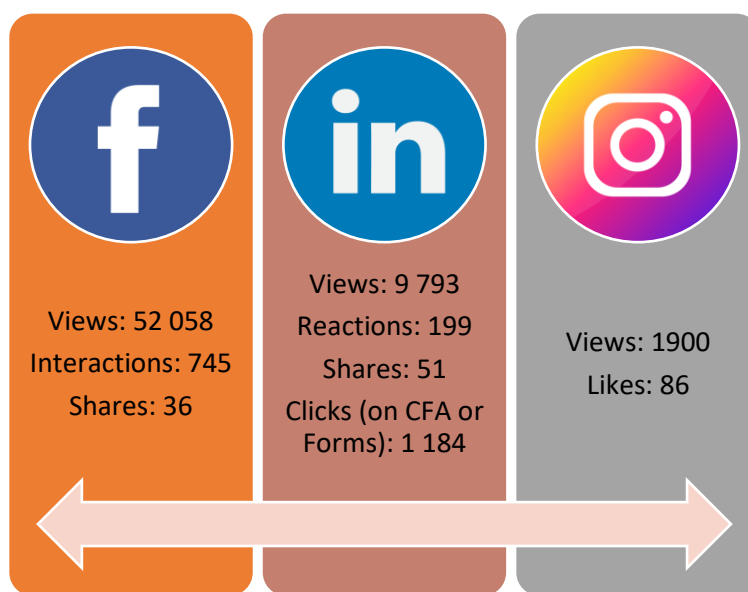


Figure 2. Overview of the social media hits for information published about the Challenge.

Applications received

In total, 240 applications were received between August 1, 2022, and August 26, 2022, within three weeks of the request for applications being published.

More than 60% of applicants were women entrepreneurs (Figure 3a). Almost 60% of the applicants were under 35 years of age (Figure 3b). The application process successfully attracted young and female entrepreneurs that are usually difficult to reach through traditional methods. This emphasizes the fact it is important to target and utilize gender- and youth-responsive approaches and partner networks for maximum impact.

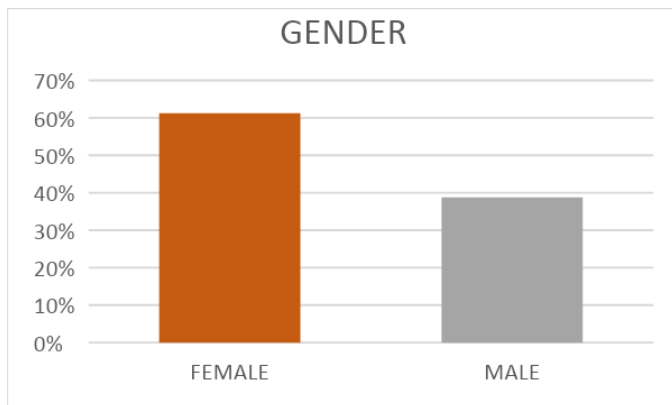


Figure 3a. Applications received by gender.

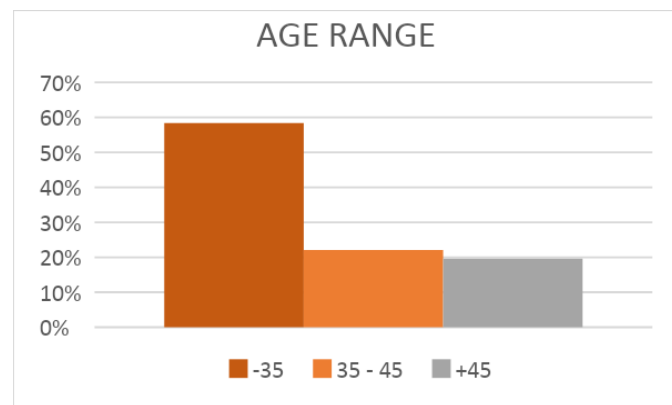


Figure 3b. Application received by age range.

Applications were received from all over Senegal, including 13% received from outside of Senegal (Figure 4). This clearly demonstrates the interest African entrepreneurs have in this kind of development project and may lead us to consider duplicating the activity across West Africa. It also emphasizes how the communication strategy used allowed the project to reach many potential participants in the region.

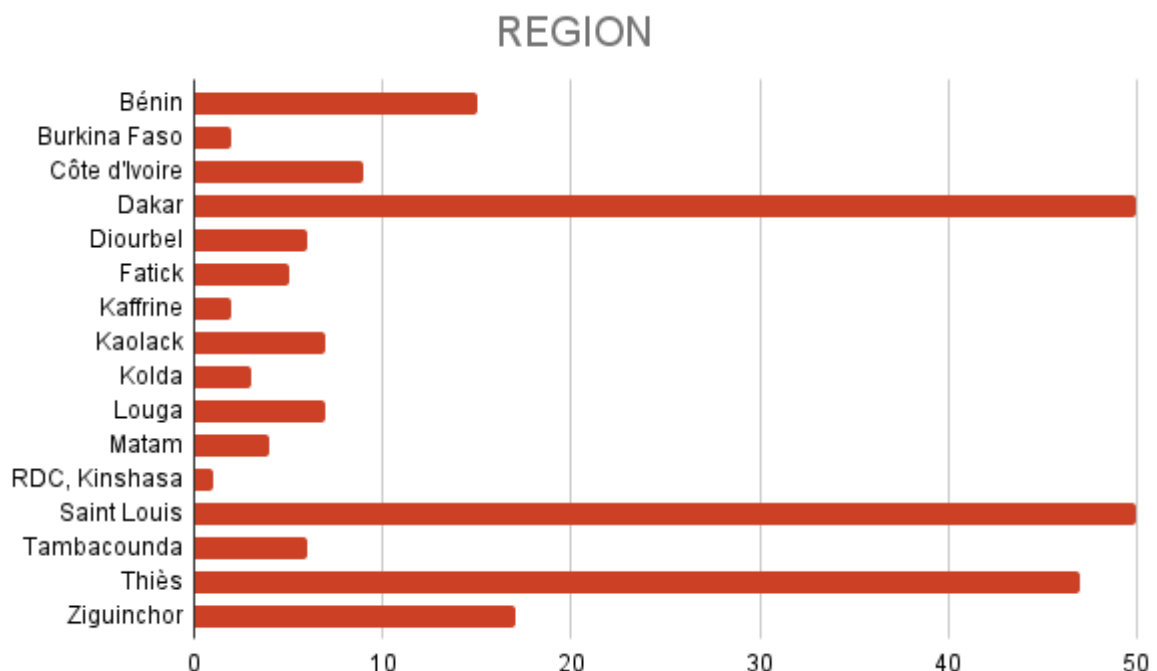


Figure 4. Regions from which the 240 applications were received

Many agricultural sectors and value chain stages were represented in the applications, with processing and horticulture leading. This can foster constructive exchanges and potential collaboration between accelerator participants as operators at different stages of the same value chains. For instance, those operating in the farm production could supply their products to those conducting the processing within the same value chain. One goal of the accelerator is to encourage interaction and pooling of resources between the entrepreneurs, by having several sectors represented.

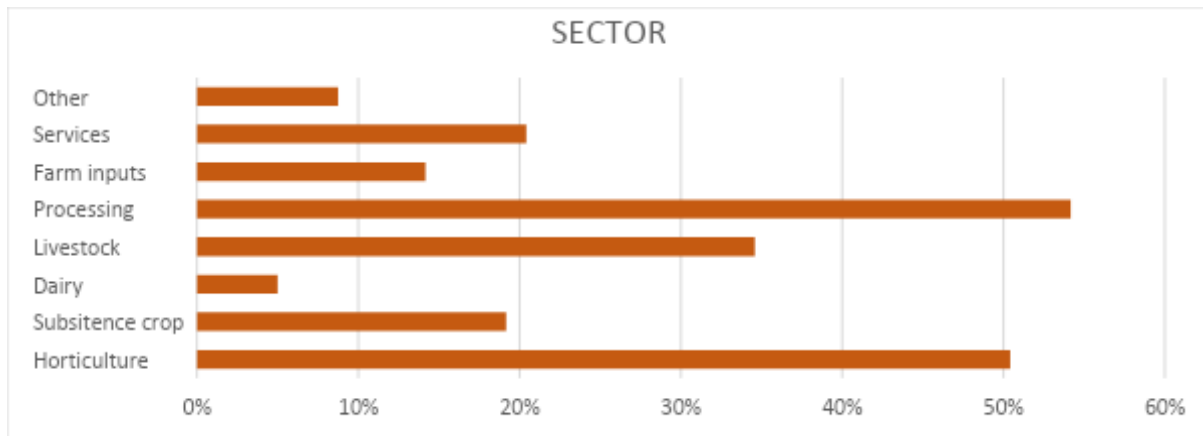


Figure 5. Agricultural sectors represented in the accelerator applications

Selection criteria

The applicants were shortlisted and pre-selected according to the following criteria specified in the RFA:

- **Business:** SME applicants are required to have been operating for a minimum of 2 years, have a concrete business model aligned with the four priority areas referenced in the project objectives, and to be seeking funding between 100K- 500K USD for follow-on capital in capital expenditure (CAPEX) or working capital.
- **Gender:** The business must have a clear gender- and social-inclusion strategy by demonstrating commitment to gender equality in at least one of the following dimensions according to the 2X Criteria⁶: *ownership, management team, workforce, and policies, within its supply chain (smallholder farmer suppliers, distributors, end clients), products, and services that benefit women.*
- **Climate:** Applicants' activities must commit to at least two of the three CSA pillars (productivity, adaptation, and mitigation).

Preference was given to the SMEs operating in the following value chains prioritized by AICCRA-Senegal: groundnut; millet/sorghum; niebe (cowpea); cattle; and dairy.

⁶ <https://www.2xchallenge.org/criteria>

Selection process

After screening and shortlisting the applications, the list was narrowed down from 240 to 50 by a panel of eight experts (Table 1). The shortlisted candidates were invited to present their project virtually to the selection panel.

Table 1. Selection panel members' names, function, and professional affiliation.

Name	Function and affiliation
Mrs. Fatou Niang	President of WIC Senegal
Mrs. Evelyne Dioh Simpa	Executive Director of WIC Capital
Mr. Pape Mady Sidibe	Investment Officer DERFJ
Mrs. Mame Diarra Bousso Gueye	Analyst ADEPME
Dr. Nadine WOROU	Coordinator AICCRA Senegal
Mrs. Marème Niang Belko	Gender Specialist CERAAS
Mr. Philippe Chabot	Alliance Bioversity International and CIAT

Mrs. Marie Ena Derenoncourt, Gender-Smart Investment Specialist (Alliance) and Mrs. Astou Dia, Secretary General (WIC) were invited as observers of the selection process.

The panel selection was conducted as follows:

- 49 applicants presented their projects to the selection panel (one candidate did not show up)
- Presentation process:
 - 5–7 minutes pitch/presentation
 - 13–15 minutes Q&A by the selection panel
- A pre-established evaluation template was provided to the panel members, who were asked to grade the candidates from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) on each key criterion.
- The final list of participants was established after deliberation and based on the ranking of average scoring.

3. The Gender-Smart Accelerator Challenge cohort

Presentation of the finalists

In total, 20 entrepreneurs were selected to join the program: 17 women and 3 men, with 45% of them aged under 35 years. (Figure 6a and 6b)

While 70% of applicants are located in Dakar or the surrounding areas, 30% are located in the rural areas (Figure 6c).

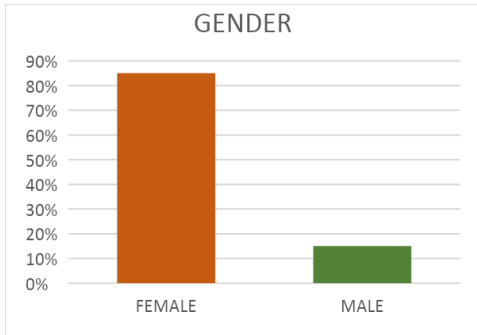


Figure 6a. Selected cohort by gender.

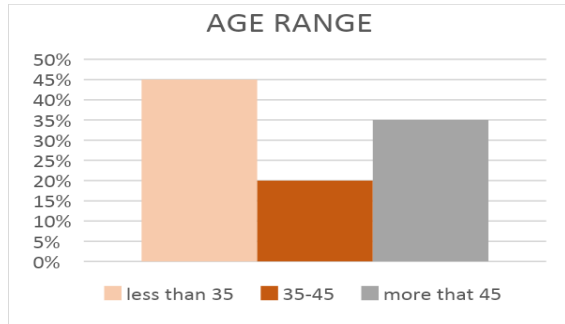


Figure 6b. Selected cohort by age.



Figure 6c. Selected cohort locations.

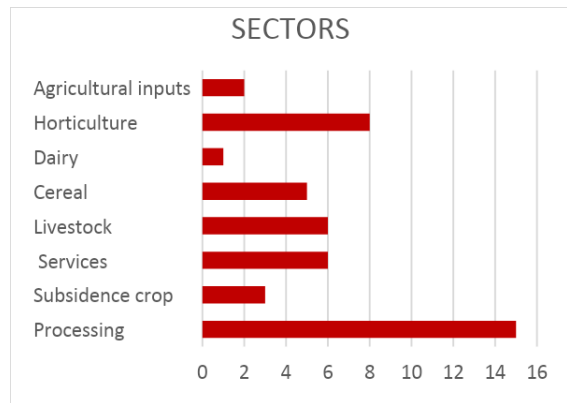


Figure 7. Agricultural sectors of the selected cohort.

While we targeted all activities related to agricultural production, many companies operating in the processing sector submitted applications (Figure 7).

To be selected, applicants had to demonstrate commercial viability. This can be observed in the turnover (Figure 8a) and in their capacity to estimate their financing needs to scale their enterprises (Figure 8b).

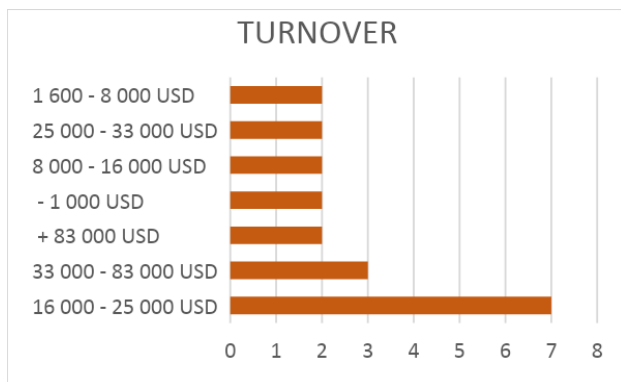


Figure 8a. Business turnover of the selected cohort.

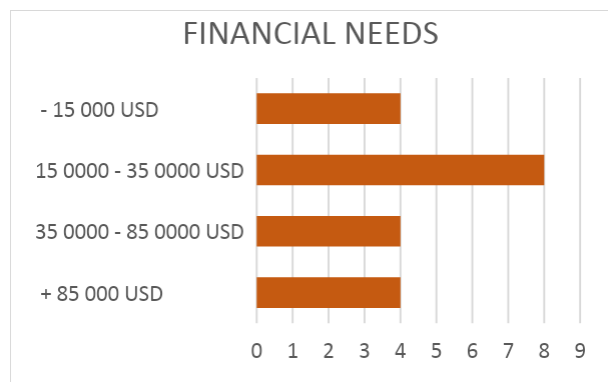





Figure 8b. Estimation of financial needs of the selected cohort.

Thirty-five percent of the selected SMEs had a turnover ranging between USD 16,000 and USD 25,000 in 2021, and 40% estimate their financial needs to be between USD15,000 and USD 35,000. Their needs align with the grant slated for the winners of the accelerator, confirming that the SMEs were

well targeted and selected. A full list of the SMEs selected, and their activities are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Accelerator participant summary table

Name of the SME	Activities	Logo
AT-TEEN GROUPE	Promotion and processing of medicinal and aromatic plants, fruits, and vegetables in herbal tea, oily macerates, and derivative products	
GIE NSAMM	Local cereal processing to produce enriched infant flour used to counter malnutrition	
CEREAL HOUSE	Local cereal processing into granola with a focus on health-conscious consumers	
DAKANE AGRO-COSMO	Zero-waste processing of fruits into food, cosmetics, and compost	
GIE DIALLO TIAMA	Poultry farming and horticulture	
GIE ALHAMDOULILLAH	Fruit and vegetable processing	
COOPÉRATIVE AGRICOLE DE PAMBAL	Aggregation and commercialization of onions	
ACASEN	Processing of local products including cereals, cashew nuts, peanuts, and potatoes	
FERME LA BARAKAH	Production of organic food and agroforestry	
GIE EXPERNA	Provides capacity building to young and women farmers of millet and fonio, processing and agroforestry	
AGA BIO	Aggregation and distribution of fruits and vegetables to supermarkets	
LA BERTHA MARKET	Commercializes local organic agricultural products and fish products	
TERRES VERTES SAHEL	Provides Capacity building to farmers and teaches building of a "school farm"	
OKO LANQ	Aggregation and B2B distribution of fruits and vegetables through an online selling platform	
PERSEE	Coaching, training, capacity building, follow up, and evaluation for women and young farmers	

FRUITY	Processing of fruits and vegetables into natural juice	
GIE CASA ECOLOGIE	Processing of fruits and vegetables	
NUTRIVIE	Production of gluten-free and vegetarian food from local ingredients	
GIE CAP ROXO	On-farm production of fruits, vegetables, and livestock	
AMRA SUARL (VET INFO GROUP)	Preventative livestock care program for farmers and animal health workers through a mobile application	

Launch ceremony

The launch ceremony of the Gender-Smart Accelerator Challenge was held in Dakar, on September 26, 2022, in the presence of project partners and other guests (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Presentations and participation at the launch ceremony, in Dakar, on September 26, 2022.

The partners present were included: the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Finance Gestion Intermédiation (FGI), Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Agence nationale de conseil agricole et rural (ANCAR), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), ECOBANK Senegal. Nineteen of the of the 20 selected entrepreneurs attended the launch, and each of them were able to briefly present their project/company.

Pre-coaching needs assessment

Before starting the capacity building component of the accelerator, a needs assessment (diagnostic) was carried out to better understand the organizational gaps and capacity building needs of the selected SMEs. This was done through a [questionnaire](#) that was jointly designed by WIC and the Alliance teams.

The questionnaire was designed according to the different areas that are important for SMEs and for the project. For the WIC team, the questions focused on three dimensions: the impact model, the business model, and the growth strategy. For the Alliance team, the focus was on the three CSA pillars (adaptation, productivity, and mitigation) and on financial and governance assessment.

WIC carried out the questionnaire with the entrepreneurs, they were conducted through on-site visits, to meet with the entrepreneurs and interview them at their workplace (Figure 10).

For most of the entrepreneurs residing in towns other than Dakar (Commune de Goudiry, Saint-Louis, Thiès, and Ziguinchor) we conducted interviews during their stay in Dakar for the launch ceremony. For those we were unable to visit or to interview during the launch, we conducted interviews online via Google Meet.

The diagnostics identified the organizational gaps and informed the curriculum of the accelerator training modules. Most of the companies lack the required documentation for due diligence by potential investors and set internal processes for financial management. There is a strong overall need to hire and strengthen capacity of human resources. Companies also need to define their growth plan and establish their business models for sustainable scaling.



Figure 10. Needs assessment interviews conducted with the business entrepreneurs.

4. The accelerator curriculum

Program content

The Gender-Smart Accelerator curriculum offers several modules, alternating between masterclasses and individual coaching, online, and in-person classes, as presented in Table 3). The program's multiple training modules are built to meet the participants' needs and provides 16 hours of one-on-one coaching with experts, 8 masterclasses, 9 hours of webinars, and 2 networking events.

Masterclasses

The masterclasses were held in person providing participants with the opportunity to work on individual and group exercises. The following table represents the topics that were addressed during the masterclasses.

Table 3. The Gender-Smart Accelerator curriculum

	Masterclass Module	Description/Relevance
1	Business Model Canva	Understand what a business model is; identify the nine key elements of a business model to know how to develop innovative business models or transform current ones
2	Finance and Accounting	Understand concepts related to accounting; read and understand financial statements,
3	Legal	Provide a general overview of the Senegalese legal context for SMEs; Understand the different regulations applicable to companies depending on their legal status; Inform entrepreneurs about the steps to formalize their business
4	Human Resources	Review the fundamentals of Human Resources Management and acquire knowledge on specific concepts such as recruitment, onboarding, performance evaluation management...
5	Communication, Digital, Marketing	Learn about communication objectives and tools and know how to implement a digital marketing strategy
6	Market Sizing	Understand fundamental market concepts, market definition and market data analysis.
7	Growth Strategy	Master the fundamentals of a growth strategy and understand the process of implementing a business growth project.
8	Customer Segmentation	Understand how to segment and target your market and position your product.
9	Storage and Supply Chain	Develop an understanding of the basic concepts and role of logistics and supply chain management in business
10	Private Equity, Scale, Exit	Understand the process of equity investment, what is expected from the entrepreneurs and the investors. Negotiate with the investors and understand the term sheets

In addition, the participants have been able to attend two webinars one on the subject of "Fundraising" and the second one was about "Operational Excellence".

Coaching sessions

The coaching sessions were held online individually with each entrepreneur to discuss the company's specific challenges in a particular topic. This format allowed the entrepreneur to identify the root causes of their challenges and enabled them to explore solutions with the coaches' sharing tools and resources to implement these solutions.

Climate Change, Climate Smart-Agriculture, Climate information Services

CGIAR scientists provided capacity building to the accelerator participants through capacity building workshops. The goal of these workshops was to

- reinforce the basic understanding of climate change, climate variability within the context of Senegal
- understand the impact of climate change on the value chains and the business activities of the accelerator participants
- provide an overview of climate-smart agriculture practices relevant to the participants value chain activities
- introduce participants to climate information services available in Senegal
- analyze participants needs as well as existing adaptation strategies
- define potential adaptation options for the companies

Participants left the workshop with an action plan for implementation of relevant CSA and CIS for their companies

Timeline

A [detailed accelerator chronogram](#) was established and shared with the coaching experts to facilitate coordinating the sessions with the entrepreneurs.

Attendance

The average attendance rate 75% for the masterclasses and the coaching sessions. The main reasons for absences are generally health issues, schedule change, unavailability, or technical issues.

Once a month, the entrepreneurs met for a 2 or 3 days bootcamp, where they could attend the sessions in person. These physical meetings created a collaborative environment where participants developed strong bonds and could share their experiences and brainstorm on specific subjects. Additionally, they attended an average of 1 master class per week and 1 one-on-one coaching session per week.

Networking

Entrepreneurs had several opportunities to attend networking events, which enabled them to meet other entrepreneurs and ecosystem actors. As a networking event we can mention the launch ceremony and the bootcamps, but also other events such as the Women's Investment Forum, the D-hub speed dating or the World Bank Public Forum to which the cohort was invited, to help them expand their network and talk about their businesses with potential partners or investors.

Evaluation

A satisfaction survey was conducted at the end of each masterclass. The satisfaction rate is more than 75% for the masterclasses. The survey assessed the following aspects:

- Quality of the masterclass: how satisfied were the entrepreneurs with the course.
- Training materials: appreciation of materials used, such as PowerPoint presentation, shared documentation, etc.;
- Duration/Length of the class; was the class too long or rather way too short;
- Usefulness for activities: how the acquired knowledge will be useful in their daily activities.
- Coach appreciation: was the coach available and attentive? Were the explanations clear and the language appropriate and accessible?

5. Next steps

Pitch day

Once the Gender-Smart Challenge curriculum has been completed, the entrepreneurs will present their projects to a selection committee during the pitch day, followed by a closing cocktail at the end of the second day. The selection committee will nominate the SMEs that will be awarded the de-risking grant, and they will receive post-accelerator program support.

The selection committee will be composed of potential investors, in addition to members of the Alliance and WIC teams. This will provide the entrepreneurs with an opportunity to pitch their projects to private Senegalese ecosystem investors and may help them secure additional financing. We have conducted a preliminary mapping of the potential investors and their relevance to the program, to be invited to attend the pitch. These are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Mapping of potential Senegalese private sector investors/partners

Name of Structure	Rationale	Focus on gender/climate
WIC Capital	WIC Capital is an investment fund launched by WIC Senegal, providing access to modern and adapted financial instruments for economic development.	WIC Capital invests in companies founded and led by women or owned at least at 50% by a woman or with a management team with a majority of women.
Délégation Générale à l'Entreprenariat Rapide des Femmes et des Jeunes (DER/FJ)	DERFJ is a structure attached to the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic of Senegal that facilitates access to financing for entrepreneurs, to enable them to start an income-generating activity or consolidate an existing one.	DERFJ was put in place to fully involve women and young people in the development of the national economy.
Teranga Capital	Teranga Capital is an investment fund that provides innovative financing and support solutions specifically designed to meet the needs of SMEs in Senegal and Gambia	Teranga Capital promotes corporate, social, and environmental responsibility and is committed to the development of opportunities of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors.

Investisseurs et Partenaires (I&P)	I&P is a pioneering impact investing group in Africa that promotes responsible African SMEs, with high local added value and capable of developing a profitable and sustainable activity.	I&P is committed to evaluating and reducing their environmental footprint. As such they have set themselves as a priority objective the carbon neutrality of their offices. To achieve this, they offset incompressible emissions by financing carbon projects, in partnership with Aera-Group.
Agence de Développement et d'Encadrement des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (ADEPME)	ADEPME is an agency that assists and supervises SMEs as well as micro-enterprises by providing them with support, advice, studies and monitoring, training and thematic workshops, problem solving and networking.	ADEPME is the operational arm of the Senegalese State for the promotion of SMEs and contributes to the expansion of the entrepreneurial ecosystem with the support of national and international partners.
ECOBANK Senegal	Ecobank is supporting SMEs and MidCaps by providing access to an invaluable source of finance available on favorable terms. Ecobank is committed to providing a range of initiatives that support the growth and success of Africa's SMEs and create employment opportunities.	Ecobank's Ellevate program is designed for women-owned or women-led businesses, businesses with a high proportion of women on the board or among employees, and businesses manufacturing products for women.
La Banque Agricole	La Banque Agricole's mandate is to finance and support agriculture; they distribute credit to promote economic activities in rural, urban and peri-urban areas.	To try and lessen the destruction caused by climate change, the bank created three funds to support farmers during climate emergencies, along with the government. The bank is also accredited at the Green Climate Fund, a global initiative to support the environment.

6. Conclusions

The agricultural sector in Senegal is evolving and, in the face of climate change, there is a need to take into consideration and alleviate the direct impact of agricultural-related activities on climate. The Gender-Smart Accelerator Challenge's is already showing early signs of impact through the SMEs' participation in the program and its activities. The Gender-Smart accelerator is providing value chain actors with access to climate information systems and encouraging them to use climate-smart technologies and, from an economic perspective, is also teaching them how to scale-up their businesses while adapting to climate variability.

7. Annexes

Annex 1: Request for applications

GENDER-SMART ACCELERATOR CHALLENGE



OVERVIEW




AICCRA-Senegal is launching a gender smart accelerator challenge and a post-accelerator program, dedicated to women entrepreneurs, that will contribute to scaling climate smart business models through gender-smart Investing in Senegal.

This program challenges entrepreneurs to rethink their business models the face of climate change, by embracing innovations and sustainable production methods, thus contributing to the Objectives of the Plan Sénégal Emergent 2019-2023.

By integrating gender dimensions in the accelerator, selection and investment process, this program provides a blueprint to financial actors to highlight opportunities in the agricultural sector, identify risks, and achieve greater financial, social and environmental outcomes.

OBJECTIVES

The Gender-Smart Accelerator Challenge aims to:

	Develop a pipeline of gender responsive Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) business models in Senegal
	Support women-led SMEs through a 4-month business development, investment readiness and climate smart agriculture technical assistance, coaching and mentoring program
	Provide de-risking grants of up \$25,000 to women agri-entrepreneurs to scale climate smart business models while facilitating matchmaking with private investors for follow-on capital

PRIORITY AREAS

Applicants business models need to be aligned with at least one of the key priority areas:



Sustainable intensification of production through access to finance, inputs, and CSA advisory



Value addition, efficient processing through reduction of post-harvest losses, and compliance with food safety standards



Improvement of market linkages through the promotion of sustainable and inclusive retail food brands



Uptake of CIS & CSA practices (such as index-based insurance) of smallholder farmers.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS & WINNERS

1 **Technical assistance for business development and investment readiness, CSA and CIS**

Through this program, each entrepreneur will be supported by business experts to enhance their business development and investment readiness. The multiple training modules are built to meet their specific needs including 16 hours of one-on-one coaching with experts, 8 masterclasses, 9 hours of webinars, and 2 networking events.

2 **CSA technical assistance**

Trainings and workshops on CSA basic concepts, climate information services and CSA/CIS bundling will be delivered by CGIAR Scientists and local partners. Follow up training will be tailored depending on SMEs' needs and area of focus (e.g. drought resistant seeds).

3 **De-risking grant**

Following the conclusion of the accelerator program and pitch day, the winners will be awarded a de-risking grant of up to US\$ 25,000 distributed according to the proposed scaling plan. This grant will be matched by private capital from private investors.

4 **Access to public and private investors**

Through networking events, oversight and mentoring from selection committee members entrepreneurs will gain direct access to financial decision makers.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted via the application form before **August 26th, 2022, 11:59pm GMT**

For any information please contact:
contact@wicsenegal.com

WHO CAN APPLY



For-profit business with at least two years of existence and experience, legally able to perform work in the country with documented evidence, such as appropriate visas, licenses, permits, etc. Non-government, consultancy and non-profit entities will not be considered.



Applicants must demonstrate **commercial viability and commitment** to the priority areas proposed in the application.



A clear gender and social inclusion strategy within the business model one at least one of the gender dimensions: (ownership, management team, workforce and policies, supply chain, and products or services that benefit women).



Experience working in Senegal, including with producers and other market actors, development partners, non-governmental organizations and government agencies and organizations.

Prior experience working with the World Bank, CGIAR or CGIAR research centers is not required. However, if the applicant has received donor funding in the past or has a proposal pending, details and purpose of such funding should be noted in the application. Failure to disclose this information will result in disqualification.

CHRONOGRAM



Call for application

August 22



Selection



Diagnostic

September 22



Program launching

Sept 22 - Dec 23



Laureates announcement



Post acceleration program

Jan - March 23

ABOUT WIC SENEGAL



WIC Senegal was created in 2016, to give women privileged access to innovative financial instruments, and to achieve inclusive economic development. Its objectives are to **(1) create innovative financial mechanisms for women, (2) promote female leadership and entrepreneurship, and (3) empower African women to fully participate in the economy.**



In 2019, WIC Capital was created. It's a hybrid of a syndicate fund and a traditional venture capital fund, which focuses on early-stage capital investment. WIC CAPITAL is an open-ended investment vehicle of USD 20 million that was incorporated as a simplified joint stock company



In 2020, WIC Académie was launched, a personalized technical assistance and coaching structure perfectly adapted to women entrepreneurs. Gender-based eligibility criteria (business led or founded by a woman), social impact and value chain strengthening are aligned with those of WIC Capital.

WIC Académie is endowed with rich and diversified experiences acquired through the execution of similar missions in Senegal in the past two years. We have developed a solid expertise in accompanying entrepreneurs in various sectors through our incubation and investment readiness programs.

WIC Académie will be implementing the accelerator challenge and WIC Capital will assist in delivering 2 months follow up program to the winners (post acceleration).

For more information, visit our website: www.wicsenegal.com





Gender-Smart Accelerator Challenge

APPEL A CANDIDATURES



- 1 Le **Gender-Smart Accelerator Challenge** est un programme d'accélération dédié aux entreprises **agricoles** au sens large dirigées par des **femmes** ou ayant une **forte composante genre**.
- 2 Toutes les entreprises agricoles peuvent déposer leur candidature, une préférence est portée aux **cultures céréalières, à l'élevage, à la filière laitière et aux cultures maraichères**.
- 3 Les entrepreneures sélectionnées bénéficieront d'un **programme d'accompagnement** et d'une **assistance technique sur mesure** pendant **3 mois** autour des thèmes suivants : **préparation à l'investissement, développement commercial, suivi et évaluation de l'impact, agriculture intelligente face au climat**. A l'issu du programme, les entreprises sont éligibles à un financement allant jusqu'à **15 millions FCFA**
- 4 La candidature se fait en remplissant et soumettant le **formulaire en ligne**. Pour toute question ou information, envoyer un mail à **contact@wicsenegal.com**

Déposez votre candidature à travers le lien
Date Limite : le 26 Aout 2022 à 23h59 GMT



Annex 3: Brochure for launch day



GENDER-SMART ACCELERATOR CHALLENGE



PRESENTATION

AICCRA-Sénégal lance un programme d'accélération et de post accélération, avec une forte composante genre, à destination des femmes entrepreneures. Le programme contribuera à faire passer à l'échelle des modèles d'affaires climato-intelligents, grâce à des investissements avec une approche de genre au Sénégal.

Ce projet encourage les entrepreneures à repenser leur modèle d'affaire face au changement climatique, en développant des méthodes de productions innovantes et durables, en contribuant ainsi aux objectifs du plan Emergent 2019-2023.

En intégrant la dimension genre dans la sélection, l'accélération et le processus d'investissement, ce projet souhaite mettre en lumière les opportunités du secteur agricole, identifier les risques, et générer un réel impact financier, social et environnemental.

LES OBJECTIFS



Développer un pipeline d'entreprise "gender sensitive" dans le domaine de l'agriculture climato-intelligente au Sénégal.



Accompagner les entreprises à travers un programme de 4 mois sur le développement de leurs activités, la préparation à l'investissement, l'assistance technique sur l'agriculture climato-intelligente, le coaching,...



Proposer des subventions d'un montant de \$25 000 aux agro entrepreneurs pour leur permettre de passer à l'échelle et faciliter la mise en relation avec les investisseurs privés.

LES OPPORTUNITES

Assistance technique pour le développement des activités, préparation à l'investissement
Les bénéficiaires seront accompagnés par des experts, pour améliorer le développement de leur activité et les préparer à l'investissement. Les modules de formations sont élaborés pour répondre à leurs besoins spécifiques, à travers 16h de coaching personnalisé, 8 master classes, 9h de webinaires et 2 événements de réseautage.

Assistance Technique sur la notion de "Climato-Intelligence"
Les formations et ateliers sur les pratiques agricoles intelligentes face au climat et sur les services d'information climatiques seront dispensés par les experts de CGIAR et les partenaires locaux. Le suivi des activités sera adapté en fonction des besoins d'accompagnement de chaque PME (ex: semences résistantes à la sécheresse).

Subventions à taux zéro
Au terme du programme et après les pitchs finaux, les lauréats recevront une subvention pouvant aller jusqu'à 25 000 USD, qui sera attribuée en fonction des plans de passage à l'échelle qui seront proposés. La subvention sera accompagnée de capitaux privés, venant d'investisseurs privés.

Mise en relation avec les investisseurs publics et privés
Grâce aux événements de réseautage et au mentorat, les entrepreneurs auront un accès direct aux bailleurs de fonds.

LES PARTENAIRES DU GSAC



Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) est un projet qui contribue à la réalisation d'un avenir africain respectueux du climat rendu possible par la science et l'innovation dans l'agriculture. AICCRA est soutenu par une subvention de l'Association Internationale du Développement (IDA) de la Banque Mondiale.



ClimBeR est une initiative du CGIAR qui a pour objectif d'accroître à terme, la capacité des systèmes de production des petits exploitants à résister aux effets graves du changement climatique.



WIC Sénégal a été créé en 2016 pour donner aux femmes un accès privilégié aux instruments financiers et atteindre un développement économique inclusif. Les objectifs sont (1) de créer des mécanismes financiers innovants pour les femmes, (2) faire la promotion de l'entrepreneuriat et du leadership des femmes, (3) accompagner l'autonomisation des femmes Africaines pour leur permettre de participer pleinement à l'économie. WIC Académie bénéficie une solide expertise dans l'accompagnement des entrepreneures issues de divers secteurs.

www.wicsenegal.com