



## Background

Building a sustainable and resilient agri-food system begins with recognizing the pivotal role of smallholder farmers in feeding the world and addressing the challenges they face. One of the most significant barriers is the limited financial, technical, and organizational capacity of smallholder Producer Organizations (POs) in supporting their members to raise productivity and income. In 2016, GAFSP introduced the innovative Missing Middle Initiative (MMI) to address this gap by providing financing to POs to strengthen their own capacity and financial sustainability as well as that of their members. The initiative aimed to provide smallholders with improved access to funding directed to the POs they belong to, leveraging their collective power to reduce transaction costs, negotiate better terms, raise their productivity and incomes, and ultimately drive impactful, long-term transformations in agricultural and food systems.

The MMI's success established GAFSP's commitment to the PO-led financing track, which has been a core GAFSP pillar since its launch in 2020. The track places POs in the lead on developing their funding proposals to GAFSP and directs financial resources to POs to support their leadership, management, and implementation of these development projects. This unique approach distinguishes GAFSP from other development platforms that do not directly involve grassroots organizations from inception through implementation. By placing POs at the forefront and by addressing the financing and capacity gaps, GAFSP has garnered strong support from stakeholders across the development space.

Since the initiation of the PO-led track, GAFSP has allocated significant funding through three specific Calls for Proposals in 2016, 2021, and 2023, and almost \$80 million has been invested in 30 transformative projects directly led by POs. These projects exemplify the power of smallholder farmers with the resources and autonomy to drive change.

This strategic focus on channeling funds directly to POs underscores GAFSP's commitment to support these vital entities in advancing sustainable agriculture and food security. It also represents an innovative approach in the financial landscape, as GAFSP supports POs directly, without channeling the funds through governments, recognizing POs as development partners. By working in synergy with the Program's other financing tracks that also assist governments and agribusiness MSMEs, GAFSP seeks to catalyze lasting, systemic changes, and use the PO-led track to move towards greater sustainability and market access.



## Objective of the event

Eight years after the launch of the MMI pilot and following two Calls for Proposals dedicated to POs in 2021 and 2023, GAFSP is preparing for a pivotal year in 2025. This event will serve as a critical platform for reflection, learning, and forward planning, with a particular focus on the 8th PO-led Call for Proposals, targeted for launch in May 2025 and aligned with GAFSP's emerging Vision 2030 strategic plan. The overarching goal is to deepen the impact of the GAFSP PO-led track by enhancing understanding of its successes and challenges, while charting a future course for greater effectiveness and impact.

Key objectives include:

**Gathering lessons:** Convene the PO-led project teams, including Supervising Entities (SEs), PO partners from disbursing projects, SE representatives, and CSOs involved in the PO-led track to date. This gathering aims to facilitate a comprehensive learning exchange, offering participants the opportunity to share their experiences, insights, and lessons learned from projects funded under the GAFSP PO-led track, including the MMI. The gathered insights will help evaluate successes, identify areas for improvement, and refine approaches for future calls for proposals under the PO-led track. Additionally, these lessons will inform other GAFSP financing tracks, including the Country-led track, the GAFSP Private Sector Window, and the new Business Investment Financing Track (BIFT). The workshop will also allow the GAFSP Coordination Unit (CU) to share key findings from the PO portfolio, drawing on GAFSP's 5 Year Program Evaluation, the annual portfolio review, and recent thematic assessments.

**Informing the 8th PO-Led Track:** The insights gathered from POs and stakeholders during this event will directly contribute to the design of the 8th Call for PO proposals, ensuring that the PO-led track remains agile, adaptive, and aligned with the evolving needs of smallholder farmers and their organizations. The event will explore ways to streamline processes, increase funding efficiency, ensure that POs are empowered to lead their own development initiatives, and strengthen their resilience and sustainability in the long-term. This commitment to a PO-driven process will be essential for shaping a more inclusive and effective funding mechanism that aligns with GAFSP's emerging Vision 2030 strategic plan, which emphasizes continued and scaled-up direct support to POs as a tool to build food system resilience and improve food security by addressing productivity climate, and nutrition challenges in their communities.

**Strengthening new partnerships:** The event will also serve as an opportunity to expand GAFSP's reach by engaging PO/CSOs that have not yet been part of the GAFSP portfolio. Key CSOs in the food security and nutrition (FSN) space, along with POs already involved in the Country-led track who are now interested in receiving grants through the PO-led track, will be invited to learn about the program's achievements and potential. This outreach will not only introduce new stakeholders to the program but also gather valuable strategic insights to enhance GAFSP's future impact. On the final day of the event, an open forum will provide an opportunity for new members of the development community to learn more about the program. Additionally, external partners working with POs will be invited to share their experiences, highlighting how GAFSP can serve as a platform for cooperation. By expanding its network of potential partners, GAFSP aims to foster stronger, more diverse collaborations, creating an inclusive platform that supports smallholder farmers and their organizations through innovative and sustainable funding approaches.

By convening this critical gathering, GAFSP will reaffirm its dedication to smallholder farmers and their organizations by providing innovative direct financing, while learning from past experiences to scale up efforts that build food system resilience and improve FNS in communities through a grassroots approach. This event will lay the groundwork for future initiatives and ensure that the PO-led track can be more impactful in the context of the emerging Vision 2030.



## Audience Overview

The event will be joined in person by:

**Representatives from mature PO-Led Projects (10 projects):** In-person participants will include representatives from POs and SEs involved in projects with disbursement levels exceeding 5% of the total grant as reported during the latest Six-Monthly Reports. Additional PO-led projects will be invited to participate online, ensuring broad engagement and knowledge sharing. The list of all PO-led projects by is detailed in Annex 1.

**Representatives from Closed MMI Projects (5 projects):** Representatives from completed MMI projects will be invited to share insights and lessons learned from their experiences.

**CSOs:** Representatives from CSOs currently sitting on the GAFSP Steering Committee (AFA, ROPPA, ActionAid) will contribute their perspectives on the PO-led track and its development.

**SEs Representatives in the GAFSP Steering Committee:** Representatives of all SEs—including the World Bank, International Finance Corporation (IFC) as Secretariat to the Private Sector Window, African Development Bank (AfDB), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Program (WFP), Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and Asian Development Bank (ADB)—will join to share institutional insights and provide technical guidance.

**Key CSOs in the food security and nutrition** sector will be invited to participate as observers to learn more about GAFSP's work and explore potential collaborations.

**Plenary session will be streamed online**, to allow teams from all PO-led projects as well as POs currently involved in Country-Led Projects to join virtually, fostering inclusivity and broader knowledge exchange.

POs currently involved in Country-Led Projects, identified by the SE focal point as potentially eligible for the PO-led track, will also be invited to participate as observers, primarily online. A limited number of in-person participants may be accommodated, subject to evaluation and approval on a case-by-case basis.



## Meeting Methodology

The methodology for the GAFSP PO Stocktaking Event is designed to foster an inclusive, participatory environment where farmers' voices are at the forefront. The approach emphasizes interaction, collaboration, and empowerment, managing power dynamics and avoiding one-way presentations. With a commitment to openness in learning from mistakes, failures, and challenges, this methodology fosters a safe and inclusive space for POs to share experiences and co-create solutions.

Core Methodological Principles:

**Farmer-Centric Focus:** The structure and facilitation of the meeting prioritizes the voices of smallholder farmers representatives of the POs implementing projects, ensuring their lived experiences guide discussions and outcomes.

**Equitable Participation:** Steps will be taken to minimize hierarchical dynamics, ensuring all participants—whether POs, SEs, or CSOs—contribute on equal footing.

**Interactive Engagement:** The meeting will use participatory techniques such as small group discussions, breakout sessions, and roundtable formats to promote dialogue and collaboration over traditional presentations.

An experienced facilitator will be hired to design and guide the sessions, ensuring a cohesive and dynamic flow. The facilitator will use tools and techniques to engage all participants and address power imbalances in the room.



## Agenda - Day 3

IFAD HQ, Oval Room

Time	Session content
9.00-11.00	<p><b>Session 1</b>  <b>GAFSP Open Door Event</b>  <i>(See separate detailed concept note for the open-door event)</i></p> <p><b>Presenters:</b> GAFSP Coordination Unit and PO-led project representatives.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Share GAFSP's key achievements, lessons learned from channeling financing directly to POs, and future plans under GAFSP's emerging Vision 2030.</p> <p><b>Structure:</b> Presentations on PO-led track impact, followed by real-life success stories from POs.</p>
11.00-11.30	<b>Coffee break</b>
11.30-13.00	<p><b>Session 2</b>  <b>GAFSP Open Door Event</b>  <i>(See separate detailed concept note for the open-door event)</i></p> <p><b>Presenters:</b> Representatives from FAO, IFAD, FFF, CSIPM, GAFSP POs and government representatives</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Discuss strategies to enhance the impact of direct investments in POs by linking policy, finance, and implementation.</p> <p><b>Structure:</b> Panel discussion, bringing together diverse actors to share their experiences and perspectives on working with POs followed by an interactive Q&amp;A session.</p>
13.00-14.00	<b>Lunch</b>

Time	Session Content
14.00-15.00	<p><b>Session 16</b>  <b>M&amp;E Clinic</b></p> <p><b>Presenter:</b> Muhammed Abdella Usman</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Provide an overview of the GAFSP M&amp;E framework, offering key insights to strengthen reporting processes and improve data quality. The session will also address common challenges and clarify any doubts related to monitoring and evaluation requirements.</p>



**Structure:** An online presentation covering key aspects of the M&E framework, followed by an interactive Q&A session to ensure participants have a clear understanding of reporting expectations and best practices.

***Background documents:***

- *GAFSP M&E framework*



## Annex 2. List of projects and teams invited to attend the event in person

Country	PO project Title	PO	SE	Call
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	Improving food security and nutrition for a more resilient food system in Batken, Kyrgyzstan	ACMT - Agricultural Cooperative Mol Tushum	WFP	7th Call
<b>Nicaragua</b>	Growing Hope: Towards resilient, transformative, and inclusive food systems in northern Nicaragua with smallholder farmers, women, and youth	CSEM - Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples '20 de Abril' RL	WFP	7th Call
<b>Bangladesh</b>	Accelerating Economic and Social Inclusion of Smallholder Farmers in Climatic Hotspots through Strong Producers' Organizations	SBKS - Sara Bangla Krishak Society	FAO	6th Call
<b>Burundi</b>	Supporting small-scale family farmers who are members of CAPAD cooperatives in Burundi to be resilient to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic	CAPAD - Confédération des Associations des Producteurs Agricoles pour le Développement	IFAD	6th Call
<b>Honduras</b>	Strengthening capacities for climate resilience and economic empowerment of rural, smallholder producers in the Dry Corridor of Honduras	RED COMAL -Alternative Community Economy Network	IDB	6th Call
<b>Senegal</b>	Support for the improvement of rural family poultry farming in the Departments of Mbour, Fatick and Kaolack	CNCR - Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux	IFAD	6th Call
<b>Tanzania</b>	Improvement of food systems supply services in rural Tanzania in adaptation to COVID-19, in short 'Baridi Sokoni'	MVIWATA - Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Waku-lima Tanzania	AFDB	6th Call
<b>Haiti</b>	Promotion of Resilient Agroforestry in Grand'Anse: Scaling up and professionalizing small-scale initiatives to build back better	ROPAGA - Réseaux des Organisations de Producteurs de la Grand' Anse	WFP	6th Call
<b>Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)</b>	Support project for the promotion of agricultural entrepreneurship and food security for local producers' organizations in the DRC	COPACO - Confédération Paysanne du Congo - Principal Regroupement Paysan	IFAD	6th Call



<b>Cambodia</b>	Building back better: organic agriculture for smallholder farmers in Northern Cambodia	CACC - Cambodian Agriculture Cooperative Corporation Plc	WFP	6th Call
<b>East Africa (Tanzania and Uganda)</b>	MMI Using e-granary innovative mobile platform to deliver economic services to farmers in East Africa	EAFF - Eastern Africa Farmers Federation	IFAD	MMI
<b>Mali</b>	MMI Inclusion of Rural Youth in Poultry and Aqua-culture Value Chains in Mali	CNOP - Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes	IFAD	MMI
<b>Mali</b>	MMI Improved Rice Paddy Quality and Quality Cowpea Processing for Improved Nutrition and Increased Farmer Development	SOCODEVI - Société de coopération pour le développement international	WFP	MMI
<b>Senegal</b>	MMI Strengthening rural women's livelihood for a sustainable economic development in the region of Tambacounda, in the East of Senegal	APROVAG - Association des Producteurs de la Vallée fleuve de la Gambie & YNW - Alternative Community Economy Network	FAO	MMI
<b>Bangladesh</b>	MMI Increasing Access to Finance for Farmer Organizations in Bangladesh	SBKS - Sara Bangla Krishak Society	FAO	MMI





## Annex 3. GAFSP funded participants representing project teams

Name	Organization
Amanov Maksatbek	WFP
Alvarado Francisco René	WFP
Asaduzzaman Mohammad	FAO
Bramma Rita	SBKS
Camara Ngouye	YNY
Castillo Fausto	IDB
Coulibaly Lamine	CNOP
Faye Ibrahima	FAO
Gilot Velan	ROPAGA
Grandval Fanny	IFAD
Gueye Dada	IFAD
Haque Obydul	SBKS
Hanif Mohammad Abu	FAO
Hossain Md Mahmud	FAO
Kan Kunthy	CACC
Law Anna	WFP
Lee Joonyeol	WFP
Martinez Chavarria Dorlamg Ramon	CESM
Muchiri Stephen	EAFF
Mugisha Eliezel	CAPAD
Ndiaye Ousmane	CNCR
Ngongo Mukwala Louis	COPACO
Penunia Estrella	AFA
Pelon Vital	IFAD
Pius Theodora	MVIWATA
Ramadi Abel	WFP
Ruvuga Stephen	MVIWATA
Salama Nour	WFP
Santiago Olvin	RED COMAL
Asrankulov Mirzalim	ACMT
Soumare Boubacar	SOCODEVI
Stephen Muchiri	EAFF
Sutradhar Dulal Chandra	FAO
Tseden-Ish Altatunya	NAMAC
Tsendsuren Altangerel	NAMAC
Ul Socheat	WFP

