



SFSA Lexicon

Terms and definitions

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syngenta foundation
for sustainable
agriculture

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SFSA Lexicon of terms and definitions

The Foundation's vocabulary continues to evolve. The language influencers include staff, programs, partners and other external experts, Syngenta, and the shifting trends of international agricultural development. Agreed definitions of key terms are vital. They avoid misunderstandings within SFSA and in our external communication.

In English alone, we routinely use a large number of special terms in our daily work. The launch of our refreshed strategy is an excellent moment to document their meanings. This 2021 lexicon will help both our own employees and those with whom they communicate. We will review it regularly.

Please send your suggestions for improvements to

Viv Anthony (compiler),

March 2021

Vision

- SFSA's vision: a bright future for smallholder farming
- A vision statement looks forward and creates a mental image of the ideal state that the organization wishes to achieve. It is inspirational and aspirational
- Vision statements always look forward and are futuristic
- Microsoft (at its founding): a computer on every desk and in every home
- Alzheimer's Association: a world without Alzheimer's disease
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF): a future in which people live in harmony with nature



Mission

- **SFSA's mission:** To strengthen smallholder farming and food systems we catalyse market development and delivery of innovations, while building capacity across the public and private sectors
- A mission statement is a concise explanation of the direction an organization takes to fulfil its vision and reason for existence
- It translates an organisation's vision into a clear set of ideas and direction about how the vision will be achieved
- A mission statement is intended to clarify the "whom we serve", "what we do", and the "how" of an organisation
- SFSA's mission statement is used to communicate our purpose and direction to our employees, partners, clients, beneficiaries and other stakeholders
- A mission statement usually focuses on what an organisation does today and for a period of 5+ years
- **Microsoft:** To empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more
- **Alzheimer's Association:** To eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health
- **World Wildlife Fund (WWF):** to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth.



Values

- A values statement lists the core principles and beliefs that guide and direct the organization and its culture
- In a values-led organization, the values create a moral compass for the organization and its employees. Values become deeply engrained and guide decision-making.
- Values establish a standard against which actions and behaviours can be assessed
- These core values are an internalized framework that is shared and acted on by leadership
- In conjunction with a values statement, a code of ethics puts an organisation's values into practice. The code of conduct outlines the procedures in place to ensure our organization's values are upheld.¹

Strategy

- A strategy provides key principles and information that are needed for an organisation to achieve its vision
- SFSA's strategy should enable all management and staff to take decisions, plan and direct their actions and daily activities to achieve SFSA's mission.²
- The strategy addresses key questions such as: "what", "for whom", "where" and "why".

Strategic plan

- A plan and approach that delivers an organisation's strategy and associated targets on a set timetable and investment cost
- Addresses key questions: "how", "where", "when" and "by whom".

¹Hubert-Scherler, R. (2019) Presentation: Code of conduct and ethics at SFSA Retreat

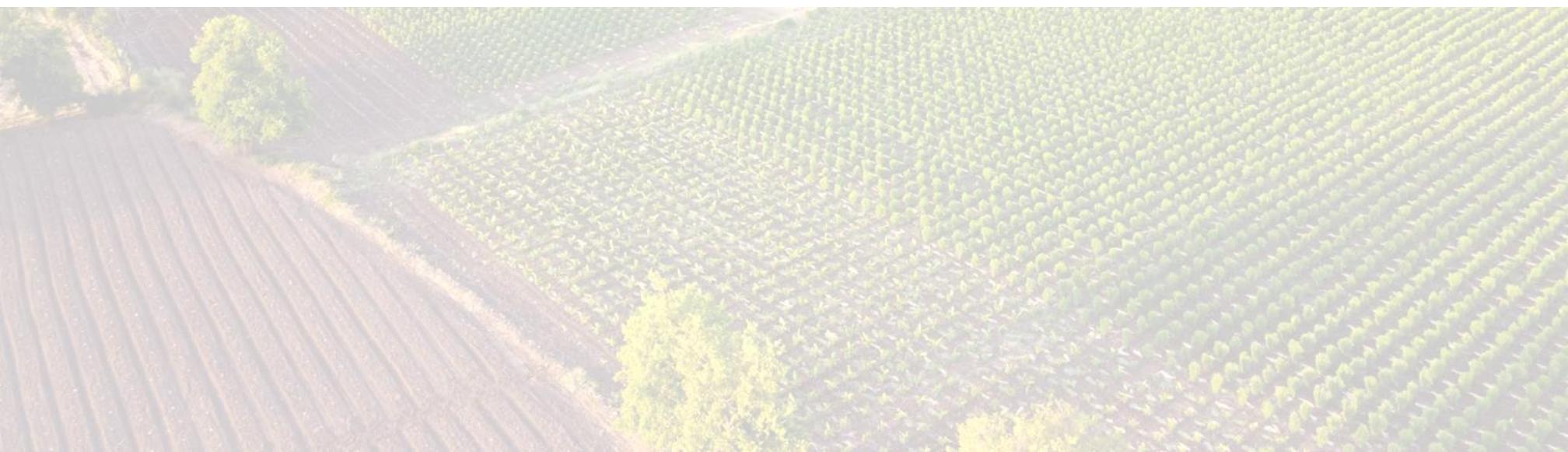
²Adapted Cambridge English Dictionary



Impact

- A positive effect that something, especially something new, has on smallholder farmers, their well-being and their farms
- Impact is a change in the livelihoods, welfare and well-being of a specific set of smallholders and their farms that results from a chain of events that SFSA has contributed to: through creating outputs (products and services) from catalysing new technology, providing know-how and contacts, access to finances or from advocacy work that improves the enabling environment, and lead to changes in behaviour i.e. outcomes
-
- Impact is not created in isolation but is a collective end-result of specific activities by several stakeholders, and not only by SFSA, that lead to:
 - Outputs (products and services) à Outcomes (behaviour changes) à Impact
 - A pre-requisite for achieving impact is having an in-depth understanding about: “who” are the smallholders being targeted, “where” are they located, “what” are their problems, challenges and obstacles and “how” can the intended interventions lead to positive impact
 - Impact is always intended to be positive. Interventions without thorough, coordinated planning and management can result in neutral or even negative impact on smallholders.

³Cambridge English Dictionary



Outcome

- An improvement in knowledge, skills, attitudes, aptitudes, or relationships that manifest as a change in activities, behaviour or operational environment⁴
- The resulting change in operations, efficiency and ideally sustainability is the outcome
- Examples of outcomes of SFSA's work that may contribute to impact whereby smallholders increase their income and opportunity to support their families and communities include:
 - Increased access to new improved varieties, other technologies and inputs
 - Increased access to off-takers and other markets
 - Risk management solutions and climate adaption opportunities developed
 - Crop yield and farm productivity improvements achieved
 - Changes to seed regulation etc.⁵
 - Knowledge transferred to and used by farmers and their business partners
- Outcomes can be seen at an individual project, program and sub-portfolio level. For example: new improved bean varieties are scaled-up and distributed by seed companies (behaviour change) and are purchased and grown by smallholders for export markets (multiple behaviour changes). These outcomes can be measured and monitored in a quantitative way using a key performance indicator (KPI), such as tracking the sales of the new varieties to smallholders by seed companies.

Strategic outcome

- Major changes in behaviour in three categories that demonstrate we are delivering our mission:
 - Smallholders have better access to affordable, improved solutions and services
 - Smallholders successfully adopt climate-smart, resilient farming practices
 - Smallholders are more successful through better functioning markets and an enabling environment.

Output

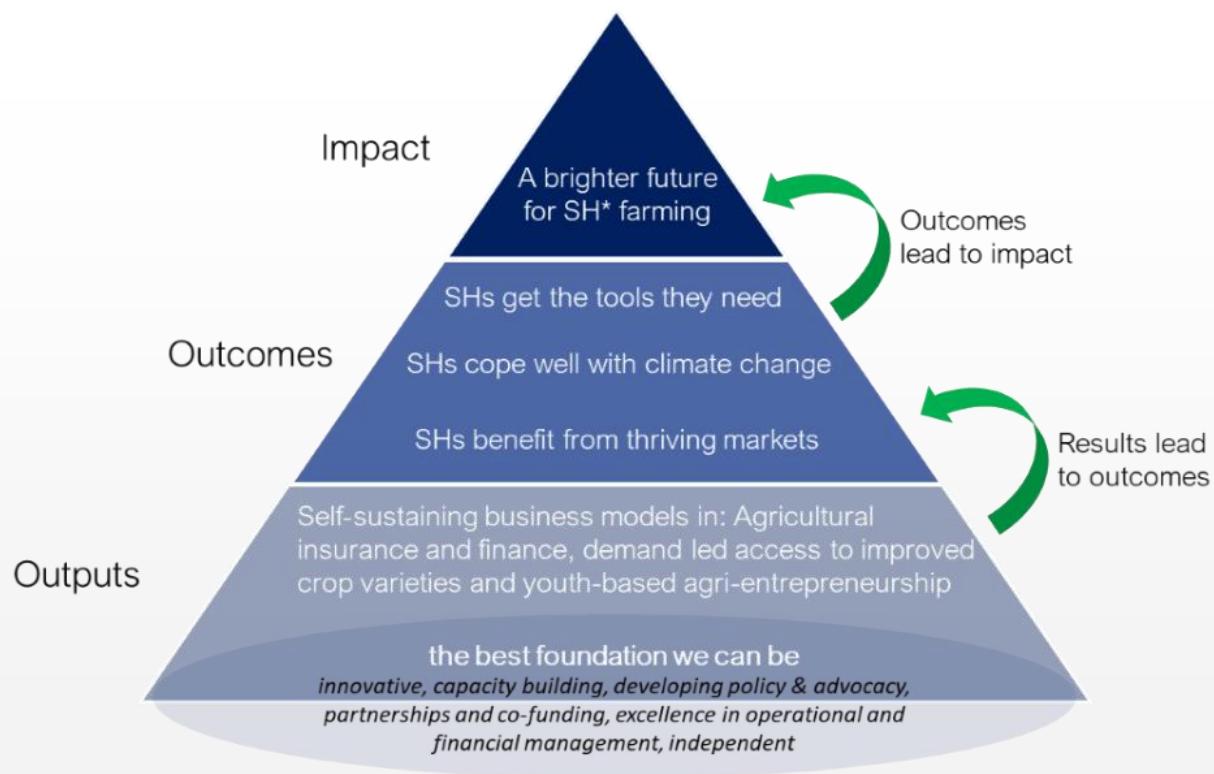
- An output is something that is created, produced or constructed, such as innovative products, services, processes or business models
- SFSA examples include market assessments for affordability and availability of farmer-centric products and services, new research findings, new businesses or farming methods, policy analyses, new crop varieties, insurance products or other innovations and knowledge transfer training materials.⁶

⁴Adapted CGIAR definition – “Managing agricultural Research for learning and Outcomes” <https://marlo.cgiar.org/glossary.do>

⁵Adapted CGIAR definition - “Managing agricultural Research for learning and Outcomes” <https://marlo.cgiar.org/glossary.do>

⁶Adapted CGIAR definition - “Managing agricultural Research for learning and Outcomes” <https://marlo.cgiar.org/glossary.do>

Figure 1 - Outputs, outcomes and impact



Target

- A target is a goal that we are trying to achieve. It is set in advance and is designed so that it can be monitored quantitatively and/or qualitatively. In SFSA, impact, outcome, and outputs for each programme and/or project will have clear targets set. KPIs are used to monitor performance towards each target.

Key performance indicator (KPI)

- A measure of towards the target for impact, outcome and output to be achieved
- Something we can observe that indicates progress, forwards or backwards
- Tracking SFSA performance against the KPI, indicates whether we are being successful or not and is the **effect** of SFSA's and our partners' actions
- KPIs tend to be quantitative using numbers, percentages or ratios to measure performance. This makes them easy to use and interpret
- KPI's do not provide any explanation about why a specific performance occurs
- Quality KPIs are typically few in number, c. 3-5 max, reliable and highly indicative of progress,

Critical success factor

- Critical success factors are the variables that **create** success e.g. good leadership, engaged employees, access to products/ information, etc.
- These are all the factors, conditions, tool, and skills that are needed to achieve success and the desired impact, outcomes, and outputs.

Portfolio⁷

- Totality of SFSA's investment and activities to achieve our mission. It is comprised of a hierarchy of activities arranged in sub-portfolios, programs, projects and associated operational activities
- The portfolio is built and managed by SFSA's portfolio manager in partnership with SFSA's sub-portfolio and program managers.

Sub-portfolio

- Contains all programs, projects and activities that benefit from being managed together to deliver a defined part of SFSA's mission e.g. Agri-services, Seeds, HQ operations
- A sub-portfolio is managed by a leader with professional expertise and experience in this field.

Program

- A program is comprised of multiple projects that have a common theme or set of beneficiaries
- Projects within a program are managed in a coordinated way to obtain outputs, outcomes and benefits not achievable by managing them individually.
- A program is larger and has a longer duration than a project and has a requirement for ongoing resources
- A program is led by a program manager.

Project

- A time-limited endeavor to create a unique product, service or result
- A project has a set of outputs and outcomes with a view to creating either directly or indirectly beneficial impact for smallholders in developing countries
- A project operates for a specific period, has a start and an end date, and an allocated budget and resources
- A project is differentiated from being an activity by being more complex and requiring a project team. The team usually contains a range of different skills and expertise. Members may be based in more than one country
- Projects are usually undertaken in partnership with other organizations
- It is the first work package level in SFSA's hierarchy of activities
- A project is led by a project manager.

⁷Definitions of portfolio, programme and project are based on PMI, Prince2, MSP, MoP

Aggregation and aggregators

- Aggregation means linking people together to enable them to have greater access to products, services or markets, greater purchasing power, or to have the collective benefits of economies of scale at different points along an agriculture or food value chain
- Aggregation helps businesses and other organizations engage with smallholder farmers at reduced transactions costs by providing the benefits of scale. Given the very small value of most individual smallholder transactions, a key limitation to market engagement for each smallholder farmer is the cost of product suppliers or off-takers reaching them
- Aggregation can also support smallholder farmers to achieve the skills and resources needed to achieve the food quality standards required by off-takers for modern markets
- Aggregators are organizations that enable aggregated transactions to happen. They include: agri-entrepreneurs, farmers' organizations, traders, wholesalers, storage operators, transporters, processors, and financial, digital and other service providers



Capacity-building

- Capacity-building is the process of developing, strengthening and retaining the skills, knowledge, processes, tools, equipment and resources needed by smallholders and their communities. It also includes strengthening value chains and organisations that support smallholder farmers to adapt, thrive, be sustainable and deliver their mission in a changing external environment
- Capacity-building has two core components:
 1. Capability – this is the set of technical and managerial skills, expertise and competencies required
 2. Capacity – this is the extent to which individuals or organizations have the capabilities required to be effective
- SFSA catalyses and undertakes capacity building with public and private sector partners to support market development and delivery of innovations for smallholder farmers and their food systems
- Capacity-building is also sometimes termed “capacity development”.

Catalytic intermediary (CI)

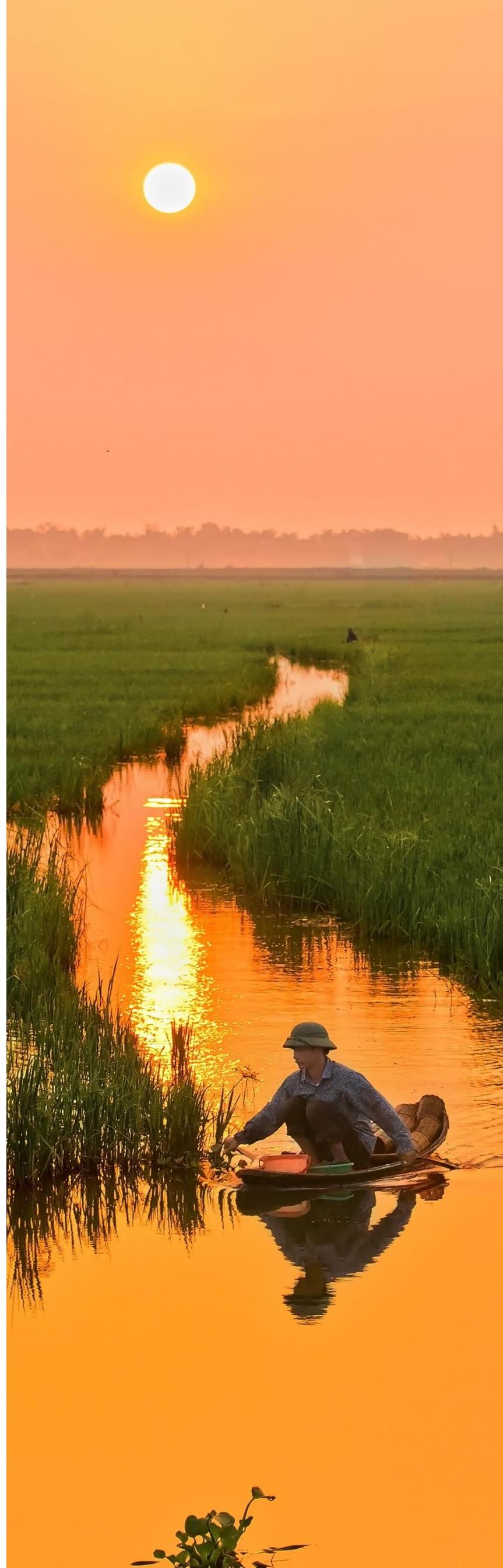
- A catalytic intermediary is a separate legal entity from SFSA, which takes over SFSA’s role in building capabilities in public and private institutions for product advancement and variety commercialization
- A catalytic intermediary provides a mechanism for scaling up an innovation, for example delivering new seed varieties into the marketplace, new digital tools or smallholder farmer business models
- **There are a range of different types of CIs including:**
 - **Collaborative Catalytic Intermediaries** – Public and private partnerships with governments, for profit and non-for-profit entities, e.g. SFSA’s radio work in Kenya, in collaboration between local governments and local private radio stations
 - **Multi-stakeholder philanthropic platforms and Social Enterprises** – This category includes the establishment of multi-stakeholder or public-private “Special Purpose Vehicles” (SPV). Examples are the independent Agri-Entrepreneur Growth Foundation (AEGF) scaling platform and ACRE Africa
 - **Private sector innovators** – e.g. Farmforce reached over 0.5 million farmers
 - **Further models** – SFSA partners with NGOs that operate like hybrid social enterprises and have the resources to achieve significant scale-up. BRAC, One Acre Fund and MyAgro are examples.

Climate-smart, resilient agriculture (CSRA)⁸

- FAO introduced the term climate-smart agriculture (CSA)⁹ in 2010 to encourage farming and agriculture to be undertaken in a way that improves food production (Pillar 1: productivity), is more resilient to impending climate change (Pillar 2: resilience), and reduces associated emissions and man's environmental footprint (Pillar 3: mitigation)
- SFSA supports these goals, extending this definition from CSA to CSRA to recognise and include remuneration and profitability as a vital pre-requisite for any farmer to change current practices and adopt innovation. Rapid economic return is an especially critical driver for smallholders with low and erratic income. Early benefits are needed as a key incentive for change
- CSRA also extends the use of the term mitigation to go beyond just reduction of emissions from agriculture. CSRA includes other interventions such as reduction of resource-use competition, and conservation of habitats and biodiversity
- SFSA's definition combines both long-term resilience and mitigation benefits with shorter-term economic gains for adopters, creating value at farm and value-chain level whilst simultaneously conserving our environment for future generations.

⁸Klauser, D. (2021) SFSA Climate Smart Resilient Agriculture position paper. Basel. Switzerland. Pp4

⁹FAO (2010) "Climate-Smart" Agriculture. Policies practices and financing for food security, adaptation and mitigation. Rome pp41



Corporate foundation

- A corporate foundation is a private foundation that is founded by a company and usually receives core funding from its founding company
- This is the case also for SFSA whose main funder is also its founder, Syngenta AG, the international agribusiness company, with headquarters in Basel, Switzerland. SFSA, and its affiliated country foundations and structures, also receive significant funding for interventions for smallholder farmers in developing countries from a range of other public, government and private sector sources, including other international foundations.

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)¹⁰

- Diversity is variety, a group's set of differences (for example in gender, age, ethnicity, religion, personality type, behaviors or thinking style)
- Inclusion is involvement and empowerment, recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of all people, and of their talents, values, views and practices
- SFSA fully recognizes, supports and encourages diversity and inclusion through our D&I policy and implementation guidelines. We are strengthening our practices in D&I throughout all our activities and interactions with colleagues, smallholder farmers, partners and stakeholders.

Entrepreneurship

- Entrepreneurship includes the mindsets, activities and skills involved with identifying a market need or failure, finding or creating an appropriate product, process or service solution and building a business to scale these products to customers, that generates sales, profit, and employment.

¹⁰SFSA's diversity and inclusion policy

https://www.syngentafoundation.org/sites/g/files/zhg576/f/2020/12/02/sfsa_diversity_and_inclusion_policy.pdf



Food security¹¹

- Food security means that people have continuous access to enough affordable, safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food for normal growth and development to enable them to lead and maintain an active and healthy life
- Food insecurity means the opposite, and can be at the individual, household, national, regional or global level.

Innovation

- Innovation is the creation, development and implementation of a new product, process, or service with the aim of improving the efficiency, effectiveness, risk reduction or market access by smallholder farmers in developing countries.

Scaling

- Scaling means significantly improving the incomes and resilience of large numbers of smallholders by catalyzing widespread adoption of innovative technologies and practices and by strengthening agricultural and market systems
- Typically, scaling within SFSA has an aspirational target of reaching and contributing to impact for at least 100,000 smallholders and can stretch upwards to millions
- To achieve widespread smallholder adoption and system changes scaling may require establishment of catalytic intermediaries and/or multi-stakeholder platforms. These bring together the necessary public, private and other stakeholders to reach smallholders that SFSA cannot achieve alone and address the overarching systemic changes needed ^{12 13}
- Scaling is also used to refer to the phase of a project or programme that occurs after development of the innovation or intervention has been completed. It involves all activities required to substantially increase the numbers of smallholder farmers that can access and benefit from the innovation or intervention.

¹¹2020 Nutrition report. <https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/2020-global-nutrition-report/>

¹²Rockefeller philanthropy advisors. (2018) *Scaling solutions towards shifting systems: approaches for impact, approaches for learning*. Pp46 www.rockpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/11-02-RockPA-Scaling-Solutions-02-WEB.pdf

¹³Berlin, R. (2021) *Scaling-up innovations: from learning to action*. SFSA paper, Basel. Switzerland

Smallholder farmers¹⁴

- The term “smallholder farmer” has many definitions involving descriptors such as farm size, revenue, income reliance on agriculture etc.¹⁵ Farmers can also be differentiated as ‘non-commercial’ or subsistence, ‘pre-commercial’ and ‘commercial’ based on land size, crop type, production and market value, and access to financial services and technologies.¹⁶
- **SFSA defines “its” smallholder farmers as pre-commercial farmers**
- They have the potential to be change-makers and include the next generation of farmers in our focus countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Our target farmers are men, women, and youth with the following profile:
 - Their farm size is typically <2ha
 - They usually own their farmland, and can therefore take decisions on its use
 - They are receptive to new ideas, change and building their farm incomes
 - They live on incomes that are low and erratic, but their land has potential for increased productivity and profitability with increased inputs and finance
 - They are likely to have access to mobile phones and possibly the internet
 - They are not regularly buying inputs and/or selling produce routinely into markets; typically, due to either lack of access to knowledge, technology and/or markets
 - They are not using risk management products or approaches such as insurance, and/or climate smart practices and inputs.



¹⁴Zhou, Y. and Koeber, L. (2021) SFSA's position paper on smallholder farmers, Basel. Switzerland

¹⁵Wiggins et al. (2000) Innovation and economic transformation in low-income countries: a new body of evidence. ODI Growth Research Program. <https://bit.ly/3jztYJJ>

¹⁶Peck et al (2013) Segmentation of smallholder households: meeting the range of financial needs in agricultural families. CGAP in focus (85). <https://bit.ly/372WfmV>

Social enterprise

- Social enterprises (SE) are businesses that are set up with specific social objectives as their primary purpose. For example, addressing social problems, improving communities, providing people with access to employment and training, or helping the environment.
- Unlike traditional business, maximizing profits is not the primary goal of a social enterprise but revenue still plays an essential role in the sustainability of the venture. Revenues are usually reinvested in the social programs
- ACRE Africa is an example of a social enterprise in East Africa¹⁷. ACRE was formed as a vehicle to enable smallholder farmers in East Africa to have reliable access to products developed from the Kilimo Salama Project. ACRE is an InsureTech intermediary specialized in agricultural product development and distribution of affordable, simple and within reach risk transfer solutions.

Sustainable agriculture¹⁸

- Sustainable agriculture has been defined by many organisations over the last 25 years
- SFSA defines sustainable agriculture for smallholder farmers in its broadest sense incorporating and going beyond the 5 core principles used by United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)¹⁹ :
 - Increasing productivity, employment, and value addition in food systems
 - Direct action to conserve, protect and enhance natural resources
 - Improved livelihoods and fostering inclusive economic growth
 - Enhanced resilience of people, communities, and ecosystems
 - Adaptable, responsible, and effective governance mechanisms
- SFSA's definition includes three points of additional emphasis to meet the needs of our present and future generations while taking care of our environment and protecting our planet.
 - **Remuneration and economic incentives for smallholders are vital so they can establish enduring, profitable small farm businesses.** We believe that smallholder advancement is dependent on the emergence of flourishing market systems. This requires the development of enduring markets, overcoming market failures such as access to inputs and financial services, and encouraging the enabling environment for the emergence of value chains that provide supply to match demand
 - **Sustainable agriculture means “growing more with less”.** More productivity with less damage to the environment and ecosystems using sustainable intensification. Agriculture and food production need to be as safe and efficient as possible for all, using modern technologies and the best that traditional knowledge and practices offer. So that smallholders prevent further degradation of their soils and natural habitats such as forests, wetlands and long-term pastures. This means harnessing the best solutions and safe technologies that can provide improved varieties, judicious application of external inputs, utilizing existing biological processes where possible, and advancing digital technology, artificial intelligence and mechanization as innovations emerge suitable for pre-commercial smallholders ²⁰
 - **Growing more food to prevent just hunger is not enough.** Sustainability only comes with farming systems that are based on diverse crops that promote soil health, biodiversity and provide variety in diets of nutritious, health giving food.

¹⁷<https://www.syngentafoundation.org/ais-east-Africa>

¹⁸Winter, S. Zhou, Y. and Castle, P. (2019) *Enabling smallholders' descendants to farm with pride (SFSA working paper)*. <https://bit.ly/2MR7ibT>

¹⁹<http://www.fao.org/sustainability/en/>

²⁰Klauser, D. and Robinson, M. (Eds) (2020) *The sustainable intensification of smallholder farming*. Burleigh Dodds Science Publishing. pp466. ISBN 9781786764300

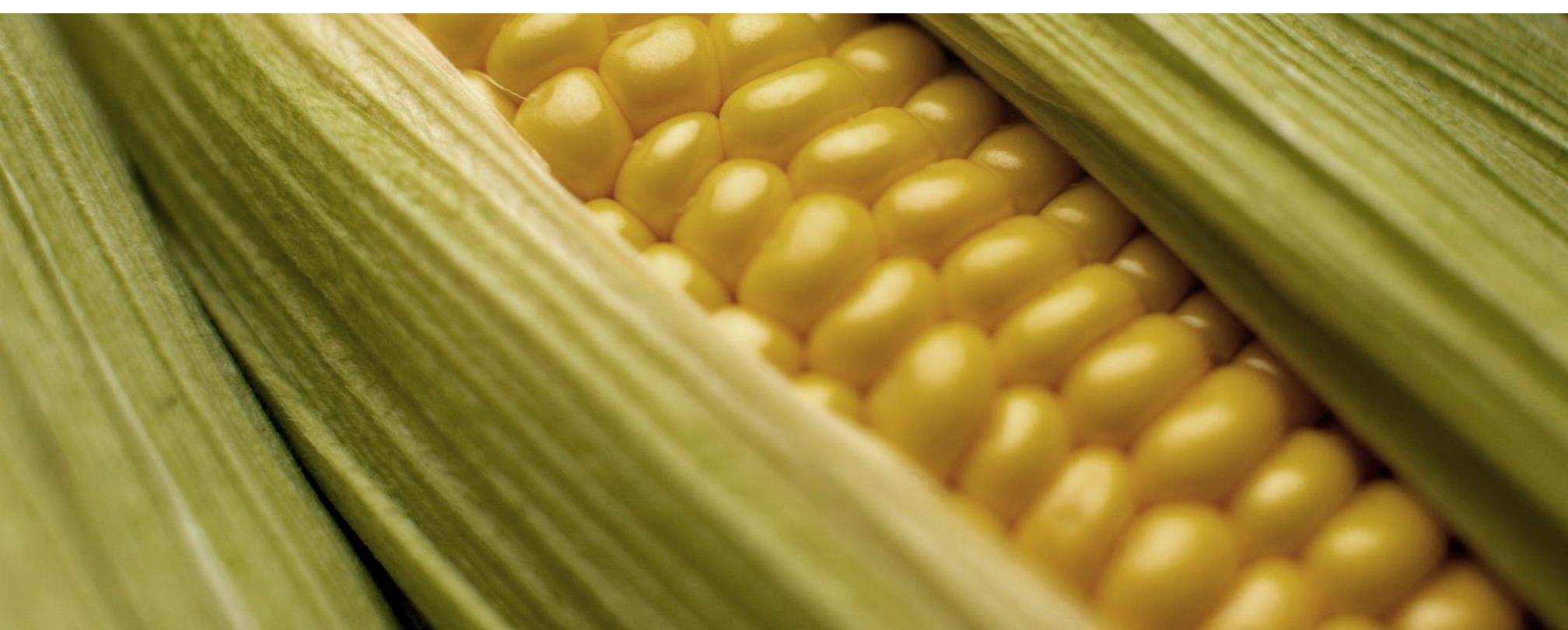
Unique selling point

- A USP describes very clearly the unique benefits that make a product, service, business or brand more compelling and superior to those offered by competitors or alternative providers
- A unique selling point (USP) is also sometimes referred to as a unique selling proposition.

Value chain

- A value chain is all the people, organizations, activities, services and buying and selling decisions that result in a product moving from its conception to an end user ²¹
- For smallholder farmers growing crops - this may involve purchasing inputs (such as seeds and chemicals, services, and associated value) from retailers to increase their crop productivity, then selling their produce to market traders. The chain continues with any stakeholders that add value to the crop through processing or packaging until it is purchased by a consumer, e.g. a chain may be comprised of seed and fertiliser suppliers, farmers, produce buyers, transporters, millers, packers, wholesalers, exporters, supermarkets, consumers
- Often the value chain is **not a single chain but an interconnected web** of organizations conducting activities that affect or add value to products that are bought and sold on the demand-supply route to consumers
- Value chains are enabled by a wide range of supporting individuals and organizations. These may include extension advisors, financial services, digital service providers, regulators, trainers and capacity builders. Such organizations assist but do not manager the flow of products through the value chain.

²¹Tongoona, P. Danquah, A. and Danquah, E.Y. (2017) Value chains and clients within value chains. In: the business of plant breeding. 73-77 CABI. ISBN 9781786393814





Youth

- There is no recognized universally agreed definition of “youth”, either globally or in development countries. For example, the United Nations²² define youth as: “persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States”. Whereas, the African Youth Charter (2006)²³ supported by the African Union and member states consider youth to include people between the ages of 15 to 35
- The Syngenta Foundation recognizes that young people are neither a homogenous group nor a static one, and any definition must support a diverse range of local country situations and definitions used by our partners
- SFSA aims to unleash the **entrepreneurship and creativity of young people defined as “youth” aged between 18 to 35.**²⁴

²²<https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

²³<https://www.youthpolicy.org/library/documents/african-youth-charter/>

²⁴Pannatier, M. (2018) *Unleashing youth potential: rural youth employment and entrepreneurship in Africa and Asia*. Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture reports. Basel. Switzerland.

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