



## Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS) - FAQ

**We have recently collaborated with the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS) program.**

**Our shared objective is to accelerate private sector investments in agribusinesses dedicated to advancing climate-resilient crops, enhancing soil quality, and fostering the prosperity of smallholder farmers.**

### **What is VACS?**

VACS is a joint collaboration launched in 2023 by the United States government's Office of Global Food Security, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the African Union. It is led by Dr Cary Fowler, a world-renowned agriculturalist who played a leading role in establishing the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

VACS purpose is to develop resilient food systems grounded in diverse, nutritious and climate adapted crops, grown in healthy, fertile soils. It aims to achieve this by building supply and demand for a diverse range of crops and promoting sustainable land use. This includes encouraging the growth of opportunity crops, which VACS defines as those with unrealized potential to improve food and nutrition security in a time of climate change.

VACS is primarily focused on regions such as Africa and Central America, where increasing food insecurity caused by extreme weather is likely to have the greatest negative impact.

### **Why is the CFC working with VACS?**

Smallholder farmers are critical elements of the food systems in these areas of the world, they are also some of the poorest people on the planet and suffer the most when their harvests fail.

At the CFC we're committed to improving the incomes and resilience of smallholder farmers through impact investment. A key part of this is supporting smallholders to diversify their crops and adopt new growing techniques that improve yields and give them access to new, more lucrative markets. Working with VACS strengthens our ability to do this.

### **What part will ACT Fund play?**

The ACT Fund unlocks crucial private sector funding for agribusinesses, especially in areas of high need. ACT's blended finance model and private equity structure is designed to de-risk investments, drive measurable impact and provide risk adjusted returns.

With demand far exceeding available financing, as seen in our 24th Call for Proposals with USD 40 million in VACS-prioritized proposals, the ACT Fund enables private investment in sustainable, equitable food systems.



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### How will the organizations' capabilities complement each other?

The CFC has previously invested around USD 50 million in opportunity crops that align with VACS' goals, such as sorghum, African rice and millet, which makes the partnership a logical fit for both organizations.

### VACS Overview and Importance

- **Launch and Leadership:** VACS, launched in 2022, is a collaborative initiative led by Dr. Cary Fowler, Special Envoy for Global Food Security, U.S. Department of State, FAO and the African Union.
- **Primary Goal:** The initiative aims to foster resilient food systems by promoting the cultivation of diverse, nutritious, and climate-adapted crops.
- **Regional Focus:** VACS prioritizes regions like Africa and Central America, where climate change significantly worsens food insecurity.
- **CFC Collaboration:** Through its partnership with VACS, the CFC seeks to boost investment in agribusinesses that support smallholder farmers, helping them thrive despite climate challenges. A key part of this is supporting smallholders to diversify their crops and adopt new growing techniques that improve yields and give them access to new, more lucrative markets.

### VACS Objectives and Selection Criteria

VACS is a joint initiative launched in 2023 by the United States government's Office of Global Food Security, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the African Union. It is led by Dr. Cary Fowler, Special Envoy Office of Global Food Security, a world-renowned agriculturalist.

Its purpose is to develop resilient food systems grounded in diverse, nutritious and climate adapted crops, grown in healthy, fertile soils. It aims to achieve this by building supply and demand for a diverse range of crops and promoting sustainable land use. This includes encouraging the growth of opportunity crops, which VACS defines as those with unrealized potential to improve food and nutrition security in a time of climate change.

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### Including VACS Objectives in Proposals

To align your proposal with VACS objectives:

- **Support Diverse, Climate-Resilient Crops:** Emphasize how your project promotes the cultivation of crops that are both diverse and adapted to climate change, contributing to resilient food systems.
- **Promote Sustainable Agricultural Practices:** Detail how your agribusiness integrates sustainable land use and farming practices, improving soil health and ensuring long-term agricultural productivity.
- **Address Food Security:** Highlight your commitment to enhancing food security in regions most affected by climate change, particularly in Africa and Central America.
- **Build Resilient Food Systems:** Explain how your project will increase both the supply and demand for climate-resilient crops, helping to establish a more sustainable and equitable food system.
- **Demonstrate Measurable Outcomes:** Include specific, measurable outcomes that align with VACS objectives, such as improved crop yields, enhanced soil fertility, or increased income for smallholder farmers.
- **Align with VACS Priorities:** Ensure that your proposal clearly shows how it meets the VACS selection criteria, emphasizing its potential to build climate resilience and support sustainable development.

### Funding and Application

- The CFC provides funding to agribusinesses through loans and debt instruments, with a standard maximum of USD 2 million for regular projects and up to USD 300,000 under the Fast-Track procedure. Flexibility is applied for projects demonstrating high impact and strong financial viability.
- All applications must be sent through the ongoing CFC Call for Proposals. No separate applications will be accepted.

**If you would like to find out more about our partnership with VACS, or are interested in investing in our ACT Fund, please get in touch with:**

**[info@common-fund.org](mailto:info@common-fund.org)**