Gates Foundation

Gates Foundation announces $1.4 billion to help smallholder farmers adapt
COP30 Fact Sheet
November 2025

For almost two decades, the Gates Foundation, through its Agricultural Development program, has been supporting smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia as the backbone of food systems, providing food and income for billions of people. These farmers are now bearing the brunt of a warming climate – a crisis they did not cause. Over 95 percent of African agriculture is reliant on rainfall. Worsening droughts, flooding, and shifting seasons are devastating crops and livestock, putting millions at risk of food insecurity and reversing hard-won development gains. Agriculture absorbs 26 percent of the economic impact of climate disasters. Africa is the only region where hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition are increasing, according to the 2025 UN State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report.

Faced with these challenges, many smallholder farmers lack access to the agricultural innovations and tools that can help them adapt to weather extremes. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), without adaptation strategies, agricultural productivity in parts of Africa could fall by up to 20 percent by 2050. In addition to mounting climate shocks, the world's poorest countries are facing overlapping challenges rising debt and shrinking aid budgets. Despite these urgent needs, less than one percent of climate finance has been designed to address the growing array of climate threats to food systems supplied by smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

On November 7, 2025, at COP30 in Belém, Brazil, the Gates Foundation pledged to invest $1.4 billion over the period 2026-2029 to support innovations that help smallholder farmers adapt to the increasing challenges of climate change. These include rising temperatures, more frequent and intense droughts, erratic rainfall patterns, floods and tropical storms, and more frequent pest and disease outbreaks in crops and livestock. The new investment will expand access to proven, farmer-led agricultural innovations to help millions of rural families across sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia adapt to climate shocks, strengthen livelihoods, and secure a more resilient future for people and planet.

This support comes as developing countries are increasingly calling for accelerated action and a focus on implementation following the agreement of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) at COP29. The Gates Foundation's efforts will be undertaken in consultation with focus countries to ensure they align with country priorities. This announcement builds on our previous commitment made at COP27 and the considerable progress countries have made in identifying climate risks and adaptation needs at the local level. We commit to continue working with other funders to co-create and co-fund, and reduce fragmentation in climate adaptation funding, ensuring these solutions reach the farmers that need them.

Innovation for Impact

Our COP30 commitment will be focused on accelerating a set of high impact innovations that help farmers adapt and forge resilient livelihoods. It will support technologies and approaches that are already showing results, targeted to the needs of smallholder farmers today and in the future.

These include:

- **Digital tools for farmers,** accessed on their mobile phones, including AI-powered weather forecasting, that deliver low-cost, locally relevant forecasts of unprecedented accuracy and speed, to guide the planting of crops. Most smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa don't have access to the localized weather forecasts they need due to the absence of functioning weather stations. Artificial intelligence can process massive datasets from satellites and create better prediction models, pinpointing when rains start and stop at a hyper-local level.
    - The foundation's COP30 announcement will build on existing efforts and new partnerships, including a new commitment from the **AIM for Scale** coalition**,** aiming to reach 100 million farmers across Africa, Asia, and Latin America by 2030. This initiative has already rolled out SMS weather forecasts for almost 40 million Indian farmers in 13 states for the 2025 monsoon season, warning them of an early start to the monsoon rains with an unusual pause. The forecasts helped farmers navigate an unpredictable season to make better planting decisions, protecting millions of acres of crops.

- **Climate-resilient crops and livestock,** that withstand drought, heat, and emerging pests while improving yields and nutrition. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and increasing pest and disease pressures are already diminishing yields of staple crops in vulnerable regions. We will increase our support for advanced breeding techniques to produce tougher, high-performing varieties of crops like sorghum, rice, wheat, millet and maize, building on almost two decades of global work developing drought-tolerant maize which has increased farmers' yields by up to two-thirds. Thanks to these investments, our partners are now able to develop and deliver improved seeds to farmers faster than ever, in partnership with local seed companies. Increasing crop yields and enhancing livelihoods can also play an important role in reducing pressures that drive the conversion of more land to agriculture, helping preserve forests and other habitats that provide valuable ecosystems in line with COP30's goals.

  Livestock is a priority for our investments as it is a principal source of income and nutrition for up to three quarters of a billion of the world's people living below the poverty line, especially women. Our commitment will include funding work to increase animals' yields while diminishing their emissions. This includes supporting the development of climate-smart animal feeds, such as high-yielding, nutritious, and drought-tolerant natural grasses that increase cows' milk yields by up to 100 percent while decreasing their methane emissions by up to 50 percent.

- **Soil health innovations** that restore degraded land, enhance productivity, and reduce emissions. Soil health is vital for smallholder farmers' prosperity but increasingly under threat from climate change, along with a lack of affordable fertilizers. Increasing soil temperatures, altered rain patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events reduce the levels of organic matter in soil, increase erosion, and deplete nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorous. Our funding will support work on biofertilizers that supply essential plant nutrients, fixing atmospheric nitrogen, solubilizing phosphorus, and/or stimulating nutrient uptake, critical for plant growth. Work by some of our partners has shown yield gains of up to 24 percent when using biofertilizers for sorghum.
    - The foundation's COP30 commitment includes a $30 million partnership with the Novo Nordisk Foundation to advance soil science research.

Additional detail on our commitment

In 2022, at COP27, we committed $1.4 billion for 2022-2025, to enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers. At the time of writing we are on track to meet this commitment, with $1.33 billion having been disbursed and a further ~$220 million due to be paid before the end of 2025. Our previous commitment was 100 percent grant finance, and this is also the case with our new commitment.

The foundation reports all its grant data to the OECD-DAC and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) on a voluntary basis so our investments can be tracked. Additionally, we commit to publishing a fact sheet annually at COP summits to report on progress towards the commitment we are making today.

To gauge how our investments contribute to climate adaptation, we have developed a climate adaptation classification guide and assessed our planned investments. These classifications correspond to the OECD-DAC Rio Convention marker for Climate Adaptation and include investments that have climate adaptation as a "Significant Objective" (we use *considerate* and *intentional)* or a "Principal Objective" (we use *transformative*) under the OECD-DAC criteria. Our approach allows us additional accuracy and transparency when reporting the climate impacts of our investments.

As donor governments reach the end date for their COP26 commitment to double adaptation finance by 2025, we call on them to continue their support for adaptation finance and provide a similar level of detail on how they will deliver resources, by year, grant equivalency and focus.

To learn more about the foundation's work in agricultural development and climate adaptation or to schedule an interview with an expert, please contact: media@gatesfoundation.org