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Partners in the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), a multi-donor trust fund established in 2010 to improve food security in the world's poorest countries, today announced the allocation of \$254.5 million in grants to eight countries. The grants will support country-led initiatives to increase agricultural productivity, improve food and nutrition security, and reduce poverty in Burkina Faso, Honduras, Kyrgyz Republic, Mali, Nicaragua, Uganda, Yemen, and Zambia. International food prices have spiked three times in the last five years. With the outlook for future food prices uncertain, GAFSP seeks to improve food security and reduce poverty by delivering targeted financing for the agriculture sector in low-income countries. It takes up where emergency and recovery assistance leaves off, targeting transformative and lasting long-term development.
Canada is proud that its investment of more than \$250 million since 2010 has made a significant contribution to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program's efforts to secure positive results in developing countries such as increased agricultural productivity, strengthened links between farmers and markets, and enhanced technical capacity of institutions to develop agricultural policies, said the Honourable Christian Paradis, Canadian Minister of International Development. "Increasing food security is one of Canada's priority international development themes and we are pleased to be part of this global partnership which promotes sustainable, country-led solutions to strengthen agriculture as a pathway to prosperity." Including these new allocations, GAFSP has allocated \$912 million to 25 countries and expects to improve the incomes and food security of over 10 million beneficiaries, mainly smallholder farmers and their families. The program is already having a large impact on the ground. For example, in Sierra Leone, where the agriculture sector contributes 40 percent to GDP, GAFSP support has already worked to rehabilitate 1,300 hectares of inland valley swamps and to increase access to rural financial services including creating 15 Financial Services Associations and 4 community banks.
"GAFSP provides merit-based financing that consistently produces high impact, sustainable results, focused on smallholder farmers in poor communities, said Lael Brainard, U.S. Treasury Under Secretary for International Affairs. "It's no surprise that demand for GAFSP's targeted assistance remains high, as evidenced by the record number of well-developed programs received this round. Given the importance of global food security, the United States is proud to support this innovative and successful program, and we ask that other nations increase their investment in GAFSP." The Steering Committee allocated new funds to the following country proposals:
In Burkina Faso, GAFSP funds totaling \$37.1 million will increase agricultural production in the cereal, horticulture, livestock, and fish value chains in three food deficit regions.
In Honduras, GAFSP funds totaling \$30.0 million to improve food security, under-nutrition and rural poverty in the most vulnerable area in Central America.
GAFSP has allocated an additional \$21.5 million to the current GAFSP project in the Kyrgyz Republic. The funds will support the ongoing project rehabilitating irrigation and drainage systems, building the capacity of water user associations, and promoting a nutritional component.
In Mali, GAFSP funds totaling \$37.2 million to support water control, improve farm productivity, and build capacity for local authorities and farmer organizations.
In Nicaragua, GAFSP funds totaling \$33.9 million will focus on small producers, ethnic minorities, and value chains with growth potential in the impoverished Caribbean coast region of Nicaragua.
In Uganda, GAFSP funds totaling \$27.6 million will support the government to link agriculture, nutrition, health and education through school-based demonstration gardens, nutrition education, and small gardens.
In Yemen, GAFSP funds totaling \$36 million will strengthen community land and water management as well as enhance access to animal health services, higher value crops, and microenterprise.
In Zambia, GAFSP funds totaling \$31.1 million will improve food production, develop value chains, and build capacity in districts with the highest levels of poverty and food insecurity.
The successful country proposals were selected by the GAFSP Steering Committee from a very competitive pool of 20 complete proposals. The funds Steering Committee is comprised of members from donor and recipient countries, as well as representatives from civil society organizations, supervising entities, and other stakeholders. Successful country proposals demonstrated a high level of need, a supportive policy environment, and a comprehensive plan for agricultural development.
"Smallholders are central players as both actors and beneficiaries in solving the food security problem, said Uon Sophal, Chair of the Asian Farmers Association. "We are happy that GAFSP is channeling more resources to strengthening smallholder activities and smallholder-owned enterprises." The countries awarded GAFSP funding in previous rounds are: Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Haiti, Kyrgyz Republic, Liberia, Malawi, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Togo.
GAFSP was established in the wake of the food price crisis to fund long-term solutions that build resilience, put policies in place to help people cope with price volatility, and help avert future crises. To date, a total of \$1.3 billion has been pledged to GAFSP by Australia, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Canada, Japan, Ireland, the Netherlands, South Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States, with funds going to countries that have strategic, innovative and credible plans already in place to improve agricultural productivity and food security. United States has issued a funding challenge to match an additional \$1 to GAFSP for every \$2 contributed by other donors up to \$475 million from the United States; in order to maximize the pledge, GAFSP needs to raise an additional \$575 million from other donors.
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
DC 20433 Washington
USA
Telefon: (202) 473-1000
Telefax: (202) 477-6391
Mail: investigations_hotline@worldbank.org
URL: <http://www.worldbank.org/>
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Pressekontakt

The World Bank

DC 20433 Washington

worldbank.org/
investigations_hotline@worldbank.org

Firmenkontakt

The World Bank

DC 20433 Washington

worldbank.org/
investigations_hotline@worldbank.org

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