



**10 years of uniting  
public and private partners**  
to deliver customer-centric  
financial services

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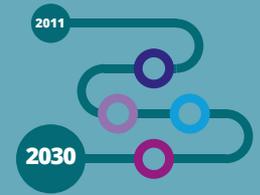
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## Acronym List

<b>DFS</b>	Digital financial services	<b>SCBF</b>	Swiss Capacity Building Facility
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa	<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
<b>MFI</b>	Microfinance institution	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, small, and medium enterprises	<b>SR</b>	Swiss Re
<b>PFI</b>	Partner financial institution	<b>VSI</b>	Venture South International
<b>TA</b>	Technical assistance	<b>WWB</b>	Women's World Banking

# WELCOME MESSAGE

## FROM THE CEO



The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted more starkly than ever before the urgency to address the issues associated with poverty – including public health, climate change, the digital divide, gender inequities, unequal access to education and jobs, and lack of affordable and appropriate financial services – that impact all of us. At the same time there is an overwhelming recognition that the private and public sectors, investors and civil society must work together to make investments that achieve higher social impact while accepting less than market rates of return.

To overcome today's challenges new business models are necessary. Impactful and sustainable companies driving these new models will require catalytic capital, labour, and skills to move into new sectors and reach low-income households. Today such enterprises have a lower prospect of competitive financial returns. They struggle to attract flexible, patient and catalytic capital at key phases in their growth, between the initial idea stage and when the company has enough traction to be considered investable by many impact or commercial investors. This gives rise to the [Pioneer Gap](#) (refer to [SCBF Perspectives on page 19](#)). Thankfully, more and more impact investors in the COVID-era see the importance of investing in companies targeting low-income populations and are more willing to invest in the early stages of these businesses. Yet, they lack the necessary comfort and familiarity to do so. A blend of catalytic, philanthropic capital and public-private cooperation can bridge this divide.

We at SCBF have experience in bridging this Pioneer Gap. For ten years, SCBF has effectively brought together global public sector resources with best-in-class private sector expertise to provide technical assistance (TA) to pioneers to traverse the gap. By creating Switzerland's leading platform for public-private cooperation for financial inclusion, SCBF has supported financial service providers to reach at least 2.6 million low-income clients, 68 percent of whom are women. We have worked with 36 TA providers and 110 partner financial institutions (PFIs) in 47 countries, creating a pipeline for equity and debt investors who are ready to invest in proven models at scale.

We are deeply aware of the need to do more. The urgency for collective action to scale solutions that increase the resilience of low-income households is growing daily as emerging markets continue to seek to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and the [prospect of less inclusive growth increases](#). The solutions are at hand, however the pioneers who can scale these solutions lack the diverse range of support to overcome unique financing, regulatory, and infrastructure challenges to traverse the Pioneer Gap. They need flexible, catalytic and patient capital, access to markets, partners, and a skilled and resilient workforce, and technical assistance all at the right time to prove their value to society.

As we celebrate our successes, we also use this moment to reflect and refine our approach by updating and evolving our strategy to address the challenges of the next 10 years. We are inspired by our partners who have contributed to SCBF's growth into an effective public-private platform: the Swiss Government, our growing network of private sector members, donors including AGFUND, Credit Suisse, and Swiss Re Foundation, our strong technical assistance providers, and the local financial institutions that ultimately serve the individuals in need of innovative solutions. We are confident that with the continued support of our partners, SCBF can drive sustainable growth among the pioneering companies best placed to deliver solutions to the low-income households navigating today's complex challenges.

We are grateful to our donors, members, partners, Board members as well as past and present employees who have made the achievements over the last 10 years possible, and who will join us with renewed urgency for the next decade.

With warm regards,

*Sitara Merchant*

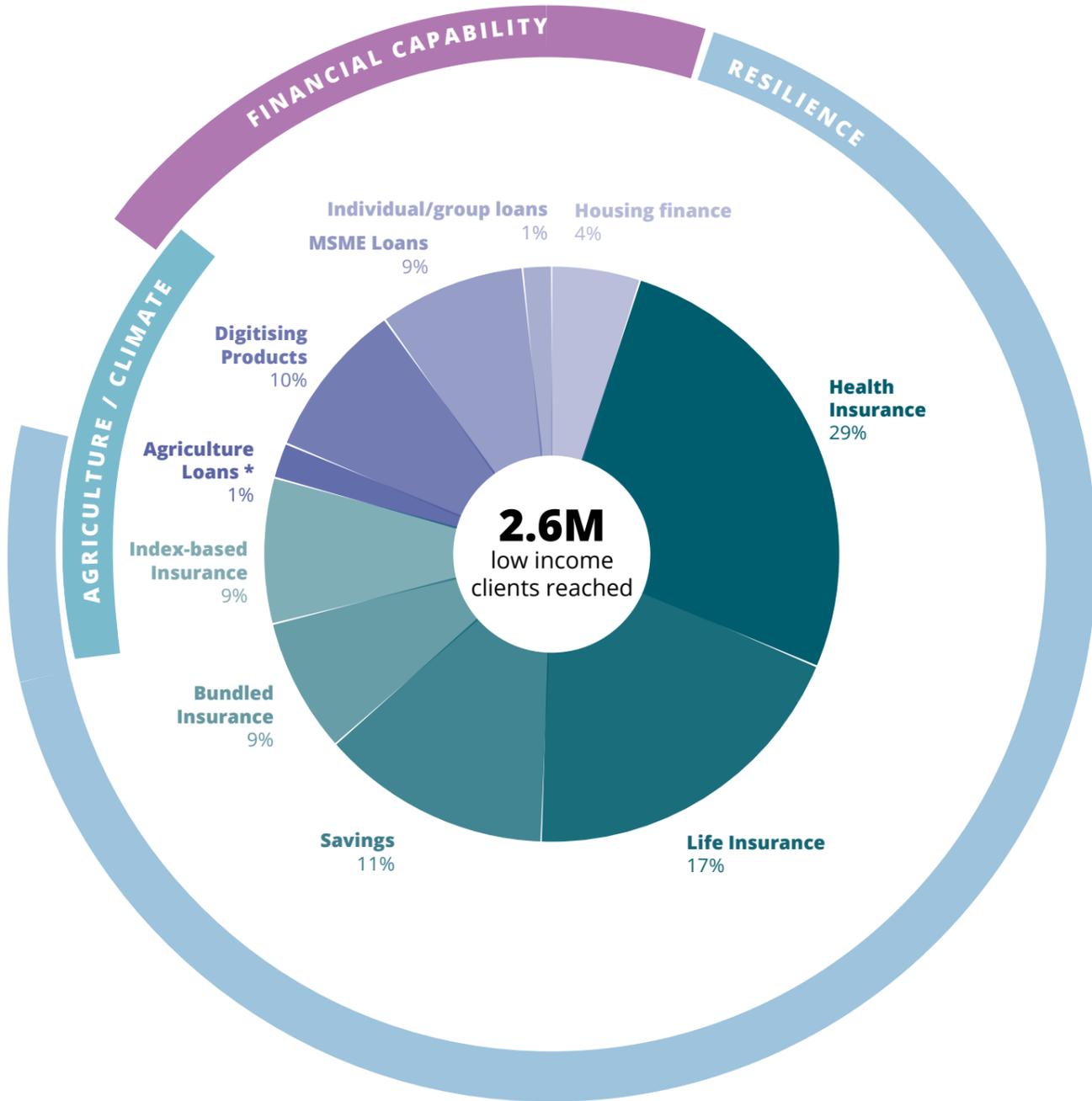
Sitara Merchant  
CEO



CHAPTER ONE  
**SCBF 2011 TO 2021**

# Key Achievements 2011 to 2021

## Outreach by Financial Services Type



**4.9M** lives covered through improved access to insurance

**1.7M** people have improved financial literacy and understanding

**159K** people indirectly benefitted from strengthened MFI capacity

**68%** Female clients



Projects funded



SCBF contribution, invested in projects by SCBF and Strategic Partners



Ratio of public/private sector funds leveraged

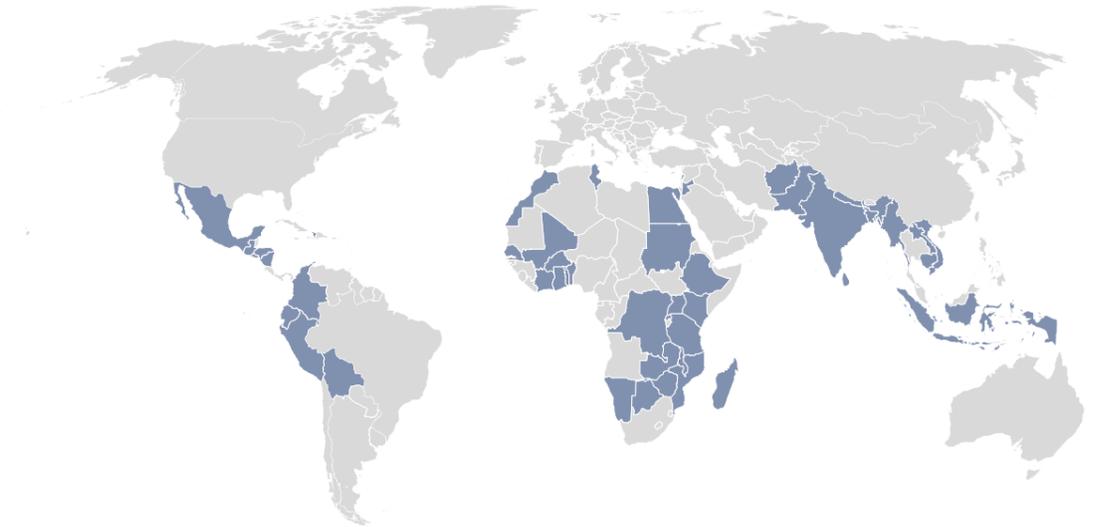


Partner financial institutions supported



Technical assistance providers

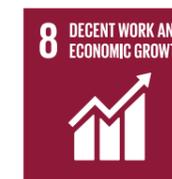
Covering 47 countries across Asia, MENA, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa



## Quantitative contribution to the SDGs



**110 SCBF Projects**  
**2.6M low-income end-clients** gained access to basic services\*\*  
SDG indicator 1.4.1



**132 SCBF Projects**  
**Over 500'000 end-clients** use a mobile-money-service provider.  
SDG indicator 8.10.2



**9 SCBF Projects**  
**Over 34'000 end-clients** used low-cost remittances and other payment transfers services.  
SDG indicator 10.c.1



**36 SCBF Projects**  
**Over 700'000 end-clients** received financial education and training.  
SDG indicator 4.3.1



**37 SCBF Projects**  
**Over 326'000 MSMEs** received a loan or a line of credit.  
SDG indicator 9.3.2



**159 SCBF Projects**  
**CHF 17.3M plus project matching contribution of CHF 12.3M** in TA committed to developing countries.  
SDG indicator 17.9.1

\*\*Includes unique end-clients for savings, credit, and money transfers. For insurance, this number includes family members.

SCBF evolution	Global event
<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>SCBF reinforces its commitment to climate resilience, fintech, and client-centric financial products that reach women</b></p> <p>1to4, BASE, CelsiusPro, Clarmondial, Habitat for Humanity, iGravity, and Seedstars join SCBF.</p>	<p><b>2021</b></p> <p><b>Renewed urgency of client-centric financial services for economic resilience</b></p> <p>The UN holds the Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) to inspire climate action, while the COVID-19 pandemic enters its second year.</p>
<p><b>SCBF reaches 2.6 million clients, 68% of whom are women</b></p>	<p><b>2020</b></p>
<p><b>SCBF platform deepens commitment to digital finance for climate resilience</b></p> <p>SCBF partners with OKO Mali to scale index insurance for smallholder farmers.</p>	<p><b>2019</b></p> <p><b>Fintech disruption undisputable</b></p> <p>Development funders increase funding to fintechs to <u>USD 450 million annually</u>.</p>
<p><b>SCBF members accelerate focus on renewable energy and climate change</b></p> <p>SCBF partners with Venture South to develop solar loan products for MSMEs in Kenya.</p>	<p><b>2017</b></p> <p><b>Financial inclusion gender gap persists at 9%</b></p> <p>The Global Findex finds that 69% of adults (1.2 billion people more than in 2014) have accounts globally.</p>
<p><b>SCBF supports fintechs traversing the Pioneer Gap</b></p> <p>SCBF partners with KiWi a fintech start-up concentrated on MSMEs. KiWi subsequently raises Series A investment round.</p>	<p><b>2016</b></p> <p><b>Global recognition of urgency to curb causes of climate change</b></p> <p>The Paris Agreement, adopted by 196 countries, comes into force.</p>

• CUSTOMER CENTRICITY

• CLIMATE

SCBF evolution	Global event
<p><b>Launch of SCBF to support client-centric financial services in low-income countries</b></p> <p>Founding members include SDC, Credit Suisse, Swisscontact, Swiss Microfinance Holding, and Zurich Insurance.</p>	<p><b>2011</b></p> <p><b>Financial institutions with high-cost, supply-driven products and services struggle to survive</b></p> <p>M-Pesa Kenya - a low-cost, non-financial services provider - reaches 13 million clients with mobile money payments.</p>
<p><b>MFIs lower costs to scale client outreach, responding to digital disruption</b></p> <p>SCBF partner NMB Bank in Nepal and Al Barid Bank in Morocco expand to serve low-income clients.</p>	<p><b>2012</b></p> <p><b>Industry shifts to client-centric products</b></p> <p>The Social Performance Task Force (SPTF) releases the Universal Standards for Social Performance Management.</p>
<p><b>SCBF links financial services directly to livelihood solutions</b></p> <p>SCBF, Buusaa Gonofaa and Wasasa in Ethiopia partner on microloans for water and solar access.</p>	<p><b>2013</b></p>
<p><b>The SCBF platform sharpens focus on financial services for climate resilience</b></p> <p>SCBF partners with Kilimo Salama in Tanzania on index insurance for farmers.</p>	<p><b>2014</b></p>
<p><b>The SCBF platform strengthens focus on women</b></p> <p>SCBF, Women's World Banking and Lead Foundation partner to replicate Caregiver insurance in Egypt. By 2021, the Caregiver product will cover 10 countries and reach 2 million clients (50% female).</p>	<p><b>2015</b></p> <p><b>The global development community emphasises client-centric and livelihood solutions</b></p> <p>All United Nations Member States adopt the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.</p>

• WOMEN

• FINTECH / DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

As SCBF celebrates its tenth anniversary, it has provided 159+ grants, with at least 65 more planned in the next three years. During this time, SCBF has evolved from its original focus on microfinance to an expanded focus on the technology-driven models that are relevant in the current environment, over time increasing the focus on fintech and insurtech, reaching women, and designing for climate resilience.

Today, we celebrate the impact of this work on the people that matter the most: our end-clients - women, smallholder farmers, microbusinesses, and others who have been underserved by financial institutions for too long. The next chapter will describe how the SCBF platform brings

together a diverse network of partners to help these clients obtain the financial services that they need to maintain and improve their economic circumstances, no matter what surprises life brings.



Caregiver insurance client  
Copyright Women's World Banking and Lead Foundation

## SDC, founding donor, reflects on 10 years of SCBF

SCBF connected with its founding donor the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to gain insight into how it sees the evolution of SCBF, past and future. In their own words, hear from SCBF Board Member Dr. Guido Beltrani, Co-Head of the SDC Expert Team Inclusive Economic Development, and Philippe Sas, Senior Policy Advisor, Expert Team Inclusive Economic Development, on how SCBF supports Switzerland's commitment to private sector engagement for poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

**As the founding donor of SCBF in 2011, we are thrilled that our initial vision for SCBF has become reality.** In May 2010, then SDC Director General Martin Dahinden and key Swiss financial sector actors decided to develop a public-private development partnership platform, later to be known

as SCBF, to promote employment and income generation in SDC partner countries. The platform would bring together the diverse yet complementary expertise and resources both human and financial from the Swiss private sector and SDC to foster financial inclusion as a poverty alleviation strategy.

**Today, SCBF is considered one of SDC's flagship programs for private sector engagement,** for at least four reasons.

First, its **innovativeness**: the SDC is convinced that its early support to the SCBF has paved the way for the realisation of other, more recent collaborations between the SDC and the Swiss financial sector to increase financial inclusion and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

Second, its **inclusive approach**, which brings together several actors around a common agenda. The SCBF has grown and today, it unites expertise and resources from 26 mainly Swiss members, among them leading insurers, re-insurers, banks, foundations, social enterprises as well as impact investors.



Al Amana, one of SCBF's earliest partners is still a leading microinsurance provider in Morocco in 2021.



Microleasing client from SCBF and Swisscontact project with cooperatives in Peru, 2015

Third, the **clear focus on the provision of technical assistance to financial institutions** in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America with proven growth potential. The Swiss banking, insurance and impact investing sectors are recognised internationally for their expertise. The SCBF builds on this Swiss added value to improve financial inclusion of the underserved through the provision of tailor-made technical assistance and capacity building to partner financial institutions in the global South.

Last but definitely not least, SCBF's **quantitative outreach** of 2.6 million end clients across 47 countries at the end of 2020 is impressive.

**SCBF is unique among SDC-funded entities focused on private sector engagement.** One reason it is the **diversity of market actors**, such as global financial players from the banking and insurance sector, impact investors, and start-ups, uniting around the same overarching objective to foster financial inclusion.

Moreover, the **thematic variety** of the technical assistance projects supported by the SCBF is impressive, addressing challenges related to climate change, agriculture, or migration to name a few, always from the perspective of financial inclusion.

An important characteristic of the SCBF is its clear gender focus - we are glad about the fact that 68 percent of the end clients of SCBF's technical assistance are women.

Finally, the SCBF is **uniquely positioned within one of the key sectors of Switzerland's economy** – the financial sector. This is an element shared with several other private sector engagement initiatives of the SDC, which are active in areas such as health, water, or agriculture and food security.

**We thank the whole SCBF team – its members, the Board and the secretariat – for the achievements during the last ten years** and look forward to the continuation of our cooperation in the future.



CHAPTER TWO  
**THE SCBF PLATFORM**

# A Model for Public-Private Cooperation

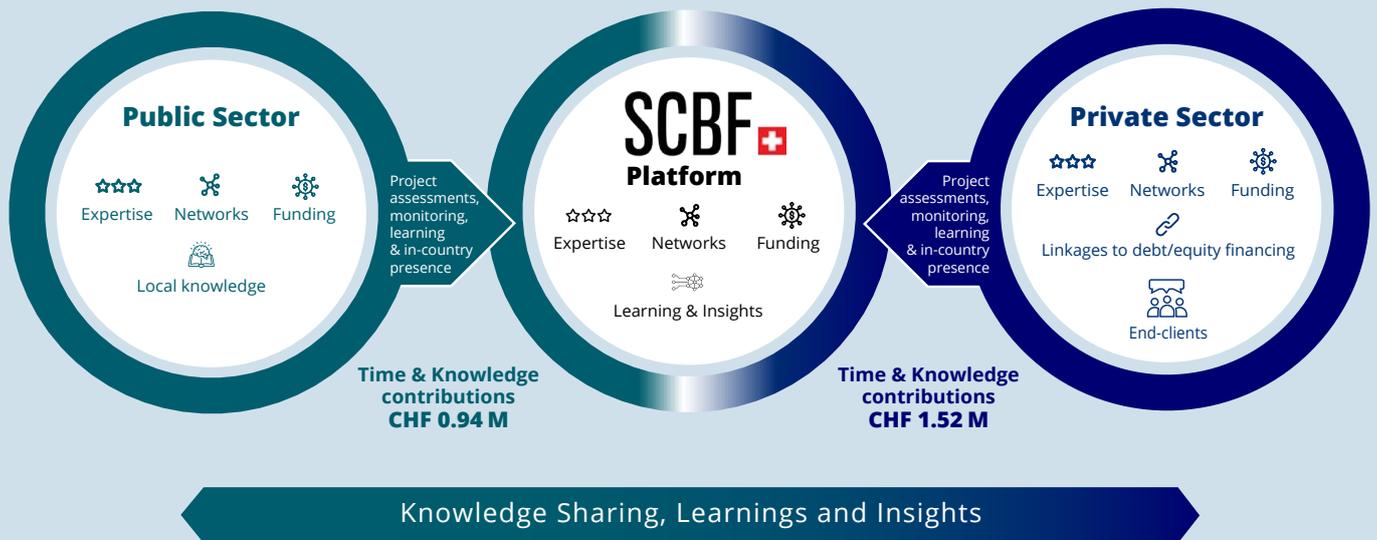
Global development is a shared responsibility, requiring a diverse array of investment and coordinated effort from government and business. Despite their shared interest in working towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda, public and private sector organisations have different expectations, incentives, terminology, and legal structures, which tend to block effective partnerships and their ability to align objectives.

**SCBF is a unique collaboration between public and private actors, bringing together unequalled expertise and insight from so many different players across all geographies and all spectrums of impact capital. We deeply value SCBF's public-private model.**

- Laura Hemrika, Credit Suisse



Public / Private Funds leveraged  
**1 : 1.82 CHF**



Poverty alleviation & financial inclusion mandate

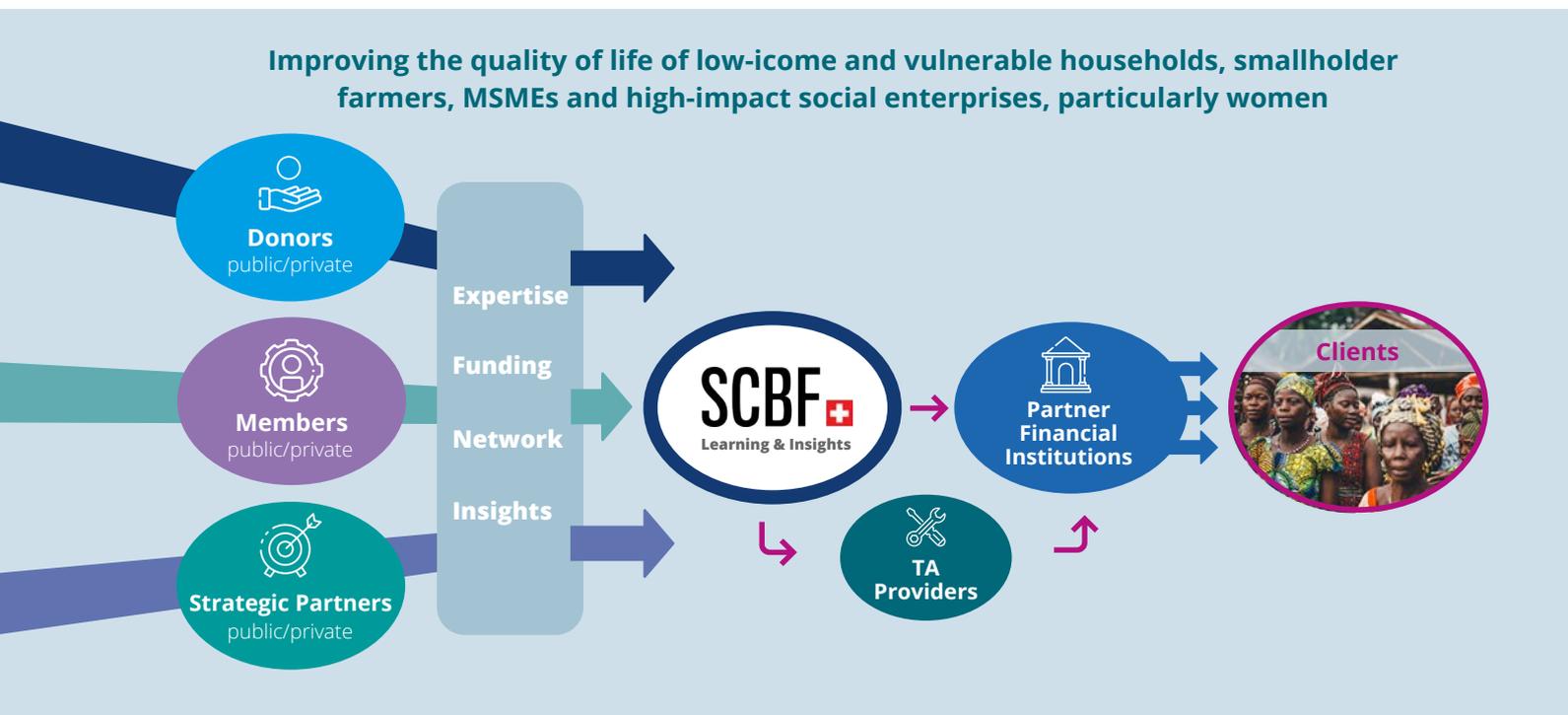
## The SCBF Platform

Over the last ten years, SCBF has effectively built a platform that engages public and private sector resources (human and financial) to expand financial inclusion. The SCBF platform uses technical expertise that sits in diverse member organisations to develop, test, and scale client-centric financial products and services aimed at low-income households.

The platform also facilitates partnerships, convenes relevant organisations, manages grants, and distils and disseminates insights.

The approach allows SCBF to have a small organisational footprint and overcome the barriers to public-private cooperation.

The following sections describe each of the core types of partners connected through the SCBF platform: clients, financial institutions, technical assistance providers, members, and donors.



Shuaaa Al Kaya, a Syrian refugee, and client of SCBF's partner in Jordan, Microfund for Women (MFW)



A rural client benefits from tailored lending products thanks to the SCBF partnership with Advans Tunisie, 2017

# Putting Clients at the Centre

**Tailored to their specific needs, financial products often allow small-scale entrepreneurs to develop their business, increase their income and to improve the well-being of their families.**

*- Beatrice Meyer, Head of Division Latin America and the Caribbean, Inclusive Economic Development, SDC*



ACRE Africa trainers, Rwanda, as part of SCBF support for upscaling agricultural insurance for smallholder farmers, 2018

In the last 10 years, SCBF has supported 110 financial institutions to develop new or improved customer-centric financial products, services and/or delivery channels to meet the financial needs of low-income and vulnerable households, smallholder farmers and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). These financial products include housing finance, agricultural index-insurance, health insurance, and loans targeted to the needs of different segments.

## **What are customer-centric financial services ?**

Expanding access to financial services is the first step towards financial inclusion. At the same time, [evidence shows](#) that access alone is insufficient. Real impact on people's lives requires that the availability of financial products and services is followed by an uptick in the use of services for daily needs and income generation. In fact, as access to financial services expands, exclusion may be harder to see: high access numbers can hide ongoing exclusion from useful, affordable, and appropriate services. This often happens when products and services from one country are copied directly into new countries and contexts, without conducting the proper market research on client needs and/or adapting these products and services to the new context.

Rather, a customer-centric approach matches increases in the supply of financial services with context-specific adaptations to match consumer demand. To impact the lives of those underserved by financial services, these customer-centric adaptations must specifically seek to address the needs and life circumstances of women, smallholder farmers, and MSMEs.

## **Why the focus on women, smallholder farmers, and MSMEs ?**

These three broad groups of clients (each of which are highly diverse client segments) face specific and persistent challenges in accessing meaningful financial services in developing countries. Furthermore, these groups are disproportionately impacted by the negative economic consequences of COVID-19. [Women](#) take on much of the childcare burden imposed by school closures, while they are more likely to fall ill or lack access to health insurance. MSMEs struggle as well as they often fall in the so-called 'missing middle' - with lost income neither covered by formal employers or by government cash assistance available to the poorest segments of the population.



Despite these challenges, few financial institutions have the data or expertise necessary to design services to meet the needs of these groups. For instance, [an IFC survey](#) in 13 African countries found that 60 percent of financial institutions surveyed said they collect gender disaggregated data but only 14 percent use the data to inform their business decisions.

<sup>1</sup> The most recent Global Findex (2017) found a persistent gender gap in financial inclusion: 9 percent more men than women, on average in developing countries, have access to financial accounts – the same percentage gap as in 2014.

Thus, SCBF grants provide the resources and time necessary for our partner financial institutions to design and adapt products for underserved client segments. Furthermore, SCBF partners commit to targets and report on outreach for the underserved segment(s) relevant to each project.

Adaptions include developing the systems and data-driven culture necessary to use customer data to inform business decisions, creating targeted financial literacy campaigns, and bundling financial and non-financial services (such as business coaching).

## Pezesha adapts float financing for women and rural small businesses in Kenya

Pezesha enables Pesatransact, a dominant agent network company in Kenya, by providing the 2,000+ merchants in the country with the tools and financing they need to meet the demands of customers and grow their business. With the support of SCBF, Pezesha is enhancing their float financing product for merchants, and has committed to adding 4,000 new merchants, at least 50 percent of whom will be women. To meet this goal, Pezesha identified three main adaptations to meet the needs of the female merchant community:

1. **Remove barriers to access:** Competing rural loan products usually require women to have guarantees from the male figure in the household before they take a loan. Pezesha, on the other hand, focuses entirely on a risk-based approach where anyone, regardless of gender, can obtain a loan for their business without a family member's approval.
2. **Increase the frequency of financial education:** Through end-customer engagement, Pezesha realised that female merchants want to understand the loan product details and terms in advance to ensure they do not get in a debt trap. Thus, the company introduced personalised SMS tips which provide on-going and accessible information on which products meet their needs and how they can ensure good use of credit to create wealth opportunities.
3. **Allow for loan amount graduation:** To further help female merchants manage their credit needs, Pezesha adapted their products to align the loan amount with sales performance. This provides transparency, and rewards female merchants who have growing sales as a result of higher customer demand. This is a pathway to wealth creation for women small business owners.

Furthermore, at least 50 percent of the merchants reached over the course of this project (2020 to 2022) will be from rural populations. To meet this goal, Pezesha has identified that rural clients have the same need as urban merchants; however, they are unable to access the same quality of service found in the city. Thus, they have made three key adaptations to better meet the needs of rural clients:



Miriam, a Pesatransact M-Pesa agent, gained access to working capital through Pezesha to grow her inventory and business. Her businesses revenues have grown by at least 30%, 2021. Photo Credit: Pezesha

1. **Offer a human touch:** Pezesha and Pesatransact have added more field and agent officers on the ground to ensure that rural merchants have some face-to-face interaction to improve the quality of service received.
2. **Hyper-localised communication:** Pezesha communication is also offered in the local language of Swahili and simplified forms to ensure effective touchpoints with the rural communities.
3. **Increase repayment flexibility:** Since rural merchants have less regular customer demand than urban merchants, they have the option to repay daily, weekly or monthly based on demand.

The timely support from SCBF in 2020 enabled Pezesha to not only cope with COVID-19 challenges, but to also use the crisis to identify and implement forward-thinking strategies that unlock opportunities for the MSMEs.

This included supporting MSMEs providing essential services with affordable access to working capital and providing financial education that empowers them with tips on cash flow to keep their business afloat.

## SCBF Perspectives: Inclusive Finance in a Digital World

In 2011, when SCBF was founded, entrepreneur and investor Marc Andreessen famously stated: “Software is eating the world.” He realised at the time that digital-first business models would define the future – both for those included and those excluded from the design and benefits of these models – rather than traditional brick-and-mortar businesses. For financial inclusion, the shift to digital has led to [transformative new business models](#), from fintech to insurtech to neobanks, which show strong potential to expand meaningful financial inclusion.

Since 2011, SCBF has been an active supporter of this shift, transitioning from a focus on microcredit to a focus on diversified financial services which use technology to drive down costs and reach underserved segments. SCBF funding has helped to expand digital financial services, including reaching nearly 300,000 women who are now transacting digitally. Through this experience, SCBF has two key takeaways which will inform the next 10 years.

First: ***Expanding financial inclusion requires unique business models that combine the benefits of digital with the realities of limited infrastructure.*** Digital tools can lower costs, increase efficiency, and make services more convenient for clients. At the same time, the underserved often live in areas with low mobile connectivity, limited access to electricity, and limited access to low-cost mobile devices. The most effective business models for financial inclusion recognise and design for this duality. For example, [Kuunda](#), a digital financial services (DFS) start-up, is solving for a critical problem in the expansion of DFS in Africa: agent networks, the brick-and-mortar backbone for DFS, rely on MSMEs who have limited access to the cash (hard currency) needed to service customer transactions. In fact, up to 20 percent of DFS transactions in Africa are denied due to liquidity issues.

Thus, Kuunda developed a fully digital product – Hapa Cash – which uses technology to provide appropriate financing to agents to support their liquidity needs. In this way, Hapa Cash recognised the reality of DFS – physical agents will be necessary for the foreseeable future – and designed the digital services necessary to support this reality. SCBF, Kuunda, FINCA and M-PESA are now refining Hapa Cash to serve 80,000 to 100,000 M-Pesa agents.

Second: ***With digital as the new reality, the future of finance is embedded in non-financial business models.*** We’ve already seen how digital has diversified business models beyond microfinance institutions. We’re now seeing that digital is diversifying business models away from companies that look anything like traditional financial institutions. This trend toward embedded finance means that there is potential for [any company](#) to become a fintech company. This is creating new opportunities for financial institutions to partner with companies to provide banking as a service (BaaS) offerings. For instance, SCBF is supporting a partnership between AwanTunai, a supply chain fintech in Indonesia, and Sayurbox, an agricultural aggregator and direct-to-consumer e-commerce grocery store, to [adapt low-cost formal invoice financing](#) to smallholder farmers. Through this embedded model, AwanTunai is leveraging Sayurbox’s direct relationship with farmers in order to deliver relevant and affordable financial services.



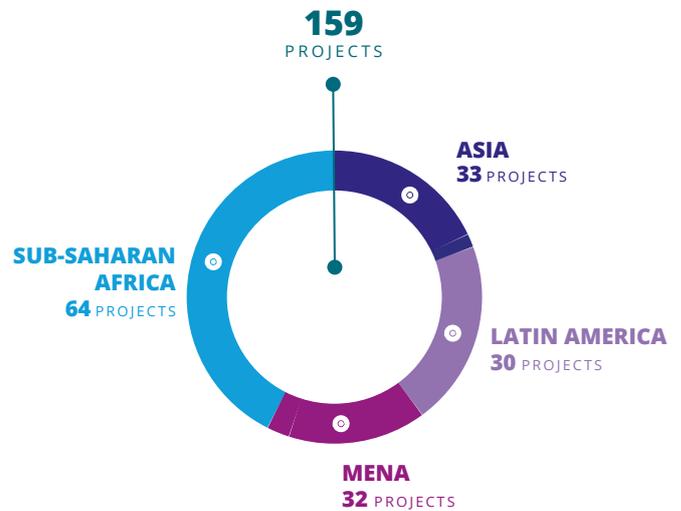
Amosi Ally, a Kuunda agent in Dar es Salaam saving money for his children’s school fees  
Photo Credit: Kuunda

# Sustaining Innovation through Partner Financial Institutions

Local **partner financial institutions** are ultimately responsible for designing, developing, sustaining, and scaling client-centric financial services to low-income clients. In each SCBF project, the financial institution must contribute at least 20 percent of the cost of the projects in order to ensure ownership and drive long-term sustainability. In reality, **this contribution over the past 10 years has been, on average, 35 percent of the total funded projects**, a sign of these institutions' commitment to ensuring that each project has real impact on their business and customers.

SCBF partners with financial institutions to refine products and services, scale operations, and allow them to attract investments from the private sector. In a series of recent interviews with some of these partners, institutions reported using SCBF support to take risks, reach new markets, increase credibility when approaching global debt and equity investors, and access relevant global and local partners to improve operations.

## Partner Financial Institutions by Region



The number of partner financial institutions is calculated based on the number of projects which include a partner financial institution. This number may differ from the number of unique partner financial institutions.

## awamo uses SCBF support to access new funding to scale innovative services for rural customers

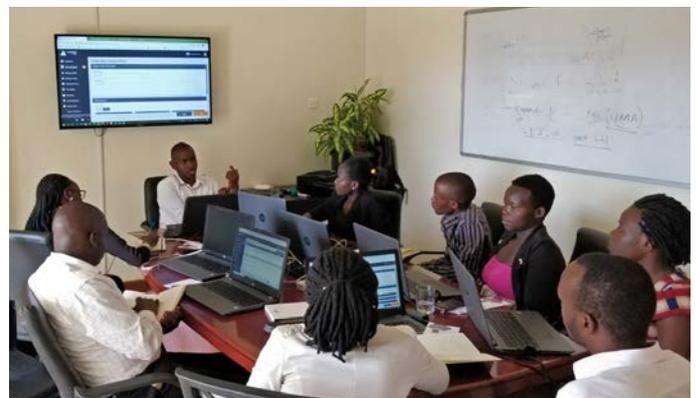
**The SCBF grant was unique in that it helped us to venture out in new directions, even as COVID-19 made fundraising harder for early-stage companies like ours.**

*Benedikt Kramer, CEO*

awamo offers an easy-to-use, mobile banking platform designed for rural microfinance institutions (MFIs) reaching 1'000 to 5'000 customers. This platform allows MFIs to run all their processes digitally, thereby increasing transparency, lowering loan defaults, lowering costs of operations and eventually driving down interest rates for rural borrowers. Once MFIs have digitised operations, they are able to offer bundled credit and insurance products, thereby reducing loan default and the risk of over-indebtedness.

Bundling insurance with the existing loan offering meant that awamo was venturing out in new directions and thus needed to access new partners. The SCBF grant – vetted by SCBF members including best-in-class global insurance companies – provided credibility, signalling that these global companies saw awamo's model of bundling credit and insurance for rural clients as viable.

In addition, the grant helped awamo to raise a private funding round of USD 300,000, since the private funder accessed additional value thanks to the SCBF grant. This financing round allowed awamo to maintain its current customer base of 100 MFIs and 210,000 rural clients in Kenya through COVID-19 lockdowns. As the economic challenges resulting from the crisis subside, awamo will look to use the solid ground gained by SCBF and private funding to launch their Series A investment round and scale across sub Saharan Africa.



With SCBF support, awamo works with MFI partners to shift loan officers to financial agents to support the expanded product offering for rural clients

# Our Partner Financial Institutions



## OKO Mali taps SCBF's global and local networks to scale insurance for climate resilience

**OKO is a really good reference but growth needs to continue that we can say it has really changed the local situation.**

**When this happens, SCBF can say: We have been instrumental to put the seed into the ground.**

*- Allianz*

OKO Finance is a microfinance start-up that designs and distributes affordable insurance products for farmers using new technologies. Endorsed by SCBF member Allianz (Re), OKO approached SCBF for funding to upscale its innovative mobile-based distribution channel to increase the reach of weather-based index insurance for smallholder farmers. OKO has developed strong partnerships to support this model. For example, Allianz provides pricing capabilities and risk capacity through Allianz Re, while the mobile network operator Orange provides the mobile connectivity, recognised brand, and a mobile payment solution available nationwide. Additional partners include NGOs such as SOS Faim, local MFIs, and seed vendors.



OKO Mali offers crop insurance to smallholder farmers in Mali through a simple interface, low-cost digital channels, and robust customer support  
Photo Credit: OKO

The SCBF partnership provides benefits beyond grant funds for product upscaling. Through SCBF and Allianz, OKO connected with the local SDC office in Mali. SDC provided a diverse set of introductions, including to the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Directorate of Agriculture, and a number of producer organisations and cooperatives. Through these contacts, OKO was able to increase sales by onboarding new cooperatives and to adapt conflict-sensitive operations to address risks related to insecurity.

Beyond leveraging SDC's public sector contacts and expertise, OKO Mali benefited from the SCBF partnership when seeking to raise commercial funds. SCBF made it possible for the company to scale up the initial pilot to show more traction to investors and potentially attract new partners such as the World Food Programme and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Today, with an outreach of nearly 18,000 smallholder farmers, OKO Mali is on track to scale digital climate-resilient insurance to help farmers stay on track regardless of the weather.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This text is a summary of interview responses from Simon Schwall, the CEO of OKO Finance; SDC, including colleagues in Mali and Steven Geiger, in charge of SDC's programme for Niger and a regional rural development programme at the head office, and the Agri team at Allianz Re.

## KiWi leverages SCBF support to access the equity needed to scale services for micro-merchants

KiWi, a Swiss-based company operating in Mexico, provides a digital smart point-of-sale device to micro-merchants so that they can accept card payments, register their sales, and sell new services such as airtime. KiWi offers a cash advance solution to merchants linked to the volume of transactions completed through the KiWi services. SCBF supported KiWi to upscale the cash advance solution by refining the product based on client feedback, automating operations and risk management, and improving marketing and communications.

SCBF support came at the right moment, as KiWi was approaching angel investors to support its early growth. KiWi found that the SCBF name is synonymous with its members, and thus SCBF represents the major Swiss players in financial inclusion. This backing provided the credibility required to raise a Series A from equity investors including SCBF members [1to4 Foundation](#) and [Symbiotics](#) (in addition to [Investiere](#) and [Polytech Ventures](#)).

In addition, SCBF support made it possible for KiWi to take a customer-centric and iterative approach to product upscaling through “pragmatic, short-term, and flexible” funds that simply were not available from any other private or philanthropic donors. These funds allowed for iteration as SCBF recognises that early-stage companies change their objectives often, which requires updating milestones while keeping an eye on the agreed upon objectives.

Four years after the second SCBF grant closed, KiWi is reaching 40,000 micro-merchants across Mexico and processing more than USD 7 million in transactions per month. In the next five years, the company will expand regionally, reach 1 million micro-merchants, and add more features to the core product in order to continue to improve the lives of small business owners serving low-income communities.



Micro-merchants are critical for financial inclusion. Photo from SCBF, Bamboo Finance, and Apoyo Integral partnership, 2012

## SCBF Perspectives: Bridging the Pioneer Gap to scale solutions for the underserved

The SCBF technical assistance grant to KiWi came just at the moment when the company was navigating the so-called **Pioneer Gap**: the stage of growth when a start-up is beyond early-stage grant or friends and family funding, but before that company is deemed mature enough for commercial investment. KiWi has overcome the Pioneer Gap, securing its CHF 3 million Series A. Yet, many other promising solutions designed for the underserved have failed to do so. This is in large part because tackling the unique challenges leading to financial exclusion - a lack of enabling regulations, limited infrastructure, and smaller profit margins - often result in longer timeframes to scale and prove a return on investment than commercial investors expect.

The SCBF platform has provided expertise, funding, networks, and technical assistance to companies navigating these challenges, as seen through the stories of OKO Mali, awamo, and KiWi. SCBF grants are designed to meet the circumstances of these pioneers: an efficient application process with predictable timelines, flexible grant milestones, and small ticket sizes (up to CHF 150,000), providing grant support at amounts that are too low to justify typical commercial investment and the related due diligence. Philanthropic capital such as that provided by SCBF is particularly relevant at this stage, not only to help one company survive, but also to generate lessons and spawn copycat competitors, such that the most promising solutions for the underserved can be replicated quickly to create maximum impact.

**Unicorns, the companies that might reach a valuation of over USD 1 billion, move fast and break things. Camels are...entrepreneurs that build scalable successful businesses that can survive a drought, applicable in regions without the cushion of easy venture money and supportive ecosystems.**

*- Alex Lazarow, author of Out-Innovate, as quoted in Forbes, February 2020*



Photo Credit: BKN Photography / Unsplash

From working with these pioneers, SCBF has learnt about their unique needs. We can see that technical assistance is critical, yet insufficient. Pioneers need flexible and diverse funding mechanisms including recoverable grants and loans with longer time horizons. They need funding and partners that recognise that the solutions best placed to support

inclusive growth will take unique paths that may require patience, risk tolerance, and coordinated support from a wide variety of partners – including, in some cases, government subsidies, or a comfort with the reality that **camels can be just as valuable as unicorns**. For more on how SCBF plans to evolve based on these lessons, read on to Chapter 3.

# Transferring Knowledge through Technical Assistance Providers

Technical assistance providers provide expertise based on global insights and emerging best practices to help financial institutions test new products and refine approaches. The SCBF platform leverages our network of expert partners to transfer knowledge to the local financial service providers who are best placed to reach low-income clients with meaningful financial services. Technical assistance includes coaching management and staff in effective product management activities including in-market assessments, client-centric product development, quality control, product delivery and marketing, business planning, monitoring and evaluation, and human resource development.

To better understand the role of technical assistance providers within the SCBF platform, we spoke with Gilles Renoul (GR), the Director of Microinsurance at [Women's World Banking](#), a strong partner to SCBF over the past 10 years. Women's World Banking provides advisory services, asset management, and training on leadership and gender diversity. Since 1979, the non-profit has worked with 52 financial institutions in 28 countries to demonstrate the benefit of investing in women as clients, and as leaders.

## Our Technical Assistance Providers



Additional TA providers include Alexandre Berthaud Purata, John Wipf, Juan Vega, Lene Hansen, and our members

## Women's World Banking partners with SCBF to replicate and scale health insurance designed for low-income women

**GR: SCBF has enabled Women's World Banking to support its financial institution partners in developing financial solutions that work for their low-income women customers.** Specifically, SCBF has funded Women's World Banking to introduce and replicate Women's World Banking's flagship hospital cash product, known as Caregiver. First launched in 2006 with Microfund for Women in Jordan, Women's World Banking has worked with financial service provider (FSP) partners in Egypt, Morocco, and Uganda to develop and launch similar health insurance products. This would not have been possible without SCBF support.

**SCBF's funding is unique in that it has a specific focus that matches Women's World Banking's mission and helps achieve our strategic targets as an organisation.**

Specifically, it enables us to support FSP partners in offering microinsurance products that work for low-income women. SCBF funding is based on achieving milestones, which helps to keep all parties focused on the key steps in the engagement. On the other hand, SCBF funding also comes with many requirements that are not always easy to meet making it necessary to have additional funding support available to supplement what SCBF doesn't cover. But it is difficult to find funding for technical assistance that is focused on both insurance solutions and women which is why we appreciate SCBF funding and keep coming back.

**SCBF's support of the Caregiver microinsurance has enabled Women's World Banking to replicate and improve the solution in two markets since 2006** (and now adapt the solution to saving in one more market) at a moment where funding for insurance was scarce. Given the evolved and innovative insurance model, SCBF positioned the organisation to access funding from new funders. Through these replications, SCBF funding has contributed to extending insurance coverage to more than 2,000,000 beneficiaries, more than one million of them women and girls. It has also assisted in demonstrating that Caregiver can deliver value to low-income women and be fully sustainable. In-house outcome studies show very positive effects of Caregiver on understanding the nuances and the benefits of insurance; improved consumption (loan payments on time, avoiding debt) as well as on financial literacy and skills.



A client in Egypt benefits from Caregiver insurance, a product upscaled with support from Lead Foundation, Women's World Banking, and SCBF.  
Photo Credit: Women's World Banking and Lead Foundation.

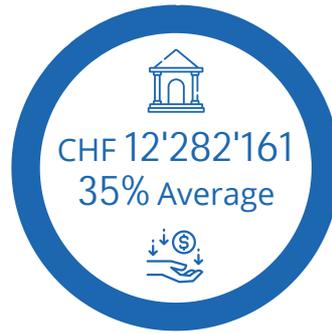
**Thanks to the success of our various projects, the relationship with SCBF has evolved from a pure donor-grantee to a trustful partnership in which new ideas and innovation can be tested.** For example, SCBF supported an automation project in Egypt that helped accelerate claims payments, SCBF co-financed a project to develop a savings-linked insurance programme in Jordan, and SCBF is now supporting a new insurance approach through saving accounts in Uganda. This has helped Women's World Banking push the boundaries of our expertise into new areas.

**Women's World Banking hopes to continue its partnership with SCBF with the same strong focus on replicating and scaling insurance and other financial solutions for low-income women.** SCBF could play a stronger role in facilitating exchange of lessons learnt and good practice within the sector. We would also welcome new grant mechanisms, such as recoverable grants, or funding support to conduct outcome evaluations. Another way SCBF could evolve is by offering more flexible grant terms which, we believe, would make for a more impactful partnership, since it would free up time and resources spent on administrative requirements to be dedicated to the actual project work.

# Creating Value for Members

As a **member-driven organisation**, SCBF engages 24 private sector members ranging from insurance industry titans to fintech start-ups and impact investors, who contribute their time and expertise to grant origination, selection, and monitoring. These partners also, in some cases, provide the link to debt and/or equity financing to support promising products after grants are complete.

The profile of SCBF members has evolved over the years to match the evolving needs of financial inclusion.



Amount and percentage of project matching contribution from PFI and the Grantees (SCBF calculation)



Amount of private investments leveraged

## Our Members



## Venture South, an investor for small and growing businesses, reflects on the value of SCBF membership

Venture South International (VSI) is a lending company which develops specialised loan products. Founded in 2008 by microfinance experts, VSI provides loans between USD 2,000 and 50,000, targeting the missing middle of small and growing businesses who have financing needs between microfinance and bank loans. An SCBF member since 2016, VSI have been active in supporting project sourcing, selection, and outreach.

In honour of the 10-year anniversary, SCBF connected with VSI principal George Petty (GP) to hear, in his own words, the value of SCBF membership.

**GP: We decided to join SCBF because it is a unique network of Swiss practitioners.** It provides us with an opportunity to share our work and learn from others. SCBF provides greater visibility, knowledge-sharing opportunities and funding for projects which is not available for early-stage organisations like ours. For example, we are developing a warehouse loan product which has required a lot of preparation to get everything right. We would not have been able to do this without SCBF support.

**We have been involved in all parts of the SCBF project cycle, including project sourcing, selection, and monitoring.** Each step allows us to see what is going on in the market up close, see how others address specific problems and share our experience. In particular, SCBF's peer review model during the application process is unique and very good. The process is not overly bureaucratic and it allows for constructive feedback from people with experience in the field. It is always interesting to see what others are doing without having to spend multiple days in a conference somewhere.

## Allianz, leading global insurance provider, imagines how SCBF can evolve to build on the current success of the member-driven model

The Allianz Group is one of the leading integrated financial services providers worldwide. It offers a wide range of insurance and fund products to 92 million customers in more than 70 countries.

The Swiss branch office of Allianz SE Reinsurance has been an SCBF member since 2012. SCBF connected with Dominik Wehgartner (DW) of Allianz SE and Reto Schneider (RS) of Allianz SE Reinsurance to learn more about the value they see in SCBF membership and the role that the platform can play in filling the protection gap – the difference between economic losses caused by disasters and

the amount of those losses covered by insurance. This gap is estimated to equal USD 162.5 billion globally, 96 percent of which is in emerging markets.<sup>3</sup>

**DW/RS: As an SCBF member, we gain first-hand insights into innovation and trends in the space of inclusive insurance.** By participating in project selection, project committees, and project monitoring, we learn what works and what does not work and connect with relevant players in the market. We also source new projects for SCBF, and find that SCBF provides a strong possibility to access necessary funds for inclusive insurance projects, especially for innovative start-up companies there is a good possibility to access the funding.

**We find that SCBF projects are successful due to the commitment by all parties involved.** This is most critical for the success of a project, as well as the contributions from financial institutions which ensure that they have skin in the game, so to speak.



Client engagement through the SCBF and Habitat partnership to build capacity for housing microfinance in Cambodia, 2012

<sup>3</sup>Lloyd's World At Risk report, October 2018. As cited in "Role of Public-Private Partnership in addressing the Global Insurance Protection Gap" from the Insurance Development Forum, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2021. Available at: [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/reser\\_e/iyahen\\_290421.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/reser_e/iyahen_290421.pdf)

## SCBF Perspectives: Technology-enabled insurance for smallholder farmers is blazing a path for a diverse range of solutions for climate resilience

Due to the current climate emergency, an estimated 100 million people who are currently economically self-sufficient will be pushed into poverty by 2030 – without intervention. Women, low-income populations, and smallholder farmers will be disproportionately impacted as weather patterns become more unpredictable, exacerbating the barriers that these groups already face to sustain and grow their income. They will need a diverse range of solutions to avoid this predicted outcome, including responsive safety nets that help to reduce risk and incentivise climate-smart practices.

Green fintech – companies who use technology-driven financial services to build climate resilience - can provide such safety nets and incentives. However, the mere concept of “green fintech” (or digital finance for climate resilience) is new. The nascent industry is in a period of rapid experimentation, which requires significant resources for market research and testing, as well as an acceptance that business models will fail, shift, and evolve. The SCBF platform is actively supporting this experimentation, creating a pipeline of relevant companies for investors by reducing risk and building capacity. OKO Mali is one clear example: its weather-index crop insurance is a lifeline to farmers who are facing climate risk on top of political instability and a lack of infrastructure. However, operating in such an environment requires more time and resources than investors typically accept. By connecting with the SCBF platform, OKO Mali has gained access to expertise, funding, and networks to keep refining its model of sustainably reducing risk for these farmers, vital to the future food security of Mali and the Sahel region.



Photo Credit: by Nichola Réméné / Le Pictorum

In this period of experimentation and growth, many questions are yet to be fully answered, such as: What are the most sustainable pricing models for microinsurance, considering low-income levels and the decreasing ability of historical data to predict future outcomes? How can green fintech fully protect low-income populations through risk-sharing, while also promoting climate-friendly practices that prevent further instability? SCBF will bring to bear the full strength of its network of partners to push forward the industry's understanding of such issues, playing our part in preventing those 100 million people from falling behind.

# Maximising Impact for Public and Private Donors

At SCBF, our donors are critical partners, serving on the board and as members actively contributing their technical expertise, experience, and networks to drive the success of SCBF projects. As demonstrated through the SDC interview in Chapter 1, SCBF benefits greatly from this public sector funding. The public sector brings several critical aspects to the table: a mandate to ensure that public funding is used to alleviate poverty, in-country presence across emerging markets to support learning between countries and regions, and expertise in monitoring and evaluation.

In addition to public-sector donor, the SCBF platform benefits from private-sector donors and foundations, which complement public contributions in recognition of the moral and business imperative to alleviate poverty and drive economic growth. Here, we highlight three of these donors - AGFUND, Swiss Re Foundation, and Credit Suisse - who describe why they partner with SCBF, and how they envision their partnerships evolving as we look towards 2030.

## Total funding since 2011: CHF 25.1M



## AGFUND, SCBF Board member, member, and donor, illustrates how SCBF's partnership model contributes to the SDGs

The Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND) is a regional organisation, established in 1980 by the initiative of His Royal Highness the late Prince Talal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the support of the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council. AGFUND has partnerships with 444 international, regional, and governmental organisations, through which it supports development projects.

AGFUND has been a member, board representative, and donor since 2018. SCBF spoke with Mr. Nasser Al-Kahtani (NA), AGFUND's Executive Director.

**NA: We became a SCBF member and donor as it funds innovative projects that are relevant to the evolving financial inclusion landscape and challenges.** Moreover, SCBF and AGFUND share the same values and mission and are both dedicated to achieving these goals. SCBF's work has successfully increased access and usage of financial services for end-clients to improve their livelihoods. This is evident not only in the types of products but also in their outreach that embrace 2.6 million low-income people in 48 countries.

Over the past three years, the AGFUND-SCBF partnership has co-funded six projects in the areas of financial education, smallholders farmers insurance, digital finance, and financial services for refugees. Our strategic partnership with SCBF is not only unique and fruitful, but also backed by commitment, and enables both partners to work on innovative products and services that can be implemented effectively and efficiently.

**SCBF's model can support current trends by continuing to enhance client-centric financial products and services, including financial education, micro-savings, agricultural weather-risk mitigation, and digital financial services.** Over the last ten years, technology (including expansion of mobile banking) has allowed non-traditional financial institutions to enhance access to finance, develop new business models and enhance investment opportunities that support micro-enterprises. This has forced banks to invest in digital innovation more quickly than they might have done otherwise. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this process. We are now seeing a range of client-centric, SDG-oriented products, including those orientated towards smallholder farmers and small-scale businesses.

**The future of financial inclusion will be different. It will emphasise more sustainable, wide-ranging self-employment, in addition to gender and client-protection issues.** The role of financial inclusion to achieve the SDGs will be more advanced and wide-ranging than today. SCBF can evolve accordingly by expanding its activities in both financial inclusion and across the SDGs to innovative products and services, innovative products, services, and business models.

**Financial inclusion in the coming years will need to respond to the aftermath of COVID-19.** This will not only affect financial services delivery, but also the types of products needed. The COVID-19 experience called for digital dissemination programmes to reach customers in different, easier, and less costly ways. Moreover, small farmers, especially women, need products to reduce the effects of climate fluctuations. Technical assistance in the form of development of best practices, advocacy, capacity building, financial services, software acquisition, and financial education will be needed for many years to come to bring more unbanked and underbanked people into the formal financial system.

## Swiss Re Foundation and SCBF drive access to health, climate-smart agriculture, and coastal resilience

The [Swiss Re Group](#) is one of the world's leading providers of reinsurance, insurance and other forms of insurance-based risk transfer, working to make the world more resilient. [The Swiss Re Foundation](#) (SR Foundation) reflects the social and humanitarian values of Swiss Re. Swiss Re has been a member of SCBF since 2012 and a member of its Board of Directors since 2019. Most recently, SR Foundation has become a donor, committing grant support to seven insurance projects and two insurance-related outcome studies. By targeting low-income households, smallholder farmers and small- and medium-sized enterprises, the projects supported by the SR Foundation help regions where resilience is low or under threat.

SCBF connected with Elodie de Warlincourt (EdW), Vice President and Philanthropy Portfolio Manager at SR Foundation, to share her perspective on the value of deepening this partnership.

EdW: **SCBF offers a vehicle for public-private partnership to support client-centric insurance and financial inclusion products for the low-income people.** We see a great match with the focus of SR Foundation in the areas of access to health, climate resilience and smart agriculture, coastal resilience and disaster risk reduction. SCBF's value is to create a place for knowledge exchange and to unlock potential for collaboration. Insurance schemes at the bottom of the pyramid need to accomplish several objectives at once: demonstrate value for money, create a market, provide financial literacy training, track impact, and generate new data to develop relevant risk models.

All these things cost more than the revenues that can be generated; thus grant funding is still very much needed. By encouraging lesson sharing, SCBF can contribute to reduced cost investments in the learning curve.

**As a member of SCBF, we benefit in various ways :** we learn from seeing how projects are prepared and supported in SCBF, we can compare notes on projects that were proposed to us, learn from projects supported by others, and we can propose projects on which we feel there is a potential for scale. Furthermore, our grant funding enables learning, experimenting, and sharing knowledge about solutions related to challenges in our focal areas of climate and natural hazards risk management, access to health and income opportunities, and societal resilience where it is low or under threat. The impact of our grant to SCBF should help us reach 980,000 insured family members or 245,000 policyholders.

**SCBF is very unique and different from other grantees.** As a Foundation we focus on our impact targets but encourage a diversity of approaches and solutions and aim to support those with the ability to demonstrate impact to scale. We notice that SCBF has the capacity to pick scalable approaches and to demonstrate their impact.

**The strength of SCBF has been to create public-private collaboration at a very operational level that is applied to every project.** This has long been possible with the funding of SDC and expertise from the private sector.

There are possibly four interesting avenues for SCBF to enhance private sector engagement in the expansion of financial services:

1. **Opening the range of priority countries** to all low- to low-middle income, lifting the target on SDC priority countries.
2. **Increasing flexibility regarding the type of projects and organisations** that can be funded, as long as the impact and the additionality are clearly stated.
3. **Deepening the focus on learning and dissemination of lessons** learnt through its own website, webinars, events, and partnerships with research organisations.
4. **Deepening the network of partners** to support project identification and in-country as research and learning.

## Credit Suisse supports SCBF's unique public-private platform as it brings together unequalled expertise across geographies, sectors, and spectrums of impact capital

Credit Suisse was the first private sector donor to support SCBF, first contributing in 2011. As part of its Corporate Citizenship commitments, Credit Suisse contributes to the achievement of the SDGs through employee engagement and grant-funded partnerships focusing on three themes: financial inclusion, financial education, and future skills. SCBF connected with Laura Hemrika (LH), the Global Head of Corporate Citizenships at Credit Suisse to better understand how this strategic partnership contributes to the company's impact goals.

LH: **Credit Suisse has a long and deep history with financial inclusion – as an investor and as a donor.** Our support for SCBF came from our grant-funded and employee-supported Financial Inclusion Initiative (FII) which, at the time, was very much focused on developing and strengthening the financial inclusion sector and the actors within it. It was clear to us that without a stronger and larger pipeline of emerging market financial services providers, the socio-economic impact we were seeking to achieve would simply not be possible. We also saw that the challenge of financing economic development was bigger than a small number of expert investors could address and required partnership and collaboration across sectors. SCBF embodied all of these things and more.

**SCBF is a unique collaboration between public and private actors, bringing together unequalled expertise and insight from so many different players across all geographies and all spectrums of impact capital.** We deeply value SCBF's public-private model. SDC initiated this collaboration many years ago with the understanding of just how important this kind of public-private partnership is to create sustainable impact for end clients and for the Swiss sustainable finance space. SDC's leadership has provided the credibility and the drive to develop something really quite unique. The experience of both public and private actors ensures the very best outcomes from the projects and organisations we fund.

**Financial services are key to enabling all SDGs.** As this understanding grows, so does the industry's acceptance that financial services are a means to serve emerging markets responsibly and effectively, rather than an end goal. Thus, looking to 2030, SCBF will need to reflect this in its approach. Likewise, to help innovative companies overcome the Pioneer Gap, we are seeing more need for financial instruments across the capital spectrum, driving SCBF to find a role in the blended finance space and to continue building the understanding of the critical function of technical assistance alongside impact investments.

**Through its members, SCBF provides a unique opportunity to donors to access and partner with leading experts in the financial inclusion space and to benefit from their knowledge and experience acquired through the multitudes of projects they have supported.**

*– Laura Hemrika, Credit Suisse*



Photo Credit: Amol Sonar / Unsplash



CHAPTER THREE  
**VISION 2030**



SCBF determines its 2030 strategy in close collaboration with members, donors, and partners.  
Photo Credit: Markus Winkler / Unsplash

**As SCBF looks towards 2030, we are excited to watch how the model will evolve. We'd like to see SCBF funding for earlier-stage start-ups, and financing mechanisms beyond technical assistance to better support customer-centric innovation in the space of inclusive insurance."**

*- Allianz Re*

As SCBF looks back on the first 10 years, we see a story of evolution: starting with the founders' core belief in the benefits of financial inclusion, SCBF has transitioned from a publicly-funded initiative focused on microcredit to a public-private platform with a diverse portfolio of customer-centric solutions ranging from savings to fintech to climate-focused insurtech. The SCBF platform brings together unparalleled public and private partners to provide pioneers with the expertise, resources, and networks they need to succeed in expanding financial inclusion.

**As SCBF looks toward 2030, it may consider repayable grants for higher risk products, and targeted funds which can be used as equity to help raise additional funding.**

*- Venture South*

While we celebrate the past, we evolve to meet present and future needs. 2021 looks very different from 2011: a global pandemic, worsening climate crisis, and increased migration are presenting unprecedented challenges, especially for women, small businesses, and smallholder farmers. To respond to these challenges and prepare for what may come, the global community must invest in the entrepreneurs who are energised to develop solutions that work for these marginalised populations. This requires challenging assumptions, as many of the traditional ethos of the financial inclusion industry are becoming outdated: digital technology is becoming business as usual, individuals are sending money and accessing loans through a range of non-financial institutions, and technical expertise is increasingly found outside of organisations based in the global North.

For SCBF, challenging assumptions means keeping our core model of supporting technical assistance while exploring new ways to work. This means supporting any entrepreneur with the potential to expand access to customer-centric financial solutions, whether a financial institution or a company embedding financial services into a broader business model. It means drawing more heavily on local technical expertise, looking to new models for technical assistance to increase relevance and bring solution to scale. Finally, it means developing new financing mechanisms, for example, convertible debt or returnable grants, for entrepreneurs at risk of falling into the Pioneer Gap (refer to [SCBF Perspectives on page 19](#)).

**Looking forward to 2030, having achieved impressive results so far, we think it is important for SCBF to evolve, expand and shape its future, while staying true to its core strengths. Most importantly, the future of SCBF should be actively shaped by its members and commitment to achieving the SDGs.**

*- SDC*

Without a doubt, SCBF will evolve, while remaining a member-driven organisation deeply committed to reaching women and building climate resilience through customer-centric solutions designed for the underserved.

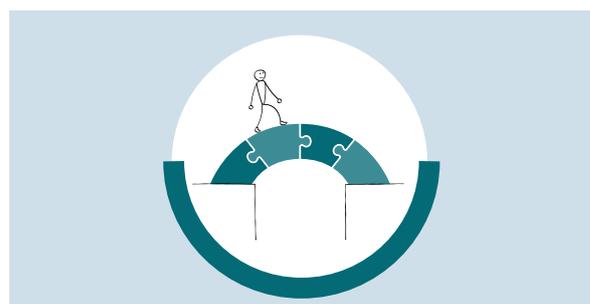




Photo by Annie Spratt via Unsplash

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