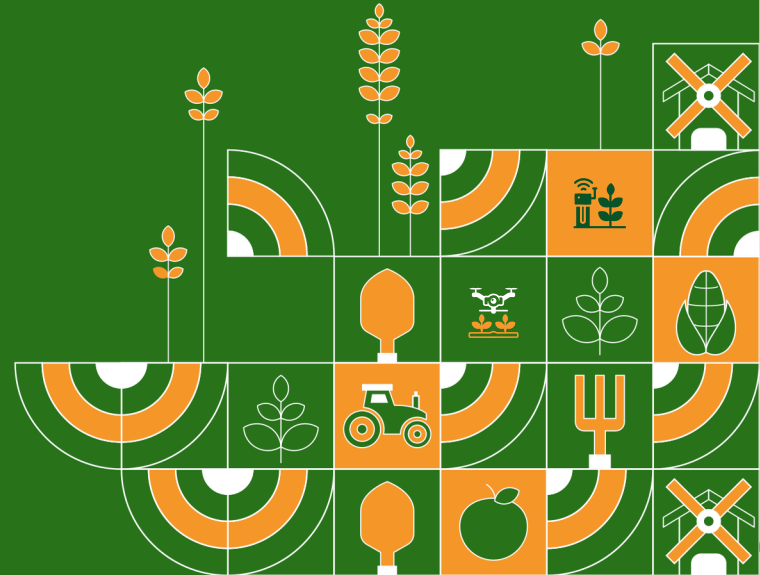




Center for Innovation and Agropreneurship Development



We Innovate | We Incubate | We Connect | We Scale Up

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Background

Successful agropreneurship programs that empower youth are profitable for youth and women with the right skills. Rural enterprise is being advanced along agricultural commodity value chains within the context of professionalized agriculture. As a result, initiatives that link youth with access to agricultural resources and the required knowledge and training are vital. In this way, the quality of training to youth that turns them into agribusiness entrepreneurs along agricultural value chains, terms of credit, and the agricultural technologies, commodities, and markets being advanced have a huge influence upon both the livelihoods of youth and the process of agricultural transformation.

Despite these opportunities, the sector faces significant challenges. Informal business practices dominate the landscape, leading to a lack of innovative and adaptive business models. This informal economy stifles growth and hinders the establishment of modern micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Furthermore, 66% of the agricultural workforce comprises youth and women, many of whom lack the necessary skills and resources to thrive as agribusiness entrepreneurs. The unemployment rate in Somalia stands at 19%, with agriculture being the second most popular degree among graduates. Each year, a significant number of young people enter the job market but find limited opportunities due to the absence of platforms that foster innovative ideas and climate-smart techniques.

Historically, Somalia's agricultural sector has been undervalued, with the government prioritizing livestock and agropastoral practices. Pastoralism, characterized by mobile grazing on communal rangelands, has dominated the production system, particularly in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). Livestock and crops remain the main sources of economic activity, employment, and exports, with agriculture's contribution to GDP estimated at approximately 70% and representing 93% of total exports, largely from livestock, and accounting for over 80% of employment.

The combination of collapsed domestic crop production and rising food demand—driven by rapid population growth and urbanization—has resulted in a surge in food imports, which reached \$2.38 billion in 2022. This figure reflects a significant increase from an average of \$82 million in the late 1980s. The government recognizes that harnessing agriculture's potential requires a comprehensive sector development strategy supported by effective institutions and interventions that leverage the dynamism of the private sector and youth development.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has initiated a range of interventions to promote climate-smart agriculture, innovative technologies, and the upscaling of existing agricultural and irrigation programs. The Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, H.E Mohamed Abdi Hayir (Maareeye) has established the Center for Innovation and Agropreneurship Development (CIAD) a groundbreaking government initiative is dedicated to transforming the agricultural sector through nature-based solutions that foster innovation, agropreneurship, and sustainable sourcing for inclusive economic growth. By bridging the gap between youth and agricultural resources, CIAD aims to cultivate a new generation of agribusiness leaders, enhancing productivity and resilience in Somalia's agricultural landscape.



Center for Innovation and Agropreneurship & Development

The Center for Innovation and Agropreneurship Development (CIAD) is the first of its kind in Somalia—a groundbreaking government initiative aimed at transforming the agricultural sector through nature-based solutions that promote innovation, agropreneurship, and sustainable sourcing for inclusive economic growth.

Managed and operated by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation of Somalia, CIAD creates an enabling environment for agropreneurs, youth & women MSMEs, and farmers. It provides incubation, acceleration, and scaling opportunities while facilitating access to critical resources, technical expertise, balanced investments, financial inclusion, and market entry.

CIAD's innovation labs concentrate on research and development (R&D) and agri-tech solutions that address local challenges especially on climate, productivity, and smart, innovative solutions to, digitally transforming farmers and agribusinesses through the integration of climate-smart agricultural practices and a digital/blockchain ecosystem that ensures sustainable and resilient economic growth.

With its comprehensive approach, CIAD addresses all stages of agricultural development and fosters inclusive socio-economic growth, particularly focusing on youth and women in the productive sector.

Mission

To transform agribusiness in Somalia through nature-based solutions that promote Innovation, Agropreneurship, and Sustainable Sourcing for inclusive economic growth.

Vision

CIAD envisions being the leading catalyst for a vibrant agricultural economy where innovation and technology are at the forefront of propelling Somalia's Agricultural MSMEs into global markets.

CIAD Objectives

- Facilitate the development of innovative agribusinesses through incubation and acceleration programs, providing mentorship, technical support, and access to funding.
- Encourage using digital solutions to enhance agricultural productivity, market access, supply chain efficiency, and traceability, thereby boosting the competitiveness of local agribusinesses.
- Support R&D to create innovative, sustainable solutions for agricultural challenges, improve value chains, and integrate smart agricultural farming.
- Develop targeted training and entrepreneurship programs to increase the participation of youth and women in agriculture, fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Improve market systems development to ensure fair pricing and market access, while enhancing access to finance through partnerships and innovative financial solutions, enabling agribusinesses to scale effectively.



CIAD Mandate

Faced with persistent challenges in Somalia's agricultural sector, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MoAI) recognized an urgent need for innovative solutions to tackle systemic issues such as low productivity, lack of skilled human capital, and the prevalence of informal business practices. The Ministry also identified the need for targeted programs to enhance the participation of youth and women in the agricultural value chain and to address the growing demand for climate-smart, sustainable farming solutions. In response, the Center for Innovation and Agropreneurship Development (CIAD) was established as a transformative platform to address these challenges, develop tailored programs, and drive sector innovation.

CIAD's mandate stems from the strategic priorities of the ministry and closely aligns with the National Transformation Plan (NTP) 2025-2029, the National Agriculture Transformation Strategy and Action Plan, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation's (MoAI) Strategic Priorities and Action Plan 2024-2025. Additionally, it supports the objectives outlined in the National Employment Strategy and the new National Capacity Building Strategy.

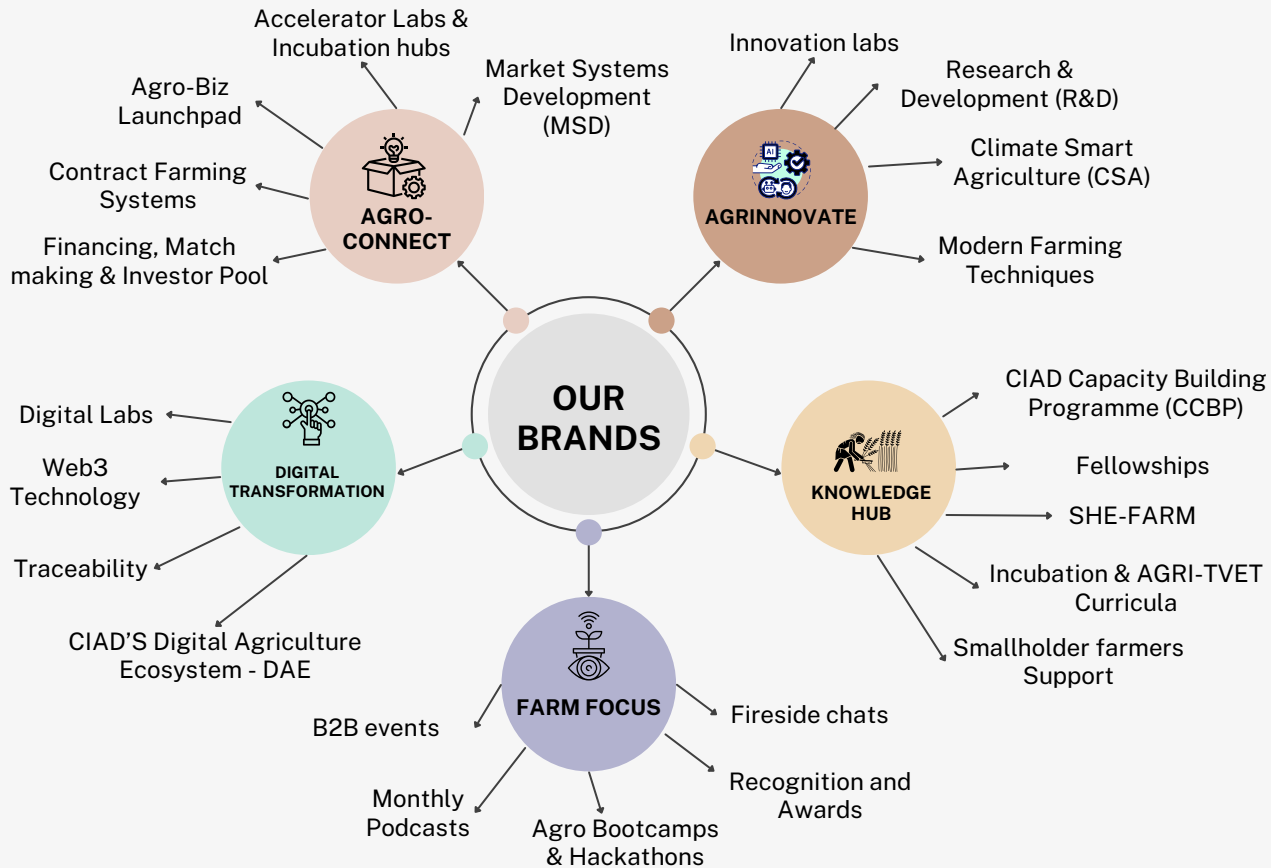
Under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, CIAD has the following key mandates to drive innovation, inclusion, and sustainable growth in Somalia's agriculture sector:

- Lead the development of incubation programs to support agropreneurs, SMEs, youth & women and farmers. Provide technical assistance, mentorship, and access to resources, aiming to drive innovation, sustainable business models, and job creation, especially for youth and women.
- Establish innovation labs dedicated to advancing R&D in agri-tech solutions and climate-smart practices, promoting data-driven approaches and technological innovations that improve agricultural productivity and sustainability.
- Facilitate the digital transformation of the agricultural sector by promoting the adoption of smart farming technologies, digital platforms, and tools that enhance transparency, traceability efficiency, and market competitiveness.

- Enhance market linkages and create robust value chains that connect farmers with local and international markets. This will include promoting contract farming models and ensuring fair market access and pricing for farmers and agribusinesses.
- Improve access to financial services for agribusinesses by establishing partnerships with financial institutions and promoting youth- and women-friendly financial products, including microfinance, insurance models, and investment facilitation to ensure the sector reaps the rewards from economies of scale as well as scope.
- Provide capacity-building programs, training, and knowledge-sharing platforms to equip farmers, youth & women SMEs, and agripreneurs with the skills and expertise needed to succeed, ensuring a culture of continuous learning and innovation.
- Develop innovative and technologically advanced incubation departments and provide the latest climate-smart agriculture tools and know-how to SME agribusinesses and provide innovative agricultural advisory services models at the national and federal levels.
- Facilitating Youth-friendly financial and insurance models to support youth agribusiness enterprises and increase the number of Youth Investing in agribusiness.



How CIAD makes a difference



Agro-Connect

Agro-Connect section serves as the cornerstone for supporting youth and women establish new business and thrive in the agricultural ecosystem. It facilitates Accelerator & Incubation tracks that help budding agropreneurs and SMEs scale their businesses through targeted programs. These programs address key areas like ideation, new agro-business launchpads, contract farming systems, and market systems development (MSD). By providing an investor pool and fostering matchmaking between financial institutions, agri-input suppliers, and farmers, Agro-Connect ensures that innovative agribusinesses have access to the resources needed to succeed. It's an essential gateway for building resilient value chains that contribute to sustainable agricultural growth in Somalia.

Agrinnovate

The Agrinnovate section represents CIAD's commitment to innovation in agriculture. Through its Innovation Labs, Agrinnovate focuses on Research & Development (R&D) initiatives aimed at bringing novel solutions to the challenges faced by Somali farmers contributing to global solutions. From promoting Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices to modern farming techniques, Agrinnovate ensures that agriculture in Somalia is more resilient to environmental challenges. This section supports a new generation of innovative agricultural technologies that help farmers increase yields, reduce environmental impacts, and adapt to evolving climate conditions.

Farm Focus

Farm Focus is dedicated to enhancing the agricultural ecosystem through engagement, networking, and recognition initiatives. This section conducts B2B events, monthly podcasts, and agro bootcamps & hackathons aimed at inspiring innovation among stakeholders. Fireside chats and innovation challenges to foster a culture of continuous learning and excellence in the sector. Farm Focus encourages best practices, innovative thinking, and collaboration to address the challenges facing agriculture in Somalia.

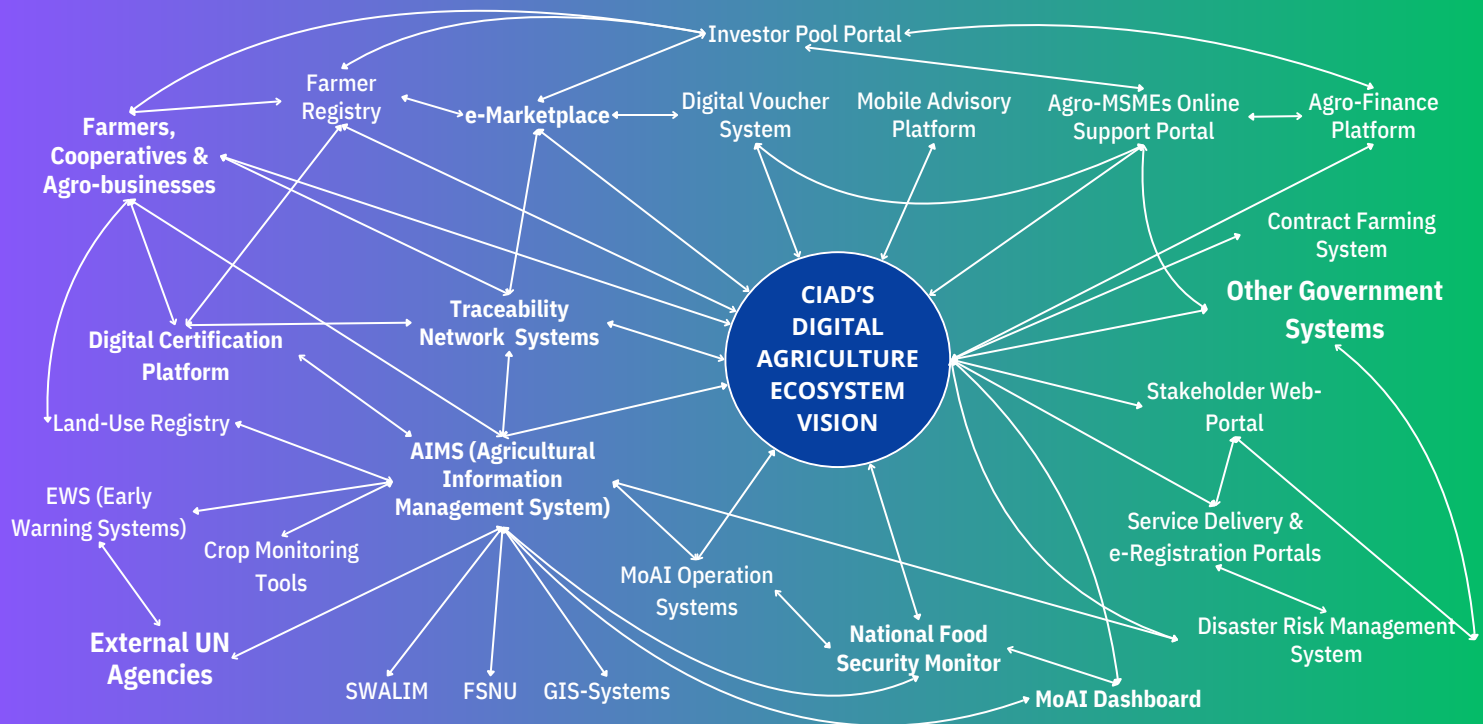
Knowledge Hub

Knowledge Hub serves as CIAD's platform for capacity building and empowerment. The CIAD Capacity Building Programme (CCBP), fellowships, and SHE-FARM (aimed at increasing women participation in agriculture) initiatives are all integral parts of this section, focusing on promoting knowledge transfer, particularly among youth and women in agriculture. The Knowledge Hub also supports the development of Incubation and Agri-TVET curricula to be used by both CIAD and partner institutions. This hub ensures that all smallholder farmers are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a competitive agricultural landscape.



Digital Transformation

CIAD's Digital Transformation pillar aims to modernize agriculture using cutting-edge technologies. Digital Labs and Web3 Technology enhance operational efficiency, while market intelligence informs better decision-making. The Digital Agriculture Ecosystem (DAE) provides a digital infrastructure that integrates farming processes, connects stakeholders, and supports transparent market participation, boosting productivity and resilience.



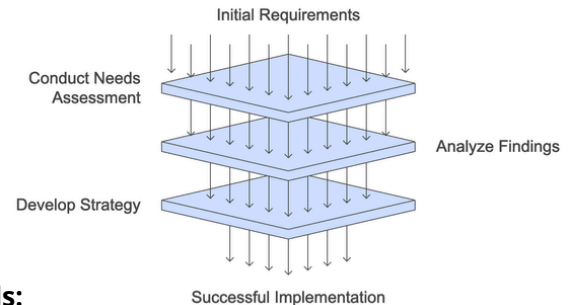
Roadmap for CIAD's Interventions

The Center for Innovation and Agropreneurship Development (CIAD) employs a systematic and dynamic approach to foster innovation, incubation, and acceleration in Somalia's agricultural sector. Below is the strategic roadmap that CIAD follows to support agropreneurs, farmers, MSMEs, and value chain actors:

Step 1: Implementation Approach and Situation Analysis:

All CIAD interventions start by conducting an in-depth analysis of the agricultural ecosystem in Somalia, including a diagnostic evaluation of existing agribusiness value chains, challenges, and opportunities for youth and women startups and MSMEs. Based on empirical evidence, CIAD develops a flexible implementation approach that adapts to systemic changes, focusing on empowering youth and women in agribusiness.

Strategic Implementation Process



Step 2: Tailored Program Development and Incubation Models:

Following the needs assessment result, CIAD tailors incubation and acceleration programs based on the specific requirements identified within the agricultural sector. These programs, or tracks, focus on various themes such as agriculture service-based solutions, agri-tech innovations, smart farming, climate resilience, and more. The programs are designed holistically, covering self-discovery, entrepreneurship modules, business development services, market entry support, access to finance and investment readiness, and technical mentorship. Through collaborations with universities, Ministry experts, relevant government agencies, financial institutions, and development partners, we provide a comprehensive support structure for youth and aspiring agropreneurs.

Step 3: Innovation Prototyping and Model Development:

CIAD focuses on prototyping innovation models and solutions that can be applied by other incubation hubs and accelerators both nationally and regionally. This step emphasizes the development, testing, and refinement of intervention models until we achieve the right fit for effective scaling and replication. CIAD's capacity and responsibility as a government institution drive us to perfect these models, which are then made available for broader adoption to create collective sectoral impact.

Step 4: Market and Finance Access for Graduates To establish self-sustaining enterprises:

CIAD aims to shift the mentality away from dependency on support toward resilience and independence. Graduates of our programs will benefit from long-term learning opportunities, access to investment readiness programs, and continuous mentorship to reduce business failure rates. CIAD partners with local financial institutions to co-design farmer-friendly financial products, including contract farming opportunities. Graduates also receive market readiness training to develop the necessary skills to enter and work in the market. This ensures alignment between incubated startups and a skilled workforce that can drive their growth.

Step 5: Training and Incubation Management:

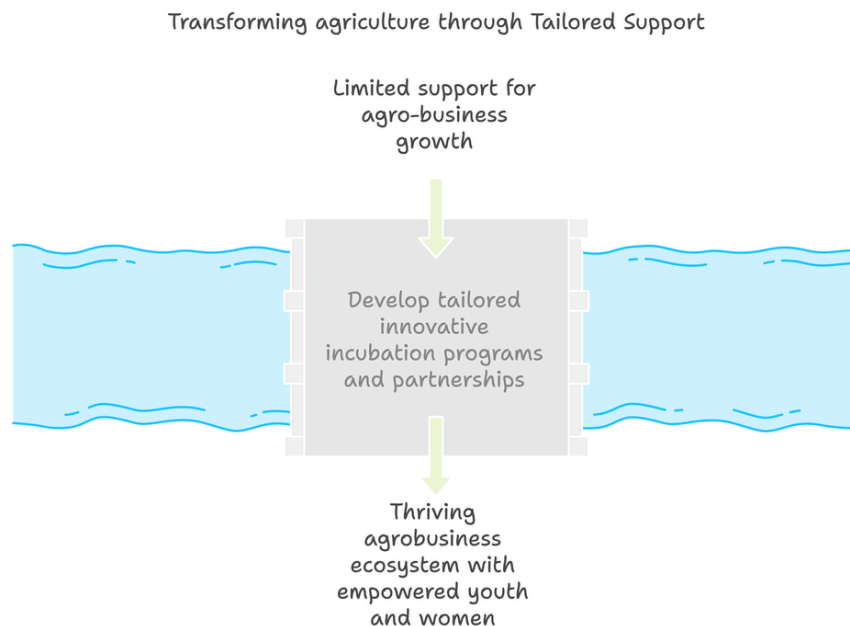
Training and Incubation Management CIAD leads the management of the incubation and training processes. This includes organizing initial training batches, conducting "Training of Trainers" (T.O.T) sessions, and establishing online support platforms for Agro MSMEs. This phase is critical to ensure that trainers, facilitators, and all involved stakeholders are well-prepared to support the success of youth and women-led enterprises.

Step 6: Ongoing Government Support As a government institution:

CIAD is well-positioned to provide ongoing support to ecosystem stakeholders and youth-led enterprises, linking them to state services and supporting implementation processes. Our role includes fostering a conducive environment for enterprise growth, supporting financial schemes, and leveraging our expertise to help stakeholders thrive

Step 7: Outreach, Campaigns, and Networking:

CIAD will facilitate information dissemination, outreach campaigns, and youth networking initiatives. These activities aim to build a strong agribusiness ecosystem by promoting interest in agribusiness among youth, private sector players, and other public sector bodies. Our engagement will ensure that the private sector and broader stakeholders are able to benefit from and contribute to our models, fostering a sense of collective responsibility and shared impact.



SHE-FARM:

Women in Agriculture

Barnaamijka Shaqo Abuurka Dumarka Beeraha



The She-Farm Program is a national initiative under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation designed to empower women in Somalia's agricultural sector. She-Farm integrates young women into professionalized agricultural value chains by providing tailored support, including value addition skills training, financial literacy, mentorship, and access to markets and resources. The program focuses on strengthening women-led enterprises, enabling them to scale up their businesses, form cooperatives, and adopt advanced agricultural technologies. These efforts not only improve participants' livelihoods but also generate a multiplier effect, creating jobs, boosting local economies, and fostering community resilience.

She-Farm: Objectives

1. Enhance women's participation in agriculture by equipping them with skills in value addition, smart farming practices, business ownership, and leadership to drive innovation and growth.
2. Support women-led agro-businesses into structured and scalable SMEs by providing access to financial solutions, targeted subsidies for essential agricultural inputs, and support for acquiring equipment, tools, and other critical resources.
3. Support women agro-businesses and entrepreneurs to form and lead cooperatives and associations, fostering collective bargaining, shared resources, and stronger market positioning.
4. Develop frameworks that link women businesses to markets through structured agreements with buyers, ensuring fair access and sustainable income generation.
5. Build resilient communities by empowering women to create jobs, promote local development, and contribute significantly to national and regional agricultural economies.



Phase 1: Value Addition

Phase one (1) of the She-Farm Program equips women agribusinesses with the foundational skills needed to enhance their products and services offerings and scale up their businesses effectively. This phase is a multi-cohort initiative and is divided into two key parts. The introductory training, conducted at the beginning of the program, equips participants with essential techniques for improving product quality and exploring new value-added offerings.

A more advanced training, tailored to the specific needs of each business, is integrated with Phase 2 of the program to provide deeper, personalized support. The program emphasizes value addition as a key driver for increasing competitiveness, market access, and income generation, laying the groundwork for sustainable business growth. Participants in Phase 1 are trained in a range of value addition and processing areas, including:

- Preservation techniques (e.g., drying, canning, and pickling).
- Processing methods for products like peanut butter, tomato paste, and powdered spices.
- Oil extraction and refining from seeds and nuts.
- Jam and sauce production for local markets.
- Packaging and branding to improve product presentation and marketability.



Phase 2: Business Development and Entrepreneurship



Phase two (2) will span approximately 11 weeks, focusing on providing participants with regular, in-depth training and technical assistance. This phase emphasizes business development and investment readiness through modules such as:

- Ideation and product development
- Business lean canvas and planning
- Customer discovery and market understanding.
- Record-keeping and financial literacy in an agro-business context.
- Business profit and cost analysis.
- Investment readiness and legal preparation.
- Advanced value addition techniques, GAP training and innovation case studies.
- Crowdfunding, fundraising, and pitch preparation for grants and financing.

Participants in Phase 2 will receive tailored mentorship, extension services, and support to refine their business models, prepare for market entry, and scale their operations. Graduates of this phase will be monitored regularly to evaluate their progress and provide continued mentorship.

Phase 3: Access to Finance and Scaling Up:

Phase 3 is a continuation of phase 2 and focuses on providing participants with tailored financial and technical support to further scale their businesses. This stage includes:

- Evaluating participants' businesses to determine the type of support required, such as equipment, financing, or targeted consulting.
- Graduates become eligible to compete in local and regional innovation competitions organized by CIAD.
- Access to exchange study tours, advanced training, and market connections.
- Participants are supported to form and lead women cooperatives and associations, fostering collective bargaining, shared resources, and stronger market positioning.
- CIAD facilitates and establishes frameworks that link women businesses to markets through structured agreements with buyers, ensuring fair access and sustainable income generation.
- In partnership with financial institutions (e.g. MFIs), participants will receive direct and indirect financing for agricultural inputs and support for acquiring equipment, tools, and other critical resources to scale up.

- Participants will have access to CIAD fundraising and crowdfunding tools to raise funds for business expansion and scale-up while CIAD partners with development partners to match their funds and offer seed money and grants for top-performing businesses.
- Participants who complete Phase 3 are recognized as **CIAD Unicorns**, exemplifying innovation, growth, and leadership in Somalia's agricultural sector.



2025 Planned Activities

No.	Program	Activities
1	The Agro-Biz Accelerator Program to scale up 300 existing agro-businesses while establishing 50 new agro-startups, driving innovation and growth within the agricultural sector.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train 40 TOTs annually to run future cohorts and enhance capacity. 2. Create/support youth- and women-led agro-business. 3. Provide mentorship and essential resources for business development including financial access and funding opportunities. 4. Facilitate market access and support digital transformation for startups. 5. Develop partnerships with financial institutions to create tailored financial products for agro-MSMEs. 6. Implement a peer-to-peer networking platform to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among participants. 7. Create a database of successful agro-business models and case studies to inspire new startups.
2	Agro MSME Support Platform: This will develop an online digital support platform for agro-MSMEs that facilitates access to localized agricultural information, agro-business registration, compliance, market data, mentorship, learning materials, and a network for investors and venture capital opportunities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct feasibility assessments to determine the platform's requirements, sustainability and functionality. 2. Organize study tours to identify best practices and models in digital support systems for agro-MSMEs in the region. 3. Develop the digital platform, ensuring it includes features approved from the feasibility study. 4. Provide training to users on how to navigate and utilize the platform effectively through training materials (shared on the platform itself). 5. Establish operational support by setting up office infrastructure, including computers and trained staff to manage the platform and support digital infrastructure of the ministry. 6. Create content to populate the platform, including guides, training materials, and market insights.

SUMMARY 2025 KEY PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Accelerator and Incubation programs

- Support existing productive sector rural/urban MSMEs with technical support, market access, financial access, de-risking and continued learning
- Incubate new innovative startups (agriculture & livestock), provide BDS, market entry support and linkages.

Establish a contract farming system for smallholder/urban farmers with focus Climate-smart farming business

- Facilitate and support deals between: Farmer/produce - buyers (hotels, restaurants, hospitals, schools..etc) with linkage to input supplier, MFI, development partners, incubation hubs, value addition, storage and agro-dealers

Digital Platform Cooperatives & agro-businesses

For registration, performance tracking system, market insights, digital certification, payment gateways, allow for cooperatives from there location submit required documents, provide window for FMS cooperatives departments, integrate with other ministry systems.

Innovation Solutions Support

- Establish multipurpose innovation labs (focused on providing youth with space to co-create, solve problems, prototype, come up with solutions that can be commercialized and expanded.
- Provide grant/ in kind support/sponsorship to new innovative agri-business ideas.

Innovation Models & Agri-TVET Curricula Development

- Develop innovation model that Incubation hubs in Somalia can use for better job creation, modern solutions and innovation challenges participation
- Develop Agri-TVET Materials/tools that are suitable for rural farmers (low literacy levels)

Support and develop Agriculture Traceability network (blockchain based)

- Partner with development partners, private sector to complete the digital ecosystem platforms and systems
- Partner with private sector to develop solutions for value chain monitoring, recording, certifying, and facilitation such as payment gateways (rural friendly), digital tokens, digital certifications.

No.	Program	Activities
3	Establish multipurpose innovation labs (focused on Digitalization, Climate, Water, and Agro-Marketing) to drive agricultural advancements, enhance sector resilience, and empower local agribusinesses through research and new technology development.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equip one innovation lab with the necessary tools for prototyping and developing new ideas and solutions (space and physical building available). 2. Support lab operations and invest in scaling successful products and services produced by the lab cohorts. 3. Conduct applied research to create climate-smart agricultural practices tailored to local and regional needs. 4. Run pilot projects to test new agricultural technologies and practices in real-world environments. 5. Offer training and capacity-building workshops to enhance technical skills for farmers and agribusinesses. 6. Develop solutions that improve productivity and sustainability, enabling scalability across the agricultural sector.
4	Smallholder farm capacity building program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct training needs assessment on smallholder farmers and urban farmers in Banadir region, Southwest and Jubaland focusing on climate smart agriculture, best practices, farming as a business, and technical support 2. Develop training tools and materials based on the capacity needs assessment result. 3. Conduct training and capacity-building programs on batch phases. 4. Strengthen farmers in record keeping, product marketing, and investment readiness. 5. Facilitate contract farming systems and develop sustainable value chains in collaboration with local and international finance institutions.
5	Agri-TVET Curricula Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create training materials for local agricultural needs that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Target skills gaps to boost employability. b. Creates new modern agricultural products/services and MSMEs. c. Align with current market demands for skilled labor. 2. Create Agri-TVET curricula with the hands-on focus that will be used by CIAD and other innovation hubs and training center.

No.	Program	Activities
6	Agriculture Digitalization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Digital Agriculture Strategy and Action plan 2. Conduct ecosystem analysis and feasibility study for traceability systems developments 3. Develop crop crop-based traceability system with full value chain covered
7	Innovation Hubs and co-working space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construct a co-working space with multiple-purpose innovation hall for incubation programs, ideation, training programs and community engagements.
8	Youth and Women programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train 200 young women on high-on-demand agribusiness skills with a job grantee of up to 60% 2. Implement target programs to empower youth, women, and marginalized groups in agribusiness, creating employment opportunities and fostering economic inclusion. 3. Train 30 urban farmers on GAP, PPM, PHM, Marketing, Record keeping, Value additions and Management. 4. Conduct 3 SHE-FARM events focusing on exhibition, workshops and farmers market 5. Organize Agro Bootcamps to introduce youth to farming skills and agropreneurship. 6. Launch a social media awareness campaign targeting young people to encourage participation in agribusiness activities.
9	Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide training on the establishment and management of VSLAs in Southwest and Jubaland. 2. Train cooperative members on savings, credit management, and loan repayment systems. 3. Establish 100 VSLAs and track their performance over 6 months
10	Market Access Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a Market Systems Development (MSD) workshop to support value chain development. 2. Collaborate with financial institutions to develop tailored financial products for agropreneurs. 3. Launch monthly podcasts focusing on agripreneurs' success stories, new trends, and opportunities in agriculture.



CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND AGROPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT (CIAD)

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