



## **The International Fund to Amplify Agro-Ecological Solutions**

The International Fund to Amplify Agro-Ecological Solutions (“The Fund”) is a multi-donor fund committed to supporting and encouraging the existing practices of local farmers and their communities throughout Latin America, Africa, and Asia with the goals of sustaining viable food systems, promoting the economic well-being of small farmers and their communities, and protecting the environment from the deleterious effects of climate change. The Fund was launched by four founding donors with the guidance and assistance of Arabella Advisors in January 2012. The founding donors include the Christensen Fund, the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation, the New Field Foundation, and the Swift Foundation.

The Fund is currently in its pilot phase, and it will award an approximate total of \$1 million to three to five grantee organizations for a 2-year grant period, beginning in August 2012. Over time, the Fund will grow to include additional donors and provide further grants, based on lessons learned from the pilot phase.

### **What is Agroecology?**

Agro-ecology is farming that centers on food production that makes the best use of nature’s goods and services while not damaging these resources. It builds upon the traditional knowledge of family-based farmers and encompasses basic ecological principles for planning and managing sustainable agricultural systems. Agro-ecology links ecology, culture, economics and society to create healthy environments, food production and communities.

### **Vision**

The Fund envisions a coordinated and sustainable agricultural system that builds on the existing skills and practices of farming communities, undergirds the food sovereignty and health of the majority of the world’s population, and mitigates the negative effects of climate change on the environment. This vision is built on the values of sustaining viable, diverse and productive food systems that are integral to vibrant regional and national economies and link rural and urban consumers in healthy and culturally enriching ways.

### **Mission**

The Fund seeks to greatly increase the volume, collaboration, and long-term effectiveness of advocacy and movement-building for agro-ecological solutions, sustainable food systems, and climate change policies through robust collaborative partnerships.

### **Grant-Making Strategies**

To realize its vision and mission, the Fund’s core strategy will be to support and incentivize collaborative partnerships that link advocacy and research organizations, farmer organizations, consumers, and grassroots movements. These partnerships should be grounded in efforts to work towards alternative agricultural solutions, sustainable food systems, and positive climate change policies. The key ways in which the Fund will advance this strategy include supporting the following activities:



- Provision of the essential capacity building tools – such as training, infrastructure, and communications tools – for enabling robust collaboration and effective partnerships among key actors.
- Engagement with key stakeholders that are underrepresented but rooted in local realities, such as women’s farmer associations or rural media networks.
- Creation of a powerful and well-informed message about current agricultural practices and a vision for the future that will inspire media coverage, motivate the public to take action, and spark additional philanthropic investment.
- Support for building strong campaigns supporting agro-ecological solutions to generate changes in international policy related to agro-ecology, food systems, and climate change.
- Support for the monitoring and challenging of prevailing industrial models, along with the promotion of sustainable alternative solutions.
- Creating relevant and insightful learning opportunities for pilot-phase donors, as well as other donors in the field, thereby encouraging better informed support and engagement for agro-ecological solutions.

## **Outcomes**

By employing these strategies, the Fund’s will aim to achieve the following long-term outcomes:

- At least ten strong partnerships that link farmers’ groups and social movements with advocacy or think tank organizations actively monitoring negative developments and promoting practical positive alternatives related to agro-ecology, food systems, and climate change issues.
- Stronger, better informed and more effectively networked think tanks, advocacy organizations, and local farmer associations and community organizations working on traditional and sustainable agriculture.
- Strong shifts in the language and direction of international agricultural policies and research agendas in favor of more complex, locally responsive, and accountable agricultural systems.
- Local, regional, and national leadership in the Global North that both counters the prevailing movement towards high input, overly simplified, and commercially oriented agricultural models, and promotes more diverse farmer-driven efforts that meet livelihood, nutritional, and ecological needs.
- Increased investment in local farmer associations and community organizations working in traditional and sustainable agriculture and amplification of existing research on local and indigenous knowledge.



- Increased attention to and debate around the efficacy of current agricultural development aid and lending policies, paired with intense global scrutiny on large-scale land leasing.
- Increased visibility of and access to giving opportunities in agro-ecology, food systems, and climate change issues resulting from the Fund and other donors' shared learning.

## **Contact**

For questions about the Fund's operations, please contact Sarah Hobson at [sarah@newfieldfoundation.org](mailto:sarah@newfieldfoundation.org) or Lauren Marra at [lauren.marra@arabellaadvisors.com](mailto:lauren.marra@arabellaadvisors.com). For questions about its grant making, contact Marcus Braxton at [marcus.braxton@newventurefund.org](mailto:marcus.braxton@newventurefund.org).