



Strengthening Inclusive Partnerships for Smallholders in Rain-Fed Areas (SIPRA) in Sudan

The challenge

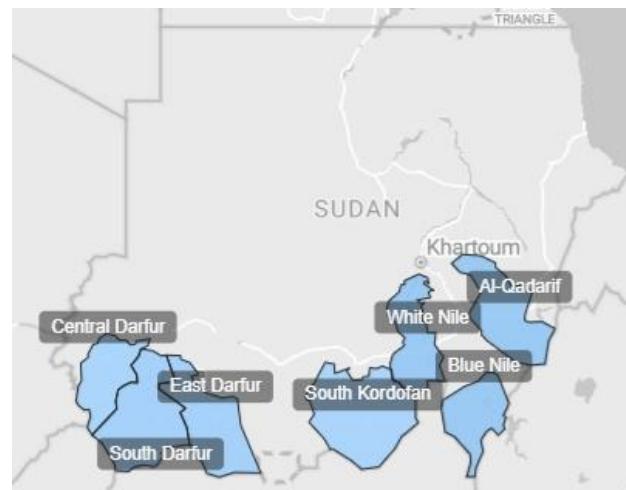
Smallholders in Sudan face long-standing challenges, including limited access to inputs, markets, and finance, which constrain farming efficiency, productivity, and resilient livelihoods. They cultivate large areas of staple and high-value commercial crops and play a crucial role in the national food system and local economy. The civil war that began in 2023 has worsened these challenges. According to the World Food Programme, agricultural production has dropped to less than half of pre-war levels, leaving 24.6 million people, or half the population, acutely food insecure. Displacement, unsafe roads, and damaged infrastructure have disrupted farmers' access to seeds, fertilizer, fuel, and markets. The private sector, historically responsible for food imports, processing, distribution, and agricultural inputs, has been heavily disrupted, as have local and public agricultural service providers, further weakening food supply chains.



Our approach and focus

SIPRA unlocks the potential of Sudan's agricultural sector to build a resilient and sustainable food system that enhances food and nutrition security, improves rural livelihoods, and fosters economic development. The programme promotes private sector engagement, strengthens local support networks, and empowers smallholders to become entrepreneurs to realize these objectives across the targeted states.

Project name	Strengthening Inclusive Partnerships for Smallholders in Rain-Fed Areas (SIPRA)
Project region	Sudan: Seven target states (see map below)
Financed by	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
Implemented by	GOPA MetaMeta
Duration	09/2024 – 08/2026
Partners	ZOA (lead), Wageningen University & Research, World Relief, SOS Sahel Sudan



GOPA MetaMeta provides strategic, technical, and operational guidance for the Challenge Fund and broader agribusiness investments, which are central to SIPRA. These investments link local producer associations with private sector companies, consolidating partnerships and sustaining long-term livelihoods and economic relations.

The Challenge Fund covers two grant types:

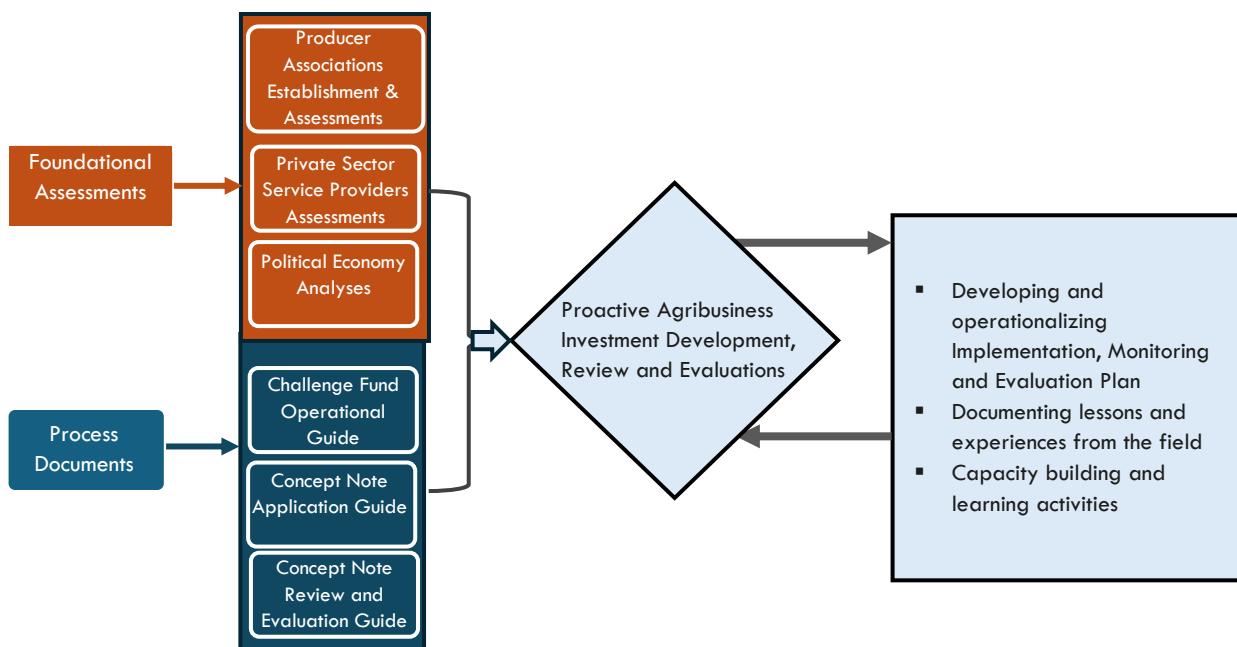
Small Grants (€1,000–€20,000, 1.5 million Euros): Awarded to Producer Associations and Farmer Networks to tackle the most limiting challenge along the agricultural value chain, from inputs and production to processing and marketing. SMEs act as private sector service providers, supporting PAs with inputs, services, and market linkages.



Large Grants (€20,000–€100,000, 1.5 million Euros): Awarded to SMEs, well-established private sector companies, and commercially-oriented farmer networks. Grantees implement scalable projects addressing multiple challenges across the value chain and must demonstrate tangible benefits for smallholder farmers.

While differing in eligibility, scope, and scale, both grants share the same ultimate beneficiaries: smallholder communities, including women, men, youth, and vulnerable groups and key value chains such as rainfed crop production, horticulture, livestock, fisheries, and poultry.

GOPA MetaMeta supports the full challenge fund and agribusiness investment pathway, illustrated in the figure below: establishing farmer organizations (Producer Associations and Networks) and assessing their needs and priorities, conducting targeted analyses, co-developing promising investments, leading rigorous review processes, and monitoring and evaluating performance. Lessons from the field are documented, and tailored, actionable training strengthens local institutions for effective implementation and sustainable impact.



Examples of our success

In the first year (2025) of the project:

- 88 Small Grant investments were approved, totalling nearly €1.3 million, focusing on productive farming and value addition
- 4 Large Grant proposals, about €560,000, were prepared for final Steering Committee review; key projects included storage facilities, gum arabic tapping, a citrus juice factory, and smallholder poultry empowerment
- Producer Associations and Farmer Networks investment priorities and capacity assessments were completed
- Private sector service delivery capacity analyses were conducted

- Political Economy Analysis was completed, providing contextual insights for strategic direction
- Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation (IME) guidelines were finalized for small grants
- Natural Resources Management guide was prepared
- Farmer Business Schools guide was completed to strengthen entrepreneurial skills
- Remote sensing-based agricultural productivity analyses were conducted
- Farmers lived experiences documentation was published.



Voices from the field

Hanan – Quiet Strength in Crisis:

“Even with fewer resources, I never stop working my land. Every seed planted is hope for my family.”

Muna, Innovating Under Pressure:

“We find ways to grow, even when everything around us is uncertain.”

El-Ruwad Network – Women Leading Change:

“We are not just surviving; we are shaping our future.”

Quotes drawn from Lived Experiences in Sudan's Agricultural Heartland (GOPA GOPA MetaMeta Research, 2025).



Impact story

In Sudan, the ongoing war continues to disrupt daily life and livelihoods. Even in areas spared from direct fighting, farming families face soaring prices, broken value chains, and shrinking opportunities to earn a stable income.

Amid these challenges, smallholder groundnut farmers in South Darfur State are transforming a traditional crop into a reliable source of income through community-managed value addition. With support from 13 Small Grants totalling approximately €93,600, SIPRA has helped local groups establish groundnut shelling and oil-pressing units. These community-owned units now benefit 390 households—around 2,000 people—enabling families to earn more within their own villages.



The impact is tangible: a 45-kg sack of raw groundnuts that once sold for about €11 now yields oil worth roughly €24 when processed locally, nearly doubling household income. Nothing goes to waste: press cake and shells are repurposed as livestock feed and fuel, promoting circular practices and lowering costs.



Beyond boosting incomes, the units create new jobs in machine operation, maintenance and marketing, strengthening the local economy at a time when resilience is urgently needed.