

# Invest with Impact

## Supporting the smallholder value chain

### Africa, continent of agriculture

Food is the story that connects all of us, and for much of history, the cultivation and processing of food has played a large role in day-to-day life. Some of these demanding and long processes have changed with the passage of time, but agriculture still contributes to a majority of jobs, which remains very much true across Africa. Currently, 80% of sub-Saharan African farmland is managed by smallholders, which are small-scale family farmers managing areas up to 10 hectares.

Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Mozambique are no exceptions, where all three economies rely heavily on agriculture managed by smallholders. The sector employs a significant portion of their population and is a major contributor to their GDPs. Meanwhile each country faces economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment, but climate change also poses an increasing risk.

### Supporting the source

Robust International Pte Ltd., founded in 2006 and headquartered in Singapore, is a multi-national trader of agri-commodities, specialized in sesame seeds and cashew nuts. Sourcing primarily from East and West Africa, Robust conducts early-stage processing operations to serve markets worldwide. The company is evolving from traditional trading and processing to becoming an end-to-end integrated supply chain company. Working capital enables Robust to buy sesame seeds and cashew nuts directly from cooperatives, aggregators, and farmers locally

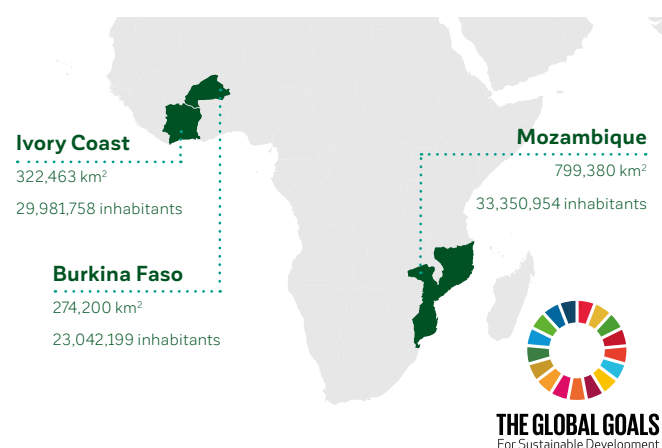
for its operations at its new processing facilities in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Mozambique.

In this way Robust is able to increase its engagement with smallholder farmers and cooperatives. Additionally, it will contribute to the economic growth in these three countries as it is expected to create over 1,100 direct jobs at the plants, supporting up to 600,000 smallholder farmers to improve their income through competitive sourcing.

Robust's Environmental and Social Management System adheres to a comprehensive set of policies and standards, which are aligned with international standards and are designed to ensure rigorous monitoring, accountability, and compliance across its global supply chains. Robust aims to positively impact food security by deeply engaging and having direct relationships with growers and smallholder farmers. This builds capacity for sustainable agricultural practices, resulting in greater yields and incomes while reducing food wastage and losses.

### The FMO Loans

Robust International Pte Ltd has been a client of FMO since 2023, when a syndicate was closed to finance the processing facilities in the three countries. It was followed by a syndicated loan with new parties amounting to USD 105 million in 2024 for working capital purposes. Due to the impact upon Burkina Faso and Mozambique, this investment is eligible for a 100% Reducing Inequalities label.



## A broader perspective

Agriculture accounts for >15% of the GDP across Africa as a whole, employing an estimated 240 million people and serving as a livelihood for many more. As mentioned before, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Mozambique are no exceptions, as all three economies rely heavily on agriculture where smallholders face challenges they cannot address alone.

Smallholder farmers often lack access to modern farming techniques, equipment, and inputs like high-quality seeds and fertilizers, limiting their productivity and ability to cope with risks. Poor infrastructure, including inadequate roads and storage facilities, hampers market access and reduces the chance of fair pricing for produce. Additionally, financial constraints, such as limited access to credit and insurance, make it difficult for farmers to invest in their farms and manage risks effectively.

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies, including improved agricultural practices, better infrastructure, access to financial services, and policies that support sustainable farming. These challenges are exactly what Robust is addressing through its cooperations.



## The development of

### Impact



Warehouses globally

25



Supported smallholders

directly: max 75,000

indirectly: max 600,000

[Read more: Sustainability – Robust International](#)

### Financial

Total syndicated loans

USD 105 mln

Total Fund parts

USD 4 mln

“Creating a greater processing capacity grows the relationship between farmers, increases yields, and enables better income for all.”



### The Fund Manager

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#### Contact

**Privium** T: +31 20 46 26 644 W: [www.fmopriviumimpactfund.nl](http://www.fmopriviumimpactfund.nl)



### The Investment Advisor

FMO Investment Management BV ('FMO IM') is a MiFID licensed Dutch investment firm and 100% subsidiary of the Dutch development bank FMO NV. FMO IM advises on the loan portfolio at the request of the Fund Manager. All loans offered to the fund have successfully completed the investment process of FMO and have thus been added to FMO's own loan portfolio.

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