ASOFRUPAL

Green Innovation for Sustainable Blackberry Value Chain Development among Smallholder Farmers in Palermo - Boyacá

COLOMBIA

PLEASE SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM AND ANY SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS TO opencall@common-fund.org

Common Fund for Commodities (CFC)

Mission

To contribute to poverty alleviation by strengthening the income-generating capacity of commodity producers and mitigating vulnerability to their economic well-being.

Vision

To strengthen and diversify the commodity sector in developing countries and transform it to be a major contributor to poverty alleviation and sustained economic growth and development.

Date: Select a date

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Please note that the CFC will only consider proposals providing reasonably accurate and complete information in the application form. An in-depth due diligence is part of CFC's approval process.

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EXCLUSION LIST

Please review the exclusion list for activities which are not eligible to receive CFC support. The list can be found on the CFC web site.

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or by mail addressed to

the Managing Director,
Common Fund for Commodities,
P.O. Box 74656, 1070 BR, Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

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1. Organization background

1.1 Organization profile

ASOFRUPAL is a smallholder farmers' association founded in 2007 in the rural district of Palermo, municipality of Paipa, Boyacá, Colombia. The organization was created with the objective of integrating small-scale family farmers to strengthen their organizational capacity, improve agricultural productivity, and facilitate collective commercialization of fruit crops, particularly fresh blackberry (mora).

ASOFRUPAL was established through a participatory process supported by local and national institutions, including the Municipal Government of Paipa, the National Training Service (SENA), and the Colombian Agricultural Research Corporation (AGROSAVIA). From its inception, the organization adopted a community-based approach focused on technical learning, collective action, and gradual consolidation of market access for rural producers.

Currently, ASOFRUPAL brings together 105 smallholder producers, of whom 55 are active members, operating under family farming systems at altitudes between 2,200 and 2,900 meters above sea level. The association's core business model is based on the aggregation, transport, and commercialization of fresh blackberries, mainly Mora Uva and Mora de Castilla, produced under traditional and semi-technical agricultural practices. Annual production reaches approximately 593 metric tons, which are marketed primarily in regional wholesale and retail markets.

The organization provides essential services to its members, including coordinated collection routes, shared transportation logistics, and stable market access. This collective model reduces transaction costs, improves price stability, and strengthens the bargaining power of small-scale producers. In addition, ASOFRUPAL has accumulated significant experience in project execution, having managed and implemented development initiatives valued at approximately COP 1.8 billion, in collaboration with public institutions, producer organizations, and environmental authorities.

Key milestones in the organization's trajectory include participation in national productive alliances programs, implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certifications for member farms, establishment of a plant nursery for blackberry propagation, acquisition of transport assets for product collection, and continuous engagement in technical assistance and capacity-building processes.

From a development perspective, ASOFRUPAL plays a critical role in income generation, rural employment, and social cohesion in its territory. The association contributes directly to poverty reduction by improving market access for vulnerable smallholders, strengthening local value chains, and promoting collective solutions to structural challenges such as market dependency, climate variability, and limited access to sustainable technologies. Its experience, territorial roots, and organizational maturity position ASOFRUPAL as a solid platform for implementing innovation-driven and environmentally sustainable investments aligned with the mission of the Common Fund for Commodities.

1.2 Location and target market(s)

The activities of ASOFRUPAL are located in the rural district of Palermo, within the municipality of Paipa, in the department of Boyacá, Colombia. Colombia is a Member Country of the Common Fund for Commodities and is therefore eligible for CFC financing.

The organization operates in a predominantly rural, high-altitude Andean territory, with production areas situated between 2,200 and 2,900 meters above sea level. Agricultural activities are carried out by smallholder family farmers under rainfed conditions, characterized by fragmented landholdings, limited access to modern infrastructure, and strong dependence on climatic conditions. The association's operational base includes a collection and coordination point used for aggregation, logistics planning, and transport of fresh produce to regional markets.

The main development challenges prevailing in the project area include limited access to sustainable energy, high exposure to climate variability, inefficient post-harvest handling systems, weak traceability and data management at farm level, and strong dependence on a small number of buyers. These constraints reduce productivity, increase post-harvest losses, and limit the capacity of smallholders to capture higher value from their production. Additionally, the territory faces structural challenges related to rural aging, limited participation of youth in agricultural activities, and restricted access to investment capital for green and innovative solutions.

Despite these challenges, the region has significant productive potential due to its favorable agroecological conditions, long-standing tradition in fruit cultivation, and proximity to regional urban markets. ASOFRUPAL's activities are primarily oriented toward domestic markets, with fresh blackberries supplied to wholesale buyers, fruit traders, local retailers, and small agro-processors in the cities of Sogamoso, Paipa, and surrounding municipalities. The association also has the potential to expand into institutional markets and higher-value segments that increasingly demand sustainably produced and traceable fresh produce.

The proposed project seeks to address the identified territorial constraints by introducing green innovation solutions, including energy-efficient infrastructure, improved post-harvest management, and basic traceability systems. These interventions are designed to strengthen the resilience of the local value chain, reduce environmental impact, and enhance the integration of smallholder farmers into more sustainable and competitive markets, fully aligned with the development objectives of the Common Fund for Commodities.

1.3 Brief summary of financing objectives

The financing request aims to support the implementation of a green innovation project designed to strengthen the sustainability, efficiency, and income-generating capacity of smallholder blackberry producers organized under ASOFRUPAL. The proposed investment seeks to address structural bottlenecks in the value chain related to energy inefficiency, post-harvest losses, limited traceability, and high operational costs, which currently constrain productivity and market competitiveness.

The funding will be used to deploy an integrated green innovation strategy that combines renewable energy solutions, improved post-harvest management, and basic digital and organizational tools for traceability and cost control. Core innovations include the installation of energy-efficient and solar-powered infrastructure for collection and post-harvest handling, the introduction of standardized quality and traceability systems at farm and association level, and targeted capacity building to improve operational efficiency and governance.

From a financial perspective, the requested CFC financing will be allocated primarily to productive green assets and enabling infrastructure, complemented by limited working capital to support implementation and early-stage operation of the improved model. The investment is expected to reduce energy and logistics costs, lower post-harvest losses, stabilize volumes supplied to the market, and improve price realization for smallholder producers. These improvements will strengthen the organization's cash flow and repayment capacity while generating measurable environmental and social benefits.

The financing strategy is structured to catalyze sustainable transformation rather than short-term expansion. By leveraging CFC support, ASOFRUPAL will be able to implement innovations that would not be feasible under conventional financing conditions, thereby contributing to a shorter, greener, and more traceable commodity value chain, fully aligned with the development mandate of the Common Fund for Commodities.

2. Request for financing

Total financing need (project / investment cost)	150.000 USD
CFC financing requested:	75. 000 USD

The loan amount requested from CFC should match with at least the same amount of co-financing provided by the applicant and/or by other defined co-financiers:

Name / amount of co-financer(s)	ASOFRUPAL 75.000 USD

Financing can be provided in either USD or EUR. Depending on the form of financing required, please complete ONE of the 3 tables below (confirm by ☒): Please fill the relevant details in the table below.

1. LOAN

Select type of loan	Amount (in EUR/USD)	Use of funds	Tenor	Collateral
☐ Trade finance [1]	[Min 300,000, Max 2,000,000]		[Max 12 months],	[Confirm name/country of buyers]
☐ Working capital	[USD 300,000 - 2,000,000]		[Max 18 months]	[Describe proposed pledge or mortgage over assets or third-party guarantee]
☐ Term loan	[USD 300,000 - 2,000,000]		[Max 5 years, max 2 years grace period]	[Describe proposed pledge or mortgage over assets or third-party guarantee]

Note: The Trade finance and Working capital loan are annually renewable up to 5 years.

2. EQUITY / Development Impact Bond

Select	Amount (in EUR/USD)	Ownership share	Use of funds
☐ Equity[2] (investment funds only)	[USD 300,000 - 2,000,000]	[Max share of 49%]	
☐ Development Impact bond (DIB)[3]	[USD 300,000- 2,000,000]		

1 Loan disbursement is based on sales contracts from eligible buyers, agreeing to make full payment directly into the account of the CFC.
2 Equity stakes in impact investment funds only. CFC does not directly invest into businesses.
3 The CFC supported the first Development Impact Bond in the commodity sector and will consider participating as investor in projects financed under DIB model. For details, see Development impact bonds: learning from the Asháninka cocoa and coffee case in Peru (practicalactionpublishing.com) (DOI: 10.3362/1755-1986.16-00029)

3. FAST TRACK[4]

Select	Amount (in EUR/USD)	Type of funding	Use of funds
☒ Fast-Track loan	[USD 50,000 - 300,000]	Provide repayment terms or provide rationale for requesting non-repayable funding.	

[4] Fast Track financing refers to a simplified approval procedure for projects seeking financial support below USD300,000. It is envisaged for selected activities yielding immediate results towards CFC objectives and/or the development of innovative products and services in a precommercial phase.

3. Management and operations

3.1 Management and ownership

ASOFRUPAL is a legally registered farmers' association operating under a non-shareholding, member-based ownership structure. As an associative organization, ASOFRUPAL does not have shareholders or equity owners in the conventional sense. Ownership and decision-making authority reside collectively with its registered members, who are smallholder family farmers engaged in blackberry production in the municipality of Paipa, Boyacá.

Ownership structure

- Ownership model: Cooperative/associative (non-profit, non-equity based)
- Members: 55 active members (out of 105 associated producers)
- Ownership distribution: Each member holds equal voting rights; no individual holds a controlling stake.
- Subsidiaries / holding entities: None
- Related entities: None

The organization operates under its General Assembly as the highest governing body, ensuring democratic participation, transparency, and accountability.

Governance and management structure

ASOFRUPAL's governance structure is composed of the following bodies:

- General Assembly: Supreme decision-making body, composed of all registered members.
- Board of Directors: Elected by the General Assembly, responsible for strategic oversight, approval of plans, budgets, and project execution.
- Legal Representative / President: Responsible for legal, administrative, and operational representation of the organization.
- Administrative and operational support: Includes accounting and logistical support, partly outsourced and partly managed internally.

A simplified organizational structure diagram (General Assembly → Board of Directors → Legal Representative → Operational Support) can be provided as a supplementary document if required.

Management team and experience

The Board of Directors and management team are composed of producers with extensive practical experience in agricultural production, collective commercialization, and project participation. While members are primarily farmers by profession, the organization has accumulated more than 15 years of institutional experience through collaboration with public entities, research institutions, and development programs.

Key management and supervisory roles include:

- President / Legal Representative: Leads strategic direction, institutional relations, and project coordination. Has long-standing experience in farmer organization leadership and engagement with public and development institutions.
- Board Members: Provide oversight and collective decision-making, with experience in agricultural production, logistics, and community-based organization.
- Accounting and administrative support: Professional accounting services ensure compliance with financial and regulatory requirements, including bookkeeping, financial reporting, and tax obligations.

Operational capacity

ASOFRUPAL has demonstrated its operational capacity through the successful execution of multiple development and productive projects with national and local institutions, managing cumulative resources exceeding COP 1.8 billion. The organization has experience in coordinating logistics, managing collective assets (such as transport equipment), organizing producers, and implementing technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives.

For the proposed green innovation project, ASOFRUPAL will leverage its existing governance framework while strengthening internal coordination and management processes. Where specialized technical expertise is required (e.g., renewable energy systems, environmental management, traceability tools), the organization will engage external technical service providers, ensuring effective implementation while maintaining strong local ownership and oversight.

3.2 Current business model

ASOFRUPAL operates as a collective commercialization and logistics organization for smallholder producers of fresh blackberries (mora) in the department of Boyacá, Colombia. The association's core activity is the aggregation, transportation, and commercialization of fresh agricultural commodities, primarily Mora Uva and Mora de Castilla, produced by family farmers under small-scale production systems.

Products and product lines

The organization currently commercializes:

- Fresh Mora Uva (approximately 60% of total volume)
- Fresh Mora de Castilla (Morón) (approximately 40% of total volume)

These products are marketed in fresh form, without on-site industrial processing. Although the association has basic infrastructure and equipment with potential for agro-processing, current operations are focused on fresh produce commercialization.

Production and supply base

ASOFRUPAL aggregates production from 105 smallholder producers, of whom 55 are active members. Production takes place in high-altitude Andean zones between 2,200 and 2,900 meters above sea level, under rainfed conditions and predominantly manual labor systems.

Annual production and commercialization volumes reach approximately 593 metric tons, with a stable supply capacity distributed throughout the year, subject to seasonal peaks. Producers operate small plots under family farming schemes, combining blackberry cultivation with other agricultural and livestock activities.

Operational process

The current operational model follows these steps:

1. Harvesting at farm level, conducted manually by producers using plastic crates.
2. Collection at roadside or designated points, according to predefined routes and schedules.
3. Centralized transport, managed by the association using its own logistics assets.
4. Direct delivery to buyers, primarily wholesale traders and fruit merchants in regional markets.

Quality control is mainly based on visual inspection and weight verification, as buyers currently accept the full range of harvested fruit. Formal grading, traceability systems, and standardized quality protocols are limited or absent.

Markets and sales channels

ASOFRUPAL operates exclusively in the domestic Colombian market. Its primary buyers are wholesale fruit traders and intermediaries supplying local and regional markets, including urban centers such as Sogamoso and Paipa. The organization currently depends heavily on a limited number of buyers, which constrains price negotiation and market diversification.

Sales revenues are generated mainly through:

- Transportation and logistics services provided to members (approximately 80% of income)
- Membership and service fees (approximately 20% of income)

Facilities, staffing, and capacity

The association has:

- Basic collection and coordination facilities
- Transport assets for product aggregation and delivery
- Administrative support functions, including accounting services

Staffing is lean and largely based on:

- An elected management structure (Board and Legal Representative)
- Operational support for logistics and administration
- Outsourced professional services (accounting)

While the current business model has proven effective in ensuring market access and income stability for members, it remains highly dependent on manual processes, fossil-fuel-based logistics, and limited data management. These constraints restrict productivity gains, increase operational costs, and limit the organization's ability to respond to sustainability and traceability demands from higher-value markets.

This existing model provides a solid operational foundation but also highlights clear opportunities for improvement through green innovation, efficiency upgrades, and organizational strengthening, which are the focus of the proposed CFC-supported investment.

4. Market opportunity

4.1 Market position and competitors

ASOFRUPAL operates within the domestic Colombian fresh fruit market, specifically in the blackberry (mora) value chain, where demand is driven by household consumption, juice preparation, small-scale agro-processing, and retail distribution. Blackberries are a widely consumed commodity in Colombia, with stable year-round demand and increasing interest from institutional buyers and agro-processors seeking consistent supply and improved quality standards.

Market position

ASOFRUPAL holds a recognized local position as a reliable aggregator and logistics provider for smallholder blackberry producers in the municipality of Paipa and surrounding areas. Its main competitive strength lies in its ability to coordinate supply from a large base of dispersed producers, ensuring volume consistency and regular market access. With an annual commercialization volume of approximately 593 metric tons, the association represents a relevant supplier at the regional level.

However, the organization currently operates primarily as a price taker within the value chain. Sales are concentrated in a limited number of wholesale buyers and intermediaries, and price formation is largely determined by market conditions and buyer requirements rather than by differentiated product attributes. Market participation is therefore characterized by low margins, limited bargaining

Competitors

ASOFRUPAL's main competitors are:

Individual producers and informal traders, who sell directly to intermediaries without collective organization.

Other small producer groups or associations operating in nearby regions with similar production systems.

Independent intermediaries, who aggregate fruit from multiple sources and supply wholesale markets.

These competitors often compete primarily on price and availability, with limited emphasis on sustainability, traceability, or environmental performance. As a result, competition in the current market is largely undifferentiated, reinforcing downward pressure on prices and limiting incentives for quality or sustainability improvements.

Market opportunity and growth potential

The Colombian blackberry market is gradually evolving toward higher requirements for quality, reliability, and sustainability, particularly among institutional buyers, retailers, and processors. There is a growing opportunity for organized producers to access more stable and higher-value market segments by offering improved post-harvest handling, reduced losses, traceability, and environmentally responsible production practices.

In this context, ASOFRUPAL's organized structure, production scale, and territorial presence provide a strong foundation to reposition itself competitively. By implementing green innovation solutions—such as energy-efficient infrastructure, improved post-harvest management, and basic traceability systems—the organization can differentiate its product, reduce operational costs, and strengthen its market position relative to informal competitors and less organized producer groups.

The proposed project is therefore strategically aligned with existing market trends and addresses clear competitive gaps, enabling ASOFRUPAL to move from a volume-based, price-dependent position toward a more resilient, efficient, and sustainability-oriented market role, consistent with the objectives of the Common Fund for Commodities.

4.2 Key strength of your business model

The key strength of the business model of ASOFRUPAL lies in its collective, smallholder-centered structure combined with a clear pathway toward green innovation and value chain upgrading. Unlike individual producers or informal traders, ASOFRUPAL aggregates supply from a large base of family farmers, enabling scale, coordination, and more efficient market participation while maintaining strong local ownership and social cohesion.

A fundamental strength of the model is its deep territorial embeddedness. The organization operates in a well-defined production area with favorable agroecological conditions and long-standing experience in blackberry cultivation. This provides supply stability, product consistency, and strong commitment from producers, which are critical factors for sustainable value chain development.

Another key strength is ASOFRUPAL's proven organizational and operational track record. With more than 15 years of experience and successful implementation of multiple development and productive projects, the association has demonstrated its ability to manage collective assets, coordinate logistics, comply with institutional requirements, and engage effectively with public and development partners. This significantly reduces execution risk for the proposed investment.

The proposed project builds on these strengths by introducing green innovation as a competitive lever, rather than as an isolated technological upgrade. The integration of renewable energy solutions, energy-efficient post-harvest handling, and basic traceability systems strengthens the business model by:

Reducing operational and energy costs,

Lowering post-harvest losses,

Improving transparency and data-driven decision-making,

Enhancing resilience to climate and market shocks.

Importantly, the model is inclusive and scalable. Benefits generated by the investment—cost savings, efficiency gains, and improved market positioning—are directly transferred to smallholder producers through better prices, reduced service costs, and more stable demand. At the same time, the model can be replicated or scaled to other producer groups and territories with similar conditions, amplifying development impact beyond the immediate beneficiaries.

These combined strengths position ASOFRUPAL as a credible and high-impact partner for the Common Fund for Commodities, capable of translating targeted financial support into measurable economic, social, and environmental outcomes while contributing to a shorter, greener, and more resilient commodity value chain.

4.3 Obstacles

Identify key obstacles and how these would be addressed by the project. If necessary, refer to Section 7.4 “Risks”.

5. Proposed operational model

5.1 Proposed business model

Despite its solid organizational base and production capacity, ASOFRUPAL faces a number of structural obstacles that limit its ability to improve competitiveness, sustainability, and income generation for smallholder producers.

One of the main obstacles is energy inefficiency and high operational costs, particularly in logistics and post-harvest handling processes that rely on conventional energy sources. This increases operating expenses and exposes the organization to fuel price volatility. The project directly addresses this constraint through the introduction of renewable energy-based and energy-efficient infrastructure, reducing costs and improving long-term operational resilience.

A second critical obstacle is the lack of standardized post-harvest management and quality differentiation. Currently, limited grading, handling protocols, and basic infrastructure result in post-harvest losses and constrain access to higher-value market segments. The project will mitigate this challenge by improving post-harvest practices, introducing basic quality standards, and upgrading handling processes, thereby reducing losses and enhancing product consistency.

Another key obstacle is limited traceability and data-driven management. The absence of structured production records, cost analysis, and traceability systems weakens planning, price negotiation, and strategic decision-making. Through the implementation of simple traceability and management tools, combined with targeted capacity building, the project will strengthen transparency, operational control, and accountability across the value chain.

Market-related obstacles also persist, particularly high dependence on a small number of buyers and limited bargaining power. While the project does not aim to immediately transform market structure, improved efficiency, quality, and sustainability performance will enable the organization to gradually diversify its market relationships and engage with buyers that value reliability and responsible production.

Finally, smallholder producers operate in a context of climate variability and environmental vulnerability, which affects yields and income stability. By promoting energy-efficient solutions and more sustainable operational practices, the project contributes to greater climate resilience and environmental sustainability at both farm and organizational levels.

These obstacles are interrelated and cannot be addressed through isolated interventions. The proposed green innovation project provides an integrated response, tackling technical, organizational, and environmental constraints simultaneously. Key residual risks and mitigation measures related to market volatility, climate exposure, and institutional capacity are further addressed in Section 7.4 (Risks) of this application.

5.2 Client base and growth potential

The current client base of ASOFRUPAL consists primarily of domestic wholesale fruit traders and intermediaries operating in regional markets within Colombia. These buyers supply fresh blackberries to local retailers, fruit shops, small agro-processors, and food service businesses. The organization's sales are currently concentrated in a limited number of long-standing commercial relationships, which provide volume stability but also result in high buyer concentration and limited bargaining power.

The existing client base values ASOFRUPAL's ability to deliver consistent volumes, reliable logistics, and regular supply, rather than differentiated quality or sustainability attributes. Pricing is therefore largely market-driven, with limited premium for product characteristics beyond basic freshness and availability. While this model has ensured continuity of sales, it constrains income growth and exposes producers to market volatility.

The proposed green innovation project is expected to significantly enhance ASOFRUPAL's growth potential by strengthening the organization's value proposition. Improved post-harvest handling, reduced losses, greater operational efficiency, and the introduction of basic traceability will enable the association to gradually expand its client base toward more stable and higher-value market segments. These include institutional buyers, local retailers with sustainability requirements, and small agro-processors seeking reliable and traceable supply.

Growth under the project is expected to be driven primarily by efficiency gains and value retention, rather than by a substantial increase in production volumes. Reduced energy and logistics costs, combined with lower post-harvest losses, will improve net margins and price realization for producers. Over time, enhanced organizational capacity and sustainability performance will also support diversification of buyers and stronger commercial relationships, reducing dependence on a single market channel.

Overall, the project positions ASOFRUPAL to transition from a volume-based, price-dependent client structure toward a more resilient, diversified, and sustainability-oriented client base, creating a solid foundation for incremental growth and long-term financial sustainability, fully aligned with the development objectives of the Common Fund for Commodities.

5.3 Supply

The supply base of ASOFRUPAL is composed entirely of smallholder family farmers engaged in the production of fresh blackberries (mora) in the rural district of Palermo, municipality of Paipa, Boyacá, Colombia. The organization aggregates supply from 105 producers, of whom 55 are active members, operating under small-scale, family-based farming systems.

Key products supplied

The main products supplied to the organization are:

- Fresh Mora Uva, representing approximately 60% of total supply
- Fresh Mora de Castilla (Morón), representing approximately 40% of total supply

All products are supplied in fresh form and delivered in plastic crates shortly after harvest to preserve quality.

Supply organization and engagement of smallholders

Smallholders are engaged through a collective and inclusive organizational model. Producers harvest the fruit manually at farm level and deliver it to designated roadside or collection points. ASOFRUPAL coordinates predefined collection routes and schedules, ensuring efficient aggregation and transport to buyers.

Supply relationships are based on long-term participation within the association, rather than formal individual contracts. While pricing is generally determined by prevailing market conditions, the association plays a key role in coordinating volumes, ensuring regular market access, and providing logistical services that reduce transaction costs for producers. This arrangement offers producers greater stability compared to selling individually to informal intermediaries.

ASOFRUPAL maintains close and continuous interaction with its supply base through regular meetings, assemblies, and communication channels. This structure facilitates collective decision-making, dissemination of technical guidance, and alignment around quality and delivery requirements.

Type of agreements and pricing arrangements

Supply arrangements are primarily seasonal and informal, reflecting the traditional structure of the local value chain. Prices are typically negotiated on a short-term basis and are influenced by market demand, supply conditions, and buyer requirements. There are currently no fixed-price or long-term offtake contracts in place.

While this system ensures flexibility, it also exposes producers to price volatility and limits incentives for quality differentiation. The proposed project aims to strengthen the supply model by introducing basic traceability, improved post-harvest practices, and clearer production records, enabling the organization to gradually move toward more structured and transparent supply arrangements.

Contribution of the project to supply strengthening

Through the implementation of green innovation solutions, the project will enhance supply reliability, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve coordination between producers and the organization. These improvements will support more predictable volumes, better quality consistency, and stronger alignment between supply and market demand, ultimately increasing income stability for smallholder producers.

key products supplied to the organization, how and by whom these are supplied and type of agreements (i.e., seasonal, or long-term, price setting arrangements, etc.). If supply comes from smallholders, highlight how smallholders are engaged and organized.

5.4 Production process

The proposed operation builds upon the existing production and aggregation model of ASOFRUPAL, introducing targeted value addition through green innovation, improved post-harvest handling, and enhanced organizational processes, rather than through large-scale industrial processing.

Value addition through the proposed operation

Value addition will be achieved primarily by reducing losses, improving efficiency, and enhancing product reliability, which directly translate into higher net incomes for smallholder producers. The project focuses on strengthening critical stages of the production and post-harvest process where inefficiencies currently occur.

Key improvements include:

- Upgraded post-harvest handling: Introduction of basic handling and sorting improvements to reduce mechanical damage and post-harvest losses, improving overall product consistency.
- Energy-efficient operations: Deployment of renewable energy-based and energy-efficient equipment to support collection and post-harvest activities, reducing dependence on conventional energy sources and lowering operating costs.
- Improved logistics coordination: Optimization of collection and handling processes to minimize delays between harvest and delivery, preserving quality and shelf life.

Equipment and infrastructure needs

The project will finance productive and enabling equipment, including:

- Energy-efficient or solar-powered systems for post-harvest handling and basic infrastructure
- Improved storage and handling equipment to reduce losses and improve hygiene
- Basic tools and facilities to support standardized quality practices

These investments are designed to be appropriate to the scale of the organization, low-maintenance, and adaptable to rural conditions.

Skills development and organizational strengthening

In parallel with physical investments, the project includes targeted capacity building for producers, board members, and operational staff. Training will focus on:

- Improved post-harvest handling practices
- Efficient use and maintenance of new equipment
- Basic quality management and traceability principles
- Operational planning and cost awareness

This combination of hardware and skills development ensures that the investments are effectively utilized and sustained over time.

Digitalisation and process improvements

The proposed operation introduces simple digital and record-keeping tools to support traceability, production monitoring, and operational control. These tools will allow the organization to:

- Record production volumes and delivery routes
- Monitor losses and operational efficiency

- Support data-driven decision-making at organizational level

Digitalisation is intentionally kept light, accessible, and scalable, ensuring adoption by smallholder producers with limited technological resources.

Changes to the current operation

The project does not fundamentally alter the core production system at farm level but enhances the efficiency and sustainability of aggregation, post-harvest handling, and organizational management. These changes enable ASOFRUPAL to retain more value within the existing value chain, improve resilience, and prepare the organization for future market requirements related to sustainability and traceability.

5.5 Innovation

The proposed business model innovation implemented by ASOFRUPAL is based on the integration of green technology, organizational innovation, and operational efficiency within a smallholder-driven commodity value chain. Rather than introducing a single technological solution, the project applies a systemic innovation approach that upgrades how production, aggregation, and commercialization are managed.

Green innovation

The project introduces renewable energy-based and energy-efficient solutions to support post-harvest handling and operational processes. By reducing dependence on conventional energy sources and fossil fuels, the innovation directly lowers greenhouse gas emissions and operating costs. Energy efficiency also improves resilience to energy price volatility and infrastructure constraints common in rural areas, making the value chain greener and more climate-resilient.

Shortening the value chain

The innovation helps to shorten the value chain by strengthening ASOFRUPAL's role as a direct aggregator and coordinator between smallholder producers and buyers. Improved logistics efficiency, better post-harvest management, and reduced losses allow the organization to retain more value at the producer level and reduce reliance on additional intermediaries. By increasing internal efficiency and reliability, the association is better positioned to engage directly with buyers that require consistent supply, thereby simplifying the chain and improving price transmission to producers.

Traceability and transparency

A core element of the innovation is the introduction of basic but robust traceability and data management tools. These tools enable the organization to track production volumes, delivery routes, and basic quality parameters at farm and collection levels. While intentionally simple and accessible, this traceability framework represents a significant upgrade from the current informal system and lays the foundation for greater transparency, accountability, and market credibility.

Organizational and process innovation

Beyond technology, the project introduces organizational innovation by embedding data-driven decision-making, standardized operational procedures, and clearer cost structures into daily operations. Capacity building ensures that producers, board members, and operational staff can effectively use new tools and equipment, ensuring long-term adoption and impact.

Contribution to CFC objectives

This integrated innovation approach enables ASOFRUPAL to transition from a traditional, volume-driven model toward a more efficient, greener, and traceable commodity value chain. The innovation is highly relevant for the Common Fund for Commodities as it demonstrates how relatively modest investments can catalyze structural transformation in smallholder systems, generating measurable economic, social, and environmental benefits while remaining scalable and replicable in similar contexts.

6. Development impact

For details of development impact indicators, please refer to the model excel spreadsheet downloadable with the application form.

6.1 Targeted impact, innovation, and additionality

The proposed project delivers targeted development impact by enabling structural improvements in a smallholder-driven commodity value chain through the application of green innovation, organizational strengthening, and operational efficiency. The intervention directly benefits small-scale family farmers organized under ASOFRUPAL, addressing economic vulnerability, environmental sustainability, and limited market integration.

Innovation enabled by CFC financing

CFC financing makes it possible to implement an integrated green innovation package that would not be feasible under the organization's current financial conditions. This includes the deployment of renewable energy-based and energy-efficient infrastructure, improved post-harvest handling systems, and basic traceability and data management tools. These innovations go beyond incremental improvements and introduce new operational standards that reduce costs, enhance transparency, and strengthen resilience.

The innovation is not limited to technology adoption. It also includes organizational and process innovation, such as standardized procedures, data-driven decision-making, and strengthened coordination between producers and the association. Together, these elements transform how value is created, retained, and distributed along the chain.

Targeted development impact

The project is expected to generate measurable economic, social, and environmental impacts, including:

- Increased net incomes for smallholder producers through reduced energy and logistics costs, lower post-harvest losses, and improved price realization.
- Improved income stability by strengthening operational efficiency and reducing exposure to energy price volatility and supply disruptions.
- Enhanced inclusion and participation of smallholders in organized markets, reinforcing collective action and local economic development.
- Environmental benefits, including reduced greenhouse gas emissions, more efficient resource use, and greater climate resilience at the organizational level.

Sustainability of impact

The sustainability of the project's impact is ensured through several reinforcing mechanisms. First, the investments focus on cost-reducing and efficiency-enhancing assets, generating ongoing financial benefits that persist beyond the project period. Second, capacity building ensures that producers and staff can effectively operate and maintain new systems, embedding innovation into daily operations. Third, improved traceability and organizational management strengthen market credibility and enable future upgrading toward higher-value segments.

Additionality of CFC support

CFC support is clearly additional. Without concessional and catalytic financing, ASOFRUPAL would not be able to mobilize the upfront capital required for green infrastructure and organizational innovation. Commercial financing options are limited and poorly aligned with the risk profile and scale of smallholder-based initiatives. By de-risking the investment and enabling innovation, CFC financing catalyzes sustainable transformation that would otherwise not occur.

Overall, the project aligns fully with the Common Fund for Commodities' mandate to promote inclusive, innovative, and sustainable commodity value chains, delivering long-term development impact while maintaining financial viability and scalability.

6.2 Impact on Sustainable Development Goals[5] (SDGs)

Describe how CFC financing will contribute to the SDGs, with emphasis on the five core CFC SDGs. Please fill out the summary table below and provide the specific impact indicators and projected impact in the Excel document attached to this form. Please bear in mind that impact must be evaluated in the context of the baseline situation.

The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals:

The proposed project contributes directly to several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing structural constraints faced by smallholder commodity producers through green innovation, improved efficiency, and inclusive value chain development. The intervention is fully aligned with the development mandate of the Common Fund for Commodities and places particular emphasis on the five core CFC SDGs.



[5] For more information on UN Sustainable Development Goals please refer to UN web page THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development (un.org)

SDG	Expected impact
	The project contributes to poverty reduction by increasing net incomes and income stability for smallholder family farmers organized under ASOFRUPAL. By reducing energy and logistics costs, lowering post-harvest losses, and improving operational efficiency, the project enables producers to retain a greater share of the value generated. Impact is evaluated against a baseline characterized by price dependency, limited margins, and high operational vulnerability.
	The project contributes directly to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by strengthening sustainable smallholder food production systems and improving the availability, stability, and efficiency of fresh fruit supply within local and regional food markets. By supporting ASOFRUPAL and its network of small-scale family farmers, the intervention enhances the capacity of producers to maintain and improve food production under environmentally and economically sustainable conditions. The project contributes directly to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by strengthening sustainable smallholder food production systems and improving the availability, stability, and efficiency of fresh fruit supply within local and regional food markets. By supporting ASOFRUPAL and its network of small-scale family farmers, the intervention enhances the capacity of producers to maintain and improve food production under environmentally and economically sustainable conditions.
	While not exclusively focused on gender, the project has a cross-cutting positive impact on women's participation in smallholder farming households. Improved income stability, organizational strengthening, and capacity-building activities support greater inclusion of women in production, post-harvest activities, and collective decision-making processes.
	The project strengthens inclusive and sustainable economic growth in rural areas by reinforcing collecREDCtive commercialization, improving productivity, and enhancing organizational capacity. Improved processes and skills development contribute to safer, more organized, and more efficient working conditions, while strengthening the long-term viability of smallholder-based economic activity.
	The project contributes to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by promoting the economic inclusion and empowerment of smallholder family farmers within the blackberry commodity value chain. Through collective organization, green innovation, and improved operational efficiency, the intervention reduces structural inequalities that typically disadvantage small-scale producers in comparison to larger commercial actors and intermediaries.

	The project contributes to climate action by integrating renewable energy-based and energy-efficient solutions into post-harvest and operational processes. These interventions reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decrease dependence on fossil fuels, and enhance resilience to climate and energy-related risks. Impact is assessed relative to a baseline of conventional, fossil-fuel-dependent operations
SDG [enter number]	

6.3 Poverty profile of end beneficiary

The end beneficiaries of the project are smallholder family farmers organized under ASOFRUPAL, located in the rural district of Palermo, municipality of Paipa, Boyacá, Colombia. These producers operate within the context of small-scale, family-based agriculture, which is recognized as a vulnerable segment within the national and regional economy.

Socioeconomic profile of beneficiaries

The majority of beneficiaries:

- Rely primarily on agricultural activities as their main source of income, particularly blackberry production, complemented by small-scale livestock or other crops.
- Cultivate small plots of land, generally under rainfed conditions and with limited access to irrigation, mechanization, or modern infrastructure.
- Face income volatility due to fluctuating market prices, climate variability, and limited bargaining power within the value chain.
- Have restricted access to formal financial services, including credit and insurance, limiting their ability to invest in productivity-enhancing or climate-resilient technologies.

Household incomes are typically low to moderate, often close to or below rural poverty and vulnerability thresholds, especially during periods of low production or adverse climatic conditions. Cash flow constraints are common, and savings capacity is limited.

Regional poverty and vulnerability context

The project area is characterized by structural rural vulnerabilities, including:

- Limited access to sustainable energy and modern post-harvest infrastructure
- Aging rural population and low participation of youth in agriculture
- High dependence on intermediary-driven markets
- Exposure to climate-related risks affecting yields and income stability

Women play a significant role in household economies and agricultural labor, particularly in harvesting and post-harvest activities, but often face unequal access to resources, decision-making spaces, and income control, reinforcing gender-based vulnerabilities.

Relevance of the project for poverty reduction

The proposed project directly targets these poverty-related constraints by:

- Increasing net household incomes through cost reductions and efficiency gains
- Improving income stability by reducing post-harvest losses and operational risks
- Strengthening collective market participation, which improves price transmission and reduces exploitation by intermediaries
- Enhancing resilience to climate and energy-related shocks through green innovation

By addressing both income generation and structural vulnerability, the project contributes to reducing poverty and economic insecurity among smallholder families, in line with the development objectives of the Common Fund for Commodities.

6.4 Social and Environmental risks

The proposed project involves relatively low social and environmental risk, as it focuses on upgrading existing operations rather than expanding agricultural land or introducing intensive production systems. Nevertheless, several potential risks have been identified at both sectoral and project levels, along with appropriate mitigation measures.

Social risks and mitigation measures

Working conditions and occupational safety:
Smallholder farming systems often rely on manual labor, with limited formalization of occupational health and safety practices. Risks include physical strain during harvesting and post-harvest handling, as well as limited awareness of workplace safety standards.

Mitigation:
The project incorporates capacity-building activities focused on basic occupational safety, improved handling practices, and safe use of equipment. Improved organization of post-harvest operations and clearer procedures will contribute to safer and more efficient working conditions. The association will also promote compliance with national labor regulations and encourage gradual adoption of good occupational practices.

Social inclusion and equity:
There is a risk that benefits from innovation could be unevenly distributed if participation is limited to a subset of producers.

Mitigation:
The project is designed to be inclusive, targeting all active members and associated producers of ASOFRUPAL. Collective governance mechanisms ensure transparent decision-making and equitable distribution of benefits derived from cost savings, efficiency gains, and improved market access.

Environmental risks and mitigation measures

Use of agrochemicals:
As in many fruit production systems, the use of agrochemicals presents potential environmental and health risks if not properly managed.

Mitigation:
The project does not promote increased use of agrochemicals or the establishment of new plantations. Instead, it supports improved organization, traceability, and awareness of good agricultural practices. Where applicable, producers will be encouraged to follow existing national guidelines and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) promoted by public institutions.

Waste management:
Post-harvest operations can generate organic waste and packaging residues, and poor waste management could lead to localized environmental impacts.

Mitigation:
Improved post-harvest handling and reduced losses will lower overall waste generation. The project will promote proper handling of organic residues and encourage participation in existing collection programs for agricultural packaging and post-consumer waste, in line with local regulations.

Energy use and emissions:
Conventional logistics and post-harvest operations rely on fossil fuels, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.

Mitigation:
A core component of the project is the introduction of renewable energy-based and energy-efficient solutions, which will reduce emissions, lower dependence on fossil fuels, and improve the environmental performance of the value chain.

Environmental and social safeguards

The project does not involve land use change, deforestation, establishment of new plantations, or displacement of communities. All activities will be implemented within existing production areas and infrastructure. Environmental and social risks will be monitored through regular organizational oversight and compliance with applicable national regulations.

Overall, the project's risk profile is considered low to moderate, with clear mitigation measures embedded in its design. The integration of green innovation and organizational strengthening contributes positively to environmental sustainability and social inclusion, in full alignment with the principles and safeguards of the Common Fund for Commodities.

7. Financial performance

7.1 Historical financial statements

The historical financial performance of ASOFRUPAL reflects a stable, service-based operating model typical of smallholder producer organizations focused on collective commercialization and logistics. Over recent financial years, the association has maintained consistent activity levels, supported by predictable production volumes and long-standing commercial relationships within the domestic market.

Main revenue and income drivers

ASOFRUPAL's revenues are generated primarily through service-based income, rather than direct trading margins. The main income drivers include:

- Logistics and transportation services provided to members and associated producers for the collection and delivery of fresh blackberries, representing approximately 80% of total revenues.
- Membership fees and service contributions, accounting for approximately 20% of total revenues, which support basic administrative and organizational functions.

In the most recent financial year, the association facilitated the commercialization of approximately 593 metric tons of fresh blackberries, with estimated gross sales in the value chain exceeding COP 1.0 billion. While the association does not retain the full value of product sales, its service-based revenue model ensures a steady cash flow linked to production volumes.

Financial standing and management

The organization maintains basic but functional financial management systems, supported by professional accounting services that ensure compliance with national accounting and tax requirements. Financial records are kept up to date, and the association has experience managing and reporting on funds from public institutions and development programs.

ASOFRUPAL has successfully administered cumulative project resources of approximately COP 1.8 billion over time, demonstrating its ability to handle external funding responsibly and transparently. While profit margins are modest, consistent with the organization's associative and service-oriented nature, operating costs are generally covered through recurring income streams.

Financial challenges and baseline context

Like many smallholder-based organizations, ASOFRUPAL operates with limited financial buffers and constrained investment capacity. High dependence on manual processes, fossil-fuel-based logistics, and energy-intensive operations places pressure on operating costs and limits opportunities for reinvestment.

This financial baseline underscores the relevance of the proposed CFC-supported investment. By reducing operational costs and improving efficiency through green innovation, the project is expected to strengthen the association's financial position, improve cash flow resilience, and enhance its capacity to sustainably manage and repay external financing.

7.2 Financial projections

Please fill out your own financial projections in the Excel sheet provided with the form. Make sure to explain the main assumptions of financial projections, e.g.:

- Assumption 1: (e.g.: Volume growth (in kg/MT) for product X from . to ..
- Assumption 2: (e.g.: Sales price/kg to increase/decrease by ..)

- Assumption 3: ...
- Assumption 4: …

7.3 Sources of funding and additionality CFC

ASOFRUPAL has historically financed its operations and development activities through a combination of internal resources and public-sector project-based support. Existing funding sources include:

- Own revenues, generated primarily from logistics and transportation services provided to members and associated producers, as well as membership and service fees.
- Public development programs, implemented in collaboration with national and local institutions, which have supported productive strengthening, technical assistance, infrastructure improvement, and organizational development on a project-by-project basis.
- In-kind contributions from members, including labor, use of existing assets, and participation in collective activities.

These funding sources have been sufficient to sustain day-to-day operations and incremental improvements but are not adequate to finance capital-intensive green innovation investments that require upfront funding and longer payback periods.

Challenges to project feasibility without CFC involvement

Despite its operational stability and strong territorial presence, ASOFRUPAL faces structural constraints that limit access to conventional financing:

- Limited collateral and balance sheet capacity, which restrict access to commercial loans from financial institutions.
- Small project scale, which makes the investment less attractive for traditional lenders and incompatible with standard loan products.
- Risk profile associated with smallholder agriculture, including climate variability, price volatility, and seasonal cash flows.
- High upfront costs associated with renewable energy-based infrastructure and efficiency-enhancing equipment, which exceed the organization's self-financing capacity.

As a result, without CFC involvement, the proposed project would either be significantly delayed, implemented at a much smaller scale, or not implemented at all. Incremental internal investments would not allow the organization to achieve the integrated green innovation required to generate transformative impact.

Additionality of CFC financing

CFC financing is clearly additional and catalytic. It enables ASOFRUPAL to mobilize investment into green infrastructure and organizational innovation that cannot be financed through existing revenue streams or public grants alone. By providing appropriately structured financing through the Fast-Track Loan facility, the CFC reduces financial barriers, de-risks the investment, and accelerates implementation.

Moreover, CFC involvement strengthens the project's credibility and leverage, positioning the organization to attract complementary support, improve governance standards, and build a track record in sustainable finance. This additionality ensures that CFC resources do not substitute existing funding but instead unlock new investment pathways, generating long-term economic, social, and environmental benefits for smallholder producers.

In summary, CFC financing plays a decisive role in making the proposed green innovation project financially feasible, scalable, and sustainable, fully aligned with the Common Fund for Commodities' mandate to support inclusive and transformative commodity value chains.

7.4 Main risks and mitigants

Please evaluate the impact of main risks on the business case and your proposed mitigation measures.

Risk/impact description	Likelihood	Mitigation measures
Market price volatility and buyer concentration *– Fluctuations in blackberry prices and dependence on a limited number of buyers could affect revenues and cash flow.*	Likely	*The project improves operational efficiency and reduces costs, increasing resilience to price fluctuations. Enhanced post-harvest handling, traceability, and reliability will support gradual diversification of buyers and stronger commercial relationships.*
Climate variability and production risks *– Adverse weather conditions may affect production volumes and supply consistency.*	Likely	*The project focuses on efficiency and loss reduction rather than volume expansion. Energy-efficient solutions and improved logistics reduce vulnerability to climate-related disruptions. Collective organization also allows risk-sharing among producers.*
Operational and implementation risk *– Limited experience with renewable energy systems and new operational tools could delay or reduce effectiveness of implementation*	Likely	*External technical service providers will be engaged for system design and installation. Capacity building for staff and producers ensures proper operation, maintenance, and adoption of new technologies.*

8. Supporting document checklist

8.1 Required documents (confirm by ☒):

☐ Audited financial statements (latest 3 financial years)
☐ Financial projections including Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss forecast
☐ Impact indicators (please fill out the template excel spreadsheet)
☐ Company registration documents
☐ Legal ownership chart for all entities of the group (in case of several legal entities)

8.2 Recommended supplementary documents (not mandatory in this stage)

- ☐ Business plan
- ☐ Management / Organization chart
- ☐ Key staff resume/s
- ☐ Articles of Association
- ☐ Environmental & Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)

9. Key details

Name of organization	ASOFRUPAL
Type of organization	*[private company, cooperative, investment fund, NGO, governmental organization]*
Country of incorporation	*Cooperative / Farmers' Association*
Date registered	Colombia
Company registration number	
Address	
Website	

10. Affirmations

The application is completed by the undersigned:

Contact details

Name	Jaime Jimenez Vega
Title	Authorized Legal Representative
Phone	3203114642
Email	asofrupalpaipa@gmail.com

I hereby confirm that: (confirm by ☒):
☐ I am duly authorized to represent the Organization:
☐ The country in which the funds are used are to take place in a CFC member country[6].
☐ The Applicant observes the principles of UN Global Compact, including universal principles on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption. The Applicant is in compliance with all applicable social and environmental regulations and will remain complaint for the whole period of the requested CFC involvement.
☐ The Applicant is not the subject of a defendant in, or respondent to any investigation, civil litigation, arbitration, or other action or proceedings related to their business activities. I will inform the CFC without delay if any such action or proceedings occur after the date of submission of this application.
☐ I warrant that the information provided in this application form is true and accurate.
☐ I understand that any information supplied to the CFC in this application form and its attachments will be made available for consideration by the Consultative Committee and other Governing Bodies of the CFC. If any of the documents contain sensitive financial or commercial information, please indicate this clearly.

How did you find out about the CFC call for proposals?

Advertisement – please name the publication	
Web search (e.g., Google)	
Social Media (e.g. LinkedIn)	
Any other – please specify	

[6] See for the actual list of CFC member countries www.common-fund.org/ about-us/member-states/.

Red Adelco
Red Nacional de Agencias de Desarrollo Local de Colombia
#SomosDELterritorio

Coordinación Convenio Paipa <coordinacion.conveniopaipa@redadelco.org>

Fwd: Submission of Project Proposal – Green Innovation for Sustainable Blackberry Value Chain Development in Palermo, Boyocá- Colombia

Coordinación Convenio Paipa <coordinacion.conveniopaipa@redadelco.org>
23 de diciembre de 2025 a las 7:45

Para: Coordinación Convenio Paipa <coordinacion.conveniopaipa@redadelco.org>

Dear CFC Open Call Committee,

On behalf of ASOFRUPAL (Asociación de Productores Frutícolas de Palermo), we are pleased to submit our project proposal entitled “Green Innovation for Sustainable Blackberry Value Chain Development among Smallholder Farmers in Boyacá, Colombia” for consideration under the Common Fund for Commodities’ Call for Proposals.

ASOFRUPAL is a farmer-based associative organization established in 2007, representing smallholder family farmers engaged in blackberry production in the municipality of Paipa, Boyacá. The proposed project seeks to implement an integrated green innovation approach to strengthen the sustainability, efficiency, and income-generating capacity of small-scale producers through renewable energy solutions, improved post-harvest handling, enhanced traceability, and organizational strengthening.

TPlease find attached the completed application form and the required supporting documentation. We confirm that all information provided is accurate to the best of our knowledge and that the project complies with the eligibility criteria and principles outlined by the Common Fund for Commodities.

We appreciate your time and consideration and remain at your disposal should any additional information or clarification be required during the evaluation process.

Yours sincerely,

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Red Adelco
Red Nacional de Agencias de Desarrollo Local de Colombia
#SomosDELterritorio

Aldo Nicolás Díaz Useche
Formulador de proyectos
Contacto: (+57) 313 407 9094
www.redadelco.org

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