

# Aequitas Fund

2025

## Investment Activities that Make a Difference

Impact and Environmental, Social  
and Governance Responsibility Report

---

## Table of Contents

Investment Activities That Make a Difference	3
Our Impact Around the World	4
Why We Invest for Impact	5
Governance	6
Responsibilities Structure	6
Our Investment and Impact Management Approach	6
Impact Strategy	7
Impact Measurement	8
Theory of Change	9
Key Performance Indicators	10
Impact Results	11
Quantitative and Qualitative Results	11
SIPeM capacity building through technical assistance	13
Moving Forward	14

## Disclose Fairly and Transparently

---

At Développement international Desjardins (DID), we believe in the importance of supporting communities in their sustainable economic development, and our teams are strongly committed to making a positive impact around the world.

The publication of this report is in line with this belief, and enables us to disclose our approach, achievements and objectives in terms of impact investing in a transparent and diligent manner.

# Investment Activities That Make a Difference

I am proud to present our 2025 annual impact report, which summarises the Aequitas fund's continued progress in advancing inclusive and sustainable finance. In 2025, the fund consolidated its investments deploying an additional 9.5 million USD in debt. These investments supported four financial institutions, impacting an additional 458,708 people, over half of them women, across Latin America, Africa, and Central Asia.

The fund's technical assistance (TA) program, co-financed by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and DID, also allowed four financial institutions we support to build their capacities so that they can better meet the needs of their customers and improve their ESG performance.

These figures and case studies show the tangible impact of our investment activities and commitment to inclusive growth in underserved markets worldwide. Beyond the numbers, our financial and technical assistance supports organizational improvements, including the adoption of gender-equality policies, the development of green financial products, and stronger governance among partner institutions. Each initiative helps embed sustainable, inclusive practices across the organizations and communities we support.



Through this report, we share our learnings, our successes and our future ambitions. We remain committed to ensuring that Aequitas realises its full potential as a trusted partner for advancing inclusive and sustainable finance in emerging and developing markets.

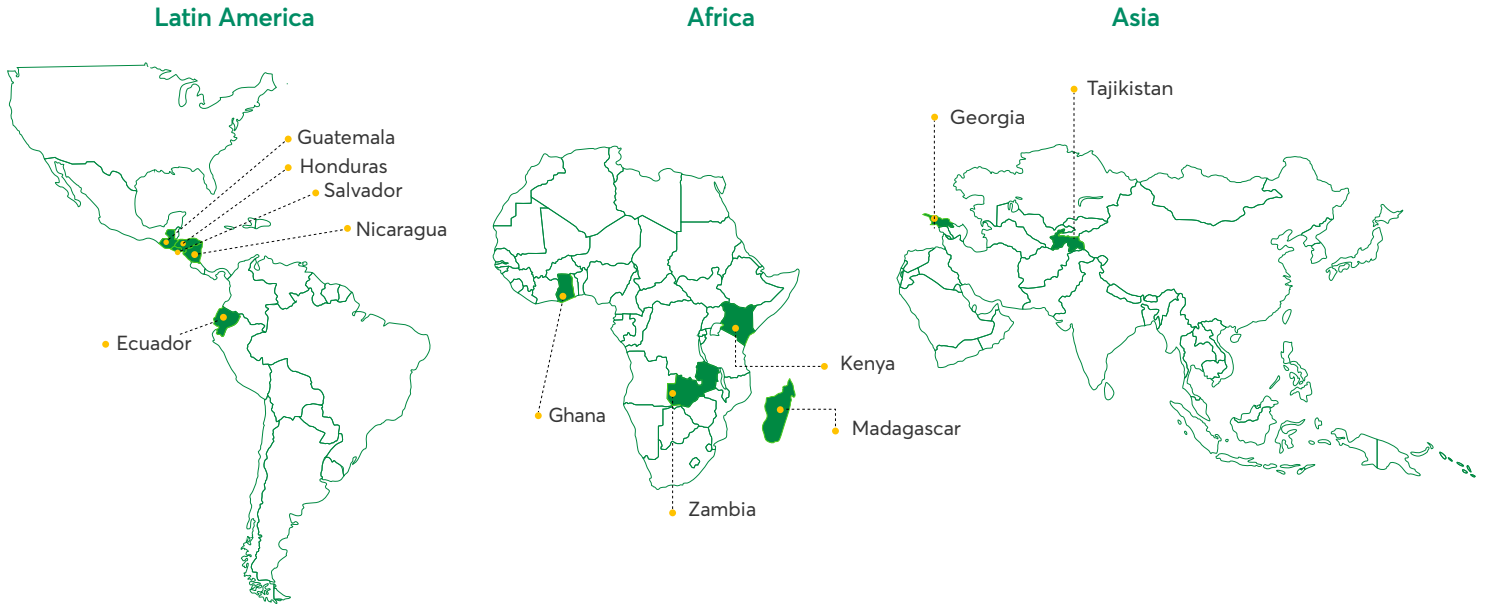
---

**Robert Cheberiak**

Managing Director, Gestion FONIDI



# Our Impact Around the World



**37.2M \$**  
**Invested to date**  
 (35.2M \$ debt, 2.0M \$ sub debt)



**20 investments**  
**11 countries**  
**16 financial institutions**

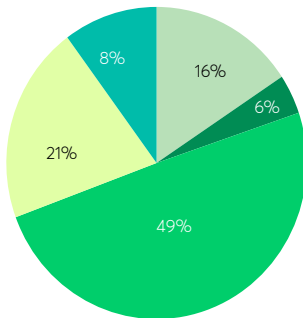
Which supported:



**415 541 women clients\***  
 (43% of all clients)



**6 664**  
**direct jobs created**  
 of which  
**54 % are women employees**



## Underlying Portfolio - By sector of Activity

- Agricultural activities
- Production and craft activities
- Services and commercial activities
- Consumption
- Others

Those data apply to institutions held in the portfolio as of 31 December 2025.

\*Indicator calculation method: Amount of Aequitas investment / Institution's total assets \* Indicator total

# Why We Invest for Impact

Financial inclusion is essential for sustainable development. In terms of the local providers of finance, small financial institutions serving underserved communities often lack capital and technical capacity, and commercial banks often avoid lending to what they consider lower value, higher-risk clients.

This is why for nearly 30 years, DID, through its investment subsidiary Gestion FONIDI, has been providing patient capital to strengthen the inclusive finance sector and thereby increase the economic autonomy of vulnerable populations, especially women and young people. The creation of Aequitas in 2021 marked an important milestone in the evolution of DID's investment approach, by formally combining access to a new, larger pool of growth capital with access to targeted technical support to maximize the benefits generated by its investments.

Research continues to show that despite increasing amounts of impact investments being made, smaller FIs continue to struggle to attract the equity needed to finance their growth; and micro and small entrepreneurs (MSMEs) — especially women-led businesses — still face major financing barriers, with 40% reporting unmet financing needs (IFC).

The Aequitas Fund addresses these gaps by supporting smaller inclusive FIs that prioritise lending to MSMEs and women entrepreneurs and by providing debt and equity finance to support their growth. As a GIIN member and PRI signatory, DID applies global best practices and integrates ESG principles throughout its investment process.



## Our Mission

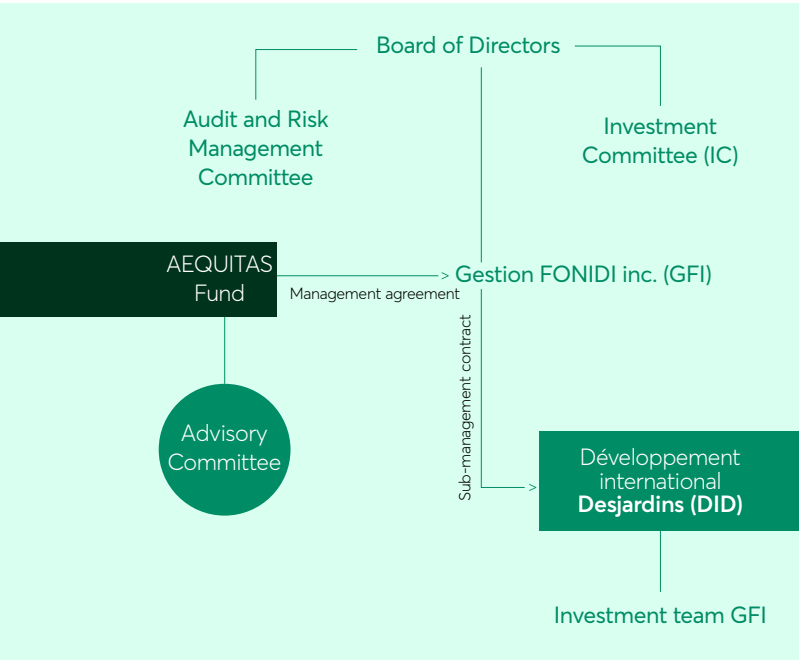
Investing in innovative financial institutions, in equity and debt, to contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth for vulnerable populations in developing countries.

### Impact objectives



While contributing to the growth of impact investing

# Governance

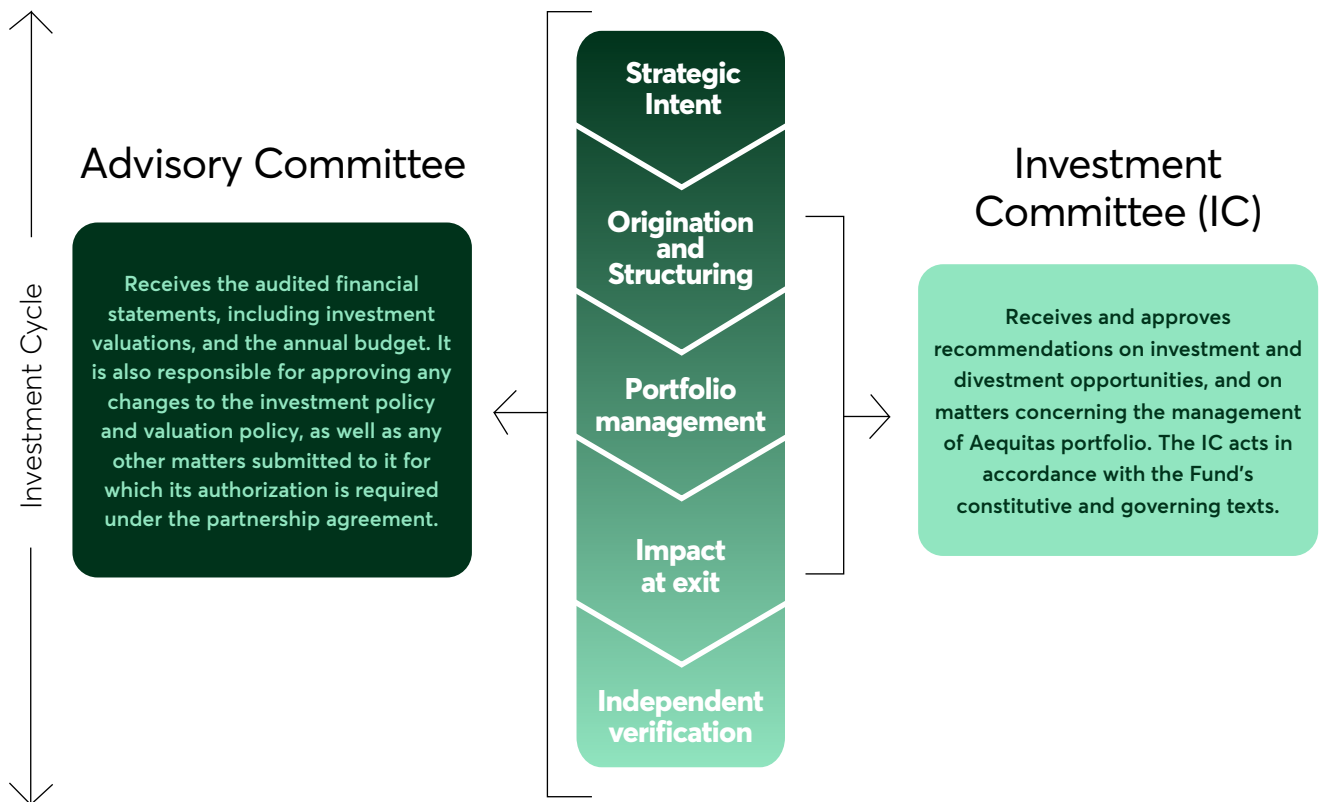


Gestion Fonidi is supervised by its Board of Directors, which is supported by two committees: the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the Investment Committee (IC).

In particular, the Board approves strategic orientations and objectives and ensures their realization, adopts regulations and policies contributing to the achievement of strategic objectives, and supervises management.

The role of the Audit and Risk Management Committee is to support the Board in its oversight, control and reporting responsibilities. The Aequitas fund investors play an active role in the governance and performance monitoring through their participation in the fund's Advisory Committee.

# Responsibilities Structure



# Our Investment and Impact Management Approach

Drawing on Gestion FONIDI's 30 years of experience, the Aequitas Fund targets positive social and environmental impact while delivering attractive investor returns. Its strategy combines rigorous financial and ESG analysis to maximize its financial and wider social impacts.

## Impact Strategy

### 1. Prospecting

Targeting small FIs (assets < 100 M USD) in countries eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA) according to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list that are committed to: increasing access to financial services, contributing to environmental sustainability, and introducing products and services tailored to the needs of underserved populations.

### 2. Due Diligence

In addition to assessing financial and operational performance, Aequitas fund's investment evaluation process also pays particular attention to potential portfolio companies' environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices.

### 3. Contracting

Each investment agreement includes two non-financial objectives to address due diligence findings, and which are aligned with each portfolio company's operational realities. These commitments aim to deliver lasting impact beyond financing. As an equity investor, Aequitas leverages its board roles to drive stronger governance, sound risk management, and progress on gender equality and climate action.

### 4. Technical Assistance

Beyond capital, Aequitas pairs investment with targeted advisory support to advance ESG performance, sustainability, and risk management.



## ATLAS

ATLAS offers impact investors an all-in-one approach to data management and benchmarking. ATLAS is an initiative led by MFR, a private and independent international rating agency specializing in inclusive finance. DID has relied on the support of MFR and ATLAS since 2022 to ensure transparent data collection in its disclosure processes. DID also contributes to the benchmarking by sharing its data to Atlas.



The Social Performance Task Force offers assessment tools for financial service providers and social investors. The tools assess the social and environmental performance management (SEPM) of financial institutions against seven Universal Standards for Social and Environmental Performance Management (USSPM). Each evaluated institution obtains a score by theme, making it easy to identify areas for improvement and capitalize on institutional achievements. The tools are broken down by indicators specific to the investor's profile. Aequitas uses ALINUS, which includes 68 indicators, combined with Green Pathway, which adds 14 environmental indicators (82 total indicators).

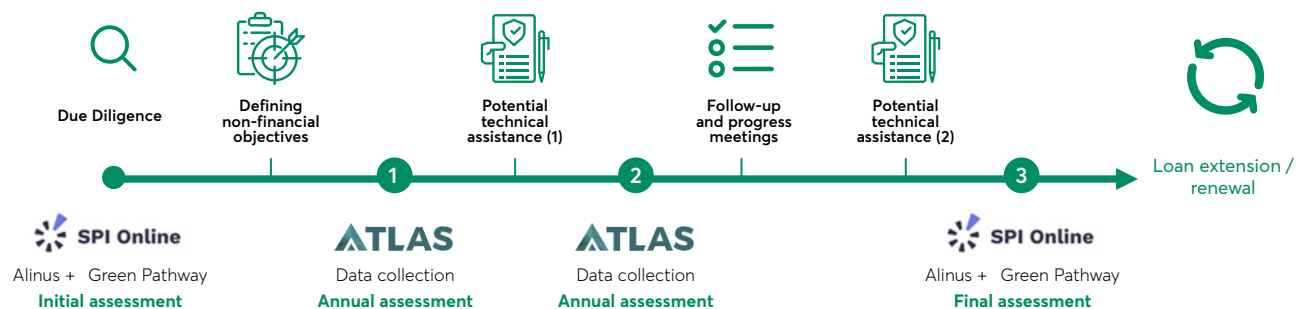
# Impact Measurement

The assessment of financial institutions is based on a due diligence analysis using the Universal Standards for Social Performance Management (USSPM) tools (ALINUS + Green Pathway), serving as an initial benchmark. These standardized indicators enable FIs' progress to be monitored both prior and throughout the life of the investment, with a final assessment at or near the exit of the investment. For loans, the contract defines non-financial objectives in terms of social, environmental and governance performance, according to their level of maturity. Annual monitoring, based on a survey, enables strategies to be adjusted and improvements to be measured.

**In 2025, support from Global Affairs Canada enabled us to offer 4 technical assistances to complement the investments. The provision of complementary technical assistance support will enhance the fund's impact on FIs and their communities.**



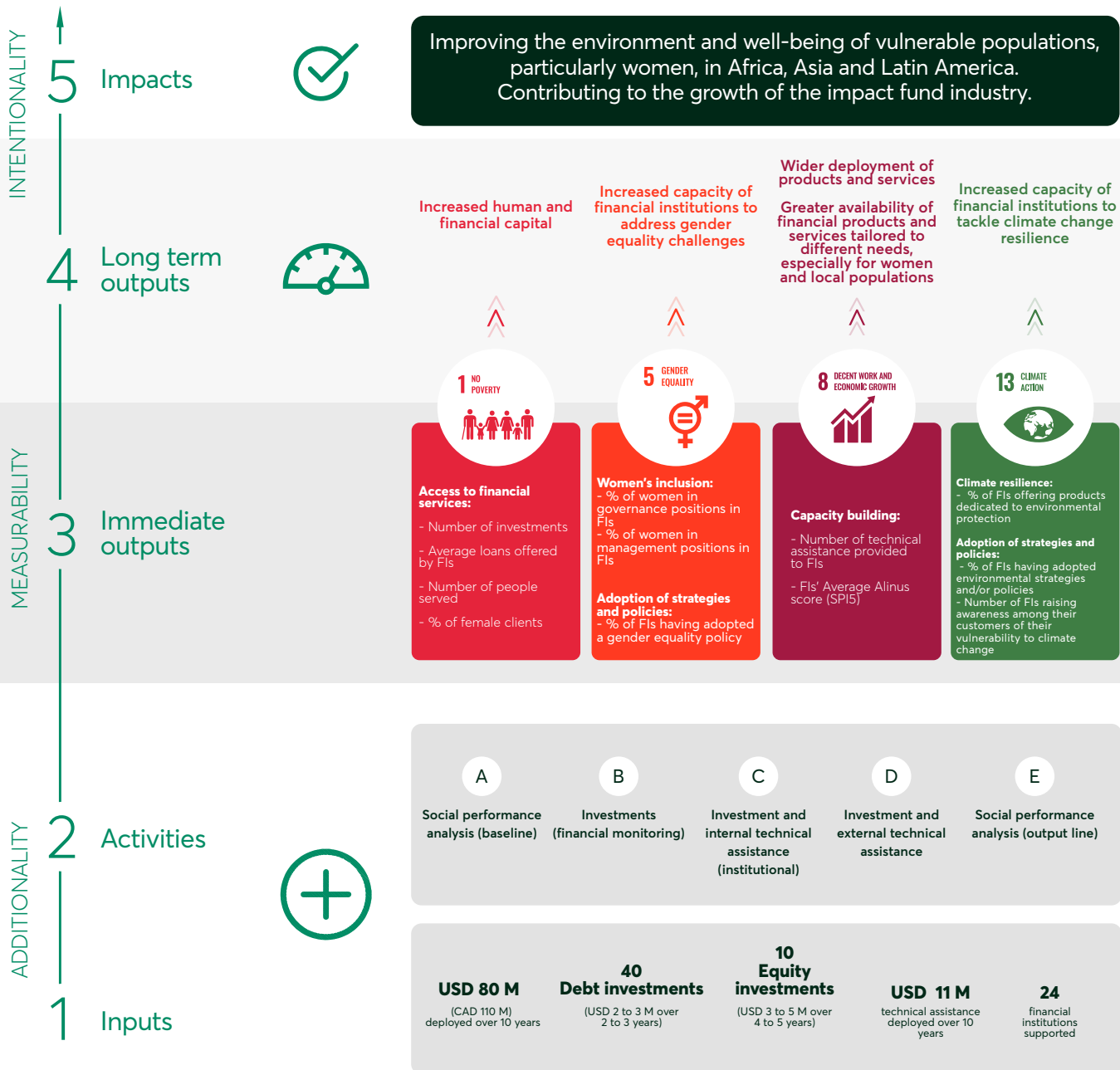
## Example of a three-year impact investment cycle



# Theory of Change

Aequitas aims to reduce the financial exclusion of underserved populations and MSME entrepreneurs, while mitigating the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities. Its objective is to improve the environmental index and well-being of 70% of beneficiaries.

To achieve this, several assumptions are made: financial institutions financed by Aequitas will improve their ESG performance, with a greater impact if they also benefit from technical assistance. Combined internal and external support assumes greater benefits for entrepreneurs, while non-financed FIs are assumed to find it more difficult to adopt sustainable practices. This approach helps to assess the impact of interventions and direct resources towards the most effective levers for strengthening financial inclusion and climate resilience.



# Key Performance Indicators

All data in USD

## General

Indicators	Target	2025	2024	2023	2022
Total amount committed	80 M	64.8 M	64.8 M	37.0 M	37.0 M
Average loan granted	1-3 M	1.8 M	1.8 M	1.7 M	1.5 M
Number of countries reached		11	9	6	2
Investments in Africa	40.0 %	25.0 %	20.4 %	11.3 %	0.0 %
Investments in Latin America	40.0 %	57.1 %	66.9 %	64.8 %	100.0 %
Investments in Asia	20.0 %	17.9 %	12.7 %	23.9 %	0.0 %



Number of institutions supported	40	20	14	9	3
Average loans offered by FIs		2,608	2,373	3,219	3,798
Average loans for women		2,060	2,165	4,082	3,498
Average loans for men		3,157	2,580	3,632	4,103
Number of people supported <sup>1</sup>		30,451	21,705	12,632	1,765
% of women clients		47.5 %	52.6 %	53.8 %	52.3 %
Outstanding loans (MSMEs owned by women)		70 M **	7.3 M	2.7 M	0.0 M
% of outstanding loans (MSMEs owned by women)		45.6 % **	49.5 %	46.2 %	0.0 %



Number of women in governance positions in FIs	<b>10% increase in parity</b>	31	30	29	9
% of women in governance positions in FIs		35.6 %	32.3 %	46.0 %	39.1 %
Number of women in management positions in FIs		44	46	58	32
% of women in management positions in FIs		42.3 %	41.8 %	36.5 %	54.2 %
Number of women employed by FIs		3,691	3,468	1,459	256
% of women employed by FIs		54.4 %	57.6 %	49.9 %	51.3 %
Number of FIs having adopted a gender equality policy	18	6	3	NA	NA



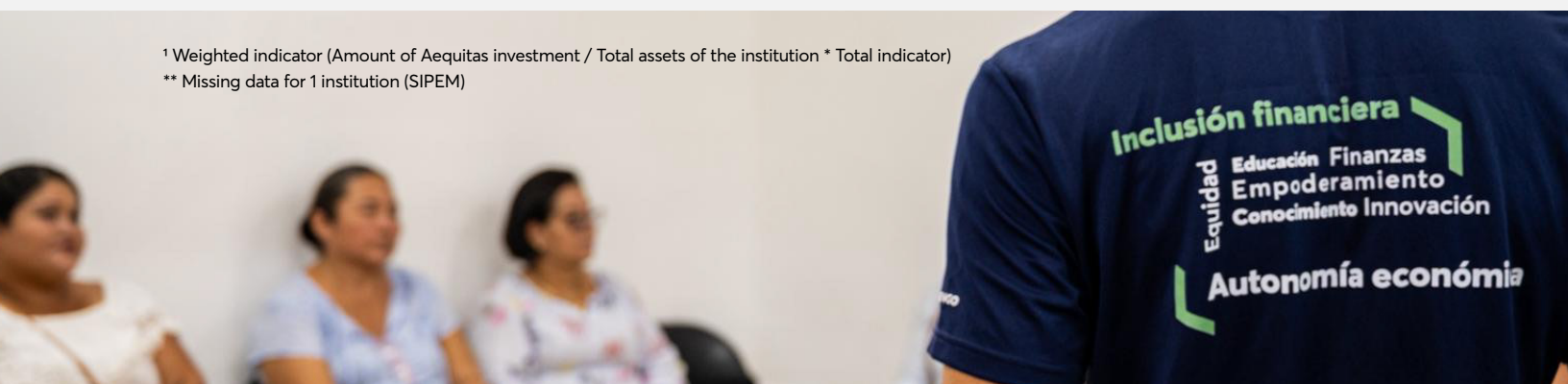
Number of technical support services provided to IFs	24	5	1	NA	NA
Average SPI5 score for IFs		67.2%	68.9%	NA	NA



% of FIs with products dedicated to environmental protection		61.5 %	53.8 %	55.6 %	33.3 %
Number of FIs that have adopted environmental strategies and/or policies	6	4	1	NA	NA
Number of FIs raising customer awareness of their vulnerability to climate change		4	3	3	1

<sup>1</sup> Weighted indicator (Amount of Aequitas investment / Total assets of the institution \* Total indicator)





\*\* Missing data for 1 institution (SIPEM)



# Impact Results

## Quantitative and Qualitative Results

The following indicators illustrate the Fund's growing scale, deepening institutional engagement, and expanding technical assistance efforts.

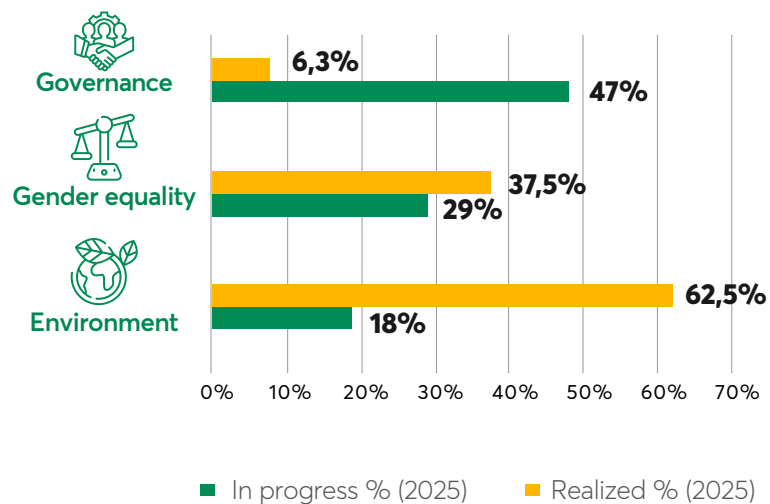
	2024		2025
<b>1</b> NO POVERTY 	<b>Number of loans</b>	9 >>	<b>11</b>
	<b>Number of people supported</b>	21,705 >>	<b>30,451</b>
<b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY 	<b>% of women in governance positions in FIs</b>	32.3% >>	<b>35.6%</b>
	<b>% of women in management positions in FIs</b>	41.8% >>	<b>42.3%</b>
<b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	<b>Number of FIs having adopted a gender equality policy</b>	3 >>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Number of technical assistances provided to FIs</b>	1 >>	<b>5</b>
<b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION 	<b>% of FIs with products dedicated to environmental protection</b>	53.8% >>	<b>61.5%</b>
	<b>Number of FIs that have adopted environmental strategies and/or policies</b>	1 >>	<b>4</b>

As the number of loans deployed increased, partner FIs are generally able to increase the volume of loans offered to their clients. At the same time, the addition of new FIs to the portfolio influenced certain aggregate indicators, notably the average loan size and the percentage of women clients, which declined slightly as a result of changes in portfolio composition. These variations do not indicate a reversal of the Fund's inclusion objectives but rather highlight the importance of accompanying portfolio growth with targeted support. In this context, technical assistance continues to play a critical role in addressing gender gaps and ensuring the progressive integration of women within FIs portfolios.

Employment related metrics show a continued increase in the number of women employed by partner FIs, although the percentage of women employees decreased marginally over the year.

The increase in technical assistance activities—adding four new additional interventions in 2025 for a total of five—also led to positive outcomes. The number of FIs with an adopted gender equality policy has increased to six. Similar progress is observed on environmental issues: more institutions have adopted environmental strategies or policies, and the share of FIs offering products dedicated to environmental protection continues to increase.

With regard to nonfinancial objectives, the results indicate that technical assistance plays an important role in supporting their achievement specifically in terms of gender equity and environment. In 2025, the scope of the governance pillar was expanded to include a broader range of objectives, such as financial education and product development. While this more inclusive approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of governance related impact, it also increases the complexity of implementation and monitoring. As a result, a larger share of objectives under the governance category is currently classified as “in progress,” reflecting both the ambition and the breadth of these objectives.



Overall, these results suggest that as Aequitas transitions from initial investments toward more mature and recurring partnerships, its capacity to influence institutional practices through strategic technical assistance is strengthening, laying the groundwork for deeper and more sustained impact.





## Case Study

### SIPEM capacity building through technical assistance

SIPEM Bank is a mission driven financial institution in Madagascar, with 29 agencies located across the country, dedicated to expanding economic opportunity for small entrepreneurs and underserved communities. Since its launch in the early 1990s, SIPEM has remained true to its original core values—social inclusion, local empowerment, and responsible finance. Today, SIPEM not only serves micro and small entrepreneurs directly but also supports five partner microfinance institutions across the country, amplifying its reach and development impact.

A concrete illustration of SIPEM's impact can be seen through the experience of Ms. Monique, a SIPEM client since 2023. She manages Mahavantana, a business specializing in the collection of essential goods (dry food products). After securing a strategic contract to supply rice, oil, and beans, she turned to SIPEM Bank for the financing needed to meet her commitments. A 12-month working capital loan enabled her to secure supplies, maintain uninterrupted operations, and meet contractual deadlines. This financing became a genuine growth catalyst: it allowed her to finance an increased business volume, strengthen her credibility with commercial partners, and consolidate her position in the local market. Building on these results, Ms. Monique renewed her financing in 2025 to further expand her activities and deepen her economic and social impact.

The 1.5M € invested by Aequitas has allowed the SIPEM bank to grow its credit portfolio and to ensure daily operations. With the investment the bank recorded a 24% increase in its credit volume.

Through the technical assistance received, SIPEM has been able to formalize a gender equality policy, a climate action policy, and institutional action plans designed to guide the achievement of its strategic objectives. A recent follow-up SPI5 assessment (USSPM) showed an organisation-wide improvement across the seven areas assessed, increasing from a combined overall ranking of 39% in 2022 to 46% in 2025.



## Moving Forward

Since its launch, Aequitas has moved beyond initial engagements with new investees to a phase where several institutions are renewing their financing. These repeat investments mark an important milestone: they reflect both institutional confidence in the Fund and Aequitas' desire to support partners over a longer time horizon. This continuity creates the opportunity to move from foundational support toward more strategic and transformative technical assistance, aligned with each institution's medium and long-term objectives.

This more sustained engagement has reinforced Aequitas' conviction that technical assistance delivers the greatest value when it is embedded within a long-term investment relationship. As partnerships deepen, technical assistance can be deployed more strategically supporting governance, risk management, environmental practices, and gender equality in a way that reflects institutional maturity and ambition. The Fund's role thus evolves from a financier and advisor to that of a longer-term partner accompanying institutional transformation aligned with their business model.

At the same time, the increasing scale and complexity of the portfolio have highlighted the importance of robust data. To strengthen the credibility and usefulness of impact measurement, Aequitas continues to rely on ATLAS for standardized data collection and benchmarking, while complementing this approach through its collaboration with Pôle IDEOS at HEC Montréal. This partnership plays a key role in refining analytical frameworks, strengthening methodological rigor, and supporting the interpretation of results — particularly in relation to client wellbeing and environmental outcomes. By combining operational data with academic expertise, the Fund aims to minimize measurement risks and enhance the reliability of its impact analysis.

In the next phase of its development Aequitas will continue to work with its partners to deepen its impact throughout technical assistance with the integration of new tools such as a well-developed financial education platform.



# Investment Activities that Make a Difference

Impact and Environmental, Social and Governance Responsibility Report



[www.DID.qc.ca](http://www.DID.qc.ca)