

The 8th Africa Agribusiness and Science Week (AASW8)

Concept for IFAD participation and Background

1.0 Background

The Africa Agribusiness and Science Week (AASW8) <https://aasw.faraafrica.org/> (initially called the Africa Agriculture Science Week) is a major continental platform for all stakeholders involved in agriculture and agribusiness research and innovation in Africa. This platform assembles **to take stock of progress on research and innovation, share information, network, create business alliances, and map out priorities for joint action**. Originally intended to be held every three years, the last AASW (the 7th edition) was held in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2016 and was attended by over 1,500 stakeholders. The 8th edition did not take place in 2019 as planned because the countries that offered to host the event were unable to finance it. A new arrangement is now in a place where the AASW will be largely self-financing and will be organized in Durban, South Africa on an annual basis.

The 8th AASW (AASW8) will be held from June 5th to 8th, 2023 at the Durban International Convention Center. It will focus on topical issues on the continent, particularly on strengthening linkages between agribusiness, science and innovation to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the agro-industry sector on the African continent. Around **1,000 delegates are expected to attend from 50 countries and 40 organizations**, with over 80 speakers targeted.

[FARA](#) (Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa) is co-organizing the event with the Comprehensive Agriculture Development Programme former Pillar 4 organizations (i.e. CAADP-XP4)¹ in collaboration with the Government of South Africa through the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). Other partners of the event include the AUC (African Union Commission), GFAR (Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation), YPARD (Young Professionals for Agricultural Development), PAFO (Pan African Farmers Organisation), One CGIAR, the EC (European Commission), FAO, DeSIRA-LIFT, the AfDB (African Development Bank), Afrexim Bank, SAPPI, Africa Business Council, the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality and the Government of KwaZulu Natal Province.

Based on the preliminary schedule, notable speakers/panellists at the event will include Akinwumi Adesina (President of AfDB); Josefa Sacko (AU Commissioner) and Benedict Oramah (President of the African Export–Import Bank). Thoko Didiza (Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, South Africa), Jeanine Cooper (Minister of Agriculture, Liberia), Abebe Haile Gabriel (Assistant Director-General of FAO and Regional Representative for Africa, Lindiwe Sibanda (Chairperson of the CGIAR System Board), Claudia Sadoff (Executive Managing Director of the CGIAR), a high-level representative of the European Commission and the Premier of the KwaZulu Natal Province. As IFAD is the main financier and supporter of the CAADP-XP4 organizations (see Box 1), FARA has extended an invitation to IFAD to support the AASW8 as a collaborating partner.

¹ These are **AFAAS** (African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services), **ASARECA** (Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa), **CCARDESA** (Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa), and **CORAF** (Conseil Ouest et Centre Africain pour la Recherche et le Développement Agricoles / West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research).

EU support to CAADP-XP4 through IFAD

The European Union is supporting CAADP ex Pillar IV organization (EUR 30 million) managed by IFAD. The programme started in 2019 and is expected to be completed in 2025. The objective of the programme is to strengthen their collaboration among one another and improve their capacity to effectively deliver on their mandate, which includes supporting national agricultural research and innovation systems to enhance their contribution to achievement of national agricultural development goals and targets; and integration of climate-relevant innovation into national agriculture planning and implementation. Other objectives of the CAADP XP4 programme are to:

- i) Improve collaboration among the national, sub-regional, and continental agriculture research and extension organizations;
- ii) Promote policy enhancement in agricultural research and innovation;
- iii) Promote investments and market linkages; and
- iv) Enhance knowledge generation and dissemination in support of decision-making, advocacy, and innovation sharing.

2.0. AASW8 Objectives

The objective of AASW8 is to provide a platform for stakeholders—including the private sector, investors, policymakers, researchers, development agencies, and farmers—in the agriculture sector to:

- Share knowledge and expertise.
- Share ideas and innovations.
- Discuss new research and innovation findings and developments.
- Identify areas for future research and in particular research in response to business opportunities
- Identify opportunities for linking research with business.
- Build partnerships.
- Engage in policy dialogue on agricultural and agribusiness development.

3.0. AASW8 Theme and Sub-Themes

The main theme of the event is “**Linking Science, Innovation, and Agribusiness for Resilient Food Systems**” and the event is structured around five sub-themes. These themes are in line with EU priority themes as communicated by EC (see Annex I for further information):

- Climate Resilience, Natural Resources Management, and Farming Systems Transition
- Nutrition-Sensitive and Gender-Responsive Food Systems
- Science – Business Nexus to Boost Intra-African Trade
- Knowledge Management, Digitalization, and Youth Entrepreneurship
- Policies, Institutions, Capacities available

4.0. AASW8 Programme

The AASW8 will feature the following:

- (i) An opening plenary session which will include a high-level panel discussion with laureates of the FARA leadership award.
- (ii) Three Plenary sessions.
- (iii) Six Parallel sessions.

- (iv) The Durban roundtable—a forum on how research and agribusiness will be leveraged to achieve the aspirations of the Dakar 2 Africa food security summit
- (v) Over 25 Side events.
- (vi) An exhibition accommodating a maximum of 50 exhibitors.

Refer to Annex 1 for the full programme

5.0. IFAD Participation

As an organization that is committed to empowering rural communities and overcoming poverty, IFAD can leverage this platform to further its mission. With the ongoing consultations for IFAD13, AASW8 would be an ideal platform to:

For IFAD

- Raise the Fund’s visibility particularly on key topics related to the priorities of the new replenishment cycle: building resilience, climate adaptation and biodiversity, partnerships with the private sector.
- Showcase its work, share success stories, achievements innovations etc.
- Learn from others and broaden knowledge base in innovations, technologies and various practices in Agribusiness and science nexus.
- Strengthen partnerships and build new relationships with other organizations, governments, and individuals working in the sector.
- Identify innovations and research that can be integrated into IFAD projects and grants
- Contribute to policy discussions and advocate for policies relevant to IFAD’s mandate

On behalf of European Union:

- Highlight EU/IFAD partnership to support AR4D over the years (CAADP, TRANSITIONS, PRUNSAR) as well as other programmes managed by IFAD (Agro-ecology, Farmers organisations, Remittances)
- Ensure that important themes considered as priorities for European Commission are discussed and promoted during parallel sessions and side events. These are Natural Resource Management/Farming Systems, Forgotten Food, Bio/organic fertilisers, Soil health and fertility approach, Biodiversity

IFAD will participate in the AASW8 in the following ways:

Parallel Sessions

- i) is organizing IFADa session on Knowledge Management, Digitalization, and Youth Entrepreneurship
- ii) Furthermore Desira-lift, a service facility of the European Commission, has invited IFAD to collaborate with them in organizing the session on Climate Resilience, Natural Resources Management, and Farming Systems Transition
- iii) IFAD is also co-organising a session on Boosting intra-Africa trade: the agricultural midstream in the value chain with FARA and COLEAD

Details about each sessions are provided in annex 2, 3 and 4

Booth

- i) The IFAD booth will showcase IFAD/EU funded work i.e. achievements, innovations including support to CAADPXP4 organisations and to the CGIAR and other research organization.

Date	0830 -1030		1100 – 1300		1400 -1700	Evening	All day
4th June	Pre-events (CCARDESA Board Meeting, GFAR Steering Committee Meeting, and YPARD Matchmaking Session) / Registration						
5th June	<p>Opening plenary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional troupe -Zulu/Gumboot Welcome Statements (CCARDESA Chair, FARA Chair, Executive Mayor of Durban City) Goodwill messages PAFO, EC, AUC, FAO, GFAR, AfCFTA Secretariat, CGIAR Keynote by AfDB president Statement of host minister and invitation of chief guest Official opening address Presentation of Awards 	BREAK	<p>High-level segment</p> <p>Fireside Chat with the Laureates Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, Dr. Okonjo-Iweala, Prof. Benedict Orama, Amb Dr Papa Seck and Amb. Josefa Sacko</p> <p>Invited Statements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD, AUDA, Ministers (Eswatini, Liberia), AfBC, SAPPI, AFASA. <p>Launch of the Action Plan for the renewed partnership between the CGIAR and African agricultural research institutions</p> <p>Launch of the Afrexim bank-FARA Research and Innovation Competencies in Agriculture (AFRICA) Award</p>	LUNCH BREAK	<p>CCARDESA General Assembly</p> <p>Durban Roundtable on leveraging and combining science and agribusiness to achieve outcomes expected from Dakar 2 Food Security delivery Compacts (<i>invitation only</i>)</p> <p>Side Events</p>	<p>VIP dinner</p> <p>Sponsored cocktail (TBC)</p>	Exhibition and Research-to-Business fair
6th June	<p>Plenary Session organized by the CGIAR</p>		<p>Parallel Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening Science - Business Linkages to Boost Intra-African Trade Making African Food Systems Nutrition Sensitive and Gender-Responsive Improving Climate Resilience, Natural Resources Management 		<p>Side Events and one field visit (Dube Trade Port)</p>		
7th June	<p>Plenary Session organized by Africa Business Council and Afrexim Bank</p>		<p>Parallel Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition of Farming Systems Knowledge Management, Digitalization, and Youth Entrepreneurship Policies, Institutions, Capacities 		<p>Side Events and one field visit (Dube Trade Port)</p>	<p>Sponsored dinner (TBC)</p>	

8th June	Plenary Session organized by FAO,		FARA General Assembly		FARA General Assembly and closing		
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Annex1: Outline of the AASW8; FARA 9th General Assembly and 3rd CCARDESA General Assembly (30/03/2023)

Annex 2

Africa Agribusiness and Science Week (AASW8)

Knowledge Management, Digitalization, and Youth Entrepreneurship Session

Concept Note

Organized by IFAD in partnership with YPARD, GFAR, COLEAD, FARA

Target Audience: Researchers, policymakers, civil society, private sector

Background:

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The 8th AASW (AASW8) will be held from **June 5th to 8th, 2023** at the Durban International Convention Center and Southern Sun. It will focus on topical issues on the continent, particularly on strengthening linkages between agribusiness, science, and innovation to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the agro-industry sector on the African continent. Around **1,000 delegates are expected to attend from 50 countries and 40 organizations**, with 60 speakers targeted.

FARA (Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa) is co-organizing the event with the Comprehensive Agriculture Development Programme former Pillar 4 organizations (i.e. CAADP-XP4)[1]. Other partners of the event include the AUC (African Union Commission), GFAR (Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation), YPARD (Young Professionals for Agricultural Development), PAFO (Pan African Farmers Organisation), Standard Bank, One CGIAR, the EC (European Commission), FAO, the AfDB (African Development Bank), and the South African Government. Based on the preliminary schedule, notable speakers/panelists at the event will include Akinwumi Adesina (President of AfDB); Josefa Sacko (AU Commissioner), and Benedict Oramah (President of the African Export–Import Bank). As IFAD is the main financier and supporter of the CAADP-XP4 organizations (see Box 1), FARA has extended an invitation to IFAD to support the AASW8 as a collaborating partner.

AASW8 Objectives:

The objectives of AASW8 are to provide a platform for stakeholders—including the private sector, investors, policymakers, Researchers Development Agencies, and Farmers—in the agriculture sector to:

- Share knowledge and expertise.
- Share ideas and innovations.
- Discuss the latest research findings.
- Identify areas for future research.
- To Build partnerships.
- Engage in policy dialogue on agricultural development

researchers, development af1 000 will participate

AASW8 Theme and Sub-Themes:

The main theme of the event is *“Linking Science, Innovation, and Agribusiness for Resilient Food Systems”* and the event is structured around five sub-themes (see Annex I for further information):

- Climate Resilience, Natural Resources Management, and Farming Systems Transition
- Nutrition-Sensitive and Gender-Responsive Food Systems
- Science – Business Nexus to Boost Intra-African Trade
- Knowledge Management, Digitalization, and Youth Entrepreneurship
- Policies, Institutions, and Capacities available

AASW8 Programme:

The AASW8 will feature the following:

- An opening plenary session will include a high-level panel discussion with the FARA leadership award.
- Plenary sessions.
- Parallel sessions.
- Investment forum.
- Side events.
- Booths.

Objectives of the Knowledge Management, Digitalization, and Youth Entrepreneurship Session:

Practitioners have asserted that Knowledge is at the heart of sustainable development. It is an essential resource for any citizen, organization, company, public body, government, and the United Nations in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Digitalization is at the foundation of a knowledge economy and the youth are key drivers of the business of knowledge utilization for increased productivity. On the other hand, multi-stakeholder cooperation at the local and global levels is vital to developing a prosperous, sustainable, peaceful, and inclusive knowledge society. Future challenges can be met only by sharing knowledge, experiences, and ideas in a fair and trustful partnership. Knowledge Management, Digitalization, and Youth Entrepreneurship have become very critical elements within the agricultural, agribusiness, and science stakeholders (governments, private sector, NGOs & civil society, researchers, regional and global actors) wishing to formulate and implement actions to develop the sector sustainably. In all cases, limited utilization of KM, and digital technologies, especially led by young entrepreneurs, are a major constraint to doubling production and productivity by 2025.

The Knowledge Management, Digitalization, and Youth Entrepreneurship thematic area of the 8th Africa Agribusiness and Science Week will bring together stakeholders within the ecosystem to engage, connect, learn, share, and create opportunities with the youth in focus. It will advance the discussion of the business in knowledge and will seek to explore the establishment of an African Knowledge Fund for agriculture and agribusiness in Africa in a coherent manner. The progress to be derived through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will be accelerated if these three drivers are optimally engaged and profitably utilized.

The parallel session on Knowledge Management, Digitalization, and Youth Entrepreneurship will look at the utilization of KM, and digital technologies in Agribusiness especially led by young entrepreneurs, and in agriculture development in general. The specific objectives of the session are as follows:

- Improved understanding of the main challenges facing youth agripreneurs and the ways that digitalization can help to overcome these challenges
- Effective practices are shared on how Knowledge Management is being used to drive improvements in digitalization and youth entrepreneurship
- Closer collaboration among different organizations in promoting digitalization and youth entrepreneurship in agriculture moving forward, especially in the face of increasing shocks and volatility.

Programme:

Parallel Session
Knowledge management, Digitalization and Youth Entrepreneurship
IFAD, GFAR, YPARD
WEDNESDAY, 7th JUNE 11:00 – 13:00

Join Zoom link <https://farafrica.zoom.us/j/85385935836?pwd=U250VzIYWVW5veDVqVVpVWDJURzFvdz09>
Meeting ID: 853 8593 5836, Passcode: 778020

Introductory remarks: Rispoli Francesco – Hub Director, Southern Africa, IFAD

Moderation: YPARD - Genna Tesdall and CAADPP4 - Krishan Bheenick

Keynote Speakers

1. **IFAD:** Brenda Gunde - Senior Technical Specialist – ICT4D
2. **GFAR:** Hildegard Lingnau - Executive Secretary
3. **YPARD:** Kofi Aquaye - Regional Coordinator

Panel Discussion

1. **IFAD:** Chipili, Brian – Youth Technical Specialist IFAD
2. **FARA:** Christopher Wangari - Director of Livestock, Policy and Research at Kenya State Department of Agriculture
3. **GFAR:** Rida Shibli - Executive Secretary of the Association of AARINENA
4. **COLEAD:** Affiong Williams, Founder & CEO, Reelfruit – Nigeria
5. **YPARD:** Viola Nakadama Uganda – Youth social entrepreneur

Closing Remarks CAADP-XP4 (CCARDESA)

(Session rapporteur: Godfrey Onagwa)

Expected Outputs:

- Partners showcase results and lessons from their work in this area with wider audience.
- Partners engage in dialogue and find ways they can work together in this area for more efficiency and effectiveness
- A knowledge brief and Video produced after the event

Expected Outcomes:

- Actives and innovations of co-organizers made visible
- Partnership for future collaboration develop with the various institution

Annex 3

Concept Note

Improving Climate Resilience and Sustainability of Farming and Food Systems: Exploring the Contribution of Agroecology

Durban, South Africa
6th June 2023, from 11:00 to 13:00
Accra Room

Hybrid Session | Registration Link

<https://faraafrica.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsc-CrrTotGdatgI99o9irKRJ-FwxNyIY>

Context

Agriculture and food systems are highly exposed and vulnerable to climate change and variability. Increasing temperatures, increasing heat waves, dry spells and droughts, more frequent and intense rainfall events, and the unpredictability of rainfall intersect with socioeconomic, political, and environmental factors (Trisos et al., 2022). The effects of the climate crisis put pressure on domestic food systems and on ecosystems with social and environmental impacts including higher health risks and the emergence of new pests and diseases for plants, animals, and humans.

To achieve food security alongside other social, environmental, and economic outcomes, there is a need for a transition towards more climate-resilient, inclusive, nutrition-sensitive, and sustainable farming and food systems. There is widespread agreement on the need to improve and diversify production while respecting the environment, but not on how this may be achieved amongst stakeholders in the diverse farming and food systems of Africa. At the global level, there is increasing interest in agroecology (variously as a science, practice, and social/ political movement) in relation to sustainable farming and food systems (HLPE, 2019; Carlile and Garnett, 2021; Wezell et al, 2022). In the most recent set of IPCC reports, Trisos et al (2022) conclude that ecosystem-based adaptation can reduce climate risk while providing social, economic, and environmental benefits and that agroecological practices can increase the resilience and sustainability of food systems in the African region. The 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity target 10 states the need for a substantial increase in the application of biodiversity-friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological, and other innovative approaches.

In line with agroecology, agro-biodiversity at the farm and landscape level, including agroforestry and mixed cropping and integration of neglected and underutilized species (NUS), has a critical role to play in better meeting the nutritional needs of rural and urban communities, to create income-generating opportunities for youth, farmers, and women and to help respond to climate change and its effects on agriculture. Mainstreaming NUS into local food production systems would increase the resilience of the livelihood system of rural and remote communities and strengthen their socio-economic development (Padulosi et al., 2013).

In order to be more productive, resilient, and sustainable, agricultural actors and systems must adapt to local socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental conditions. Some of the agricultural practices to consider to increase climate change resilience and adaptation include (i) Diversification of crop and livestock species and varieties; (ii) Use of climate-resilient and sustainable practices and technologies to improve the efficiency of farming systems and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. the use of traditional plant varieties and stress-tolerant NUS, precision irrigation, conservation tillage, the use of renewable energy sources, water conservation, etc.); (iii) Integrated pest and weed management strategies, including the use of biological controls, crop rotation and intercropping, cover cropping and the planting of pest-resistant crop varieties; (iv) Agroforestry and livestock farming systems to contribute to improving soil health, reducing erosion and CO₂ emissions, and providing shade for crops and livestock.

Andrieu and Kebede Y (2020) suggest that agroecology supports climate change adaptation and mitigation outcomes most directly by promoting resilience, diversification, efficiency, synergies, circular economy, recycling, and co-learning. Significant evidence that agroecological approaches that involved the whole system support climate change adaptation was found in a systematic review of 110 studies. Among agroecological elements, biological diversification on farms consistently had strong

positive climate change adaptation and mitigation impacts (impacts of diversification on pollination, pest control, nutrient cycling, water regulation, and soil fertility). Padulosi et al. (2015) and Adhikari et al. (2019) suggest that NUS hold great potential to address critical challenges, such as poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and climate change, due to their capacity to grow under marginal low input conditions and high nutritional values. In addition to this, these species tend to be managed with traditional indigenous knowledge, use informal seed sources, have a potential role in mitigating risk in agricultural production systems, and involve a strong gender element (Padulosi et al., 2013).

The European Union has developed several strategies that constitute the policy framework for supporting agroecology in third countries. Such a framework has three main pillars. The first is the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), the heart of which aims to make it [environmentally](#) friendly. The second pillar is the [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#) which acknowledges the significant role that agroecology can play in underpinning food system transformation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable agricultural practices. The third pillar is the [Comprehensive Strategy with Africa](#), which calls for the EU and Africa to join efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger and to address the challenges of nutrition and food security by boosting safe and sustainable agri-food systems.

In recent years, IFAD deepened its interest in agroecology and nature-based solutions as witnessed by the participation in the Agroecology Coalition and the ongoing development of technical guidance and how-to-do-note on agrobiodiversity and agroecology. The Fund performed a review of its portfolio aimed at developing a framework to assess how IFAD operations are investing in agroecology and at identifying good practices, gaps, and opportunities to leverage agroecology for strengthening resilience, income generation, nutrition, and food systems sustainability. This stock take was conducted at the farm, landscape, market, and policy levels and revealed that 60% of IFAD projects are supporting agroecology practices.

CAADP-XP4 organizations – namely FARA, AFAAS, ASARECA, CCARDESA, and CORAF – are active in researching and promoting the adoption of climate smart agriculture, as well as specific agroecological approaches contributing to more resilient and sustainable agricultural systems. This will require evidence-based multi-stakeholder partnerships, dialogue and co-learning around agroecology to inform strategies and policy processes at national, regional and continental level. In its role of facilitating agency, The European Commission (DG INTPA) through DeSIRA-LIFT contributed to the 2022 Biennial Africa Climate-Smart Agriculture Stakeholder Conference, organized by FARA and held in Ghana on 14-16 September 2022 organizing [two events](#) highlighting the key contribution of agroecology to climate change adaptation and mitigation and with multi-stakeholder perspectives. Farmer organizations, private-sector operators, including micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and smallholders, financial institutions, and African and European policymakers presented agroecological innovations and solutions in Africa, highlighting the drivers of the agroecological transition supporting economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

Transitioning towards climate-resilient, inclusive, nutrition-sensitive, and sustainable farming and food systems requires the engagement of all stakeholders in a particular context. A clear process is needed to enable governments, farmers, other citizens, researchers, the private sector, civil society, development partners, and others to engage and learn together to co-design and support (including with appropriate financial resources) the transitions. To explore the potential for climate-resilient solutions in a particular context, stakeholders need to engage in a safe environment where different world views, experiences, and evidence bases can be shared through a structured learning process involving dialogue and deliberation around agroecology, climate resilience, and sustainable farming and food systems. This can help to inform decisions throughout society and the economy.

This dialogue will engage in learning amongst various actors to explore how agroecological practices may contribute to climate resilience and sustainable farming and food systems in Africa.

Objectives

This session will bring together diverse stakeholders to:

1. Share experiences and evidence of how and to what extent agroecology contributes to climate change resilience and sustainability of farming and food systems in Africa.
2. Discuss how attention to agroecology and agrobiodiversity could inform the transition to a more sustainable and resilient food system in Africa; including how policy processes may need to change.
3. Explore how to take forward agroecology as a way to support the transition to more climate-resilient and sustainable farming and food systems in Africa, including specific actions and policies.

Programme

Facilitation

Wole Fatunbi, Researcher and Senior Technical Cluster Leader/Innovation Systems Specialist, FARA
Isolina Boto and Richard Lamboll, DeSIRA-LIFT

Sr	Time	Activity
A	11:00 – 11:15	Introductory Remarks FARA, European Commission
	11:15 -11:40	Keynote Presentations 1. Sara Namirembe , STEPUP Standard Limited, Uganda 2. Sara Savastano , Director, Research & Impact Assessment Division, IFAD
B	11:40 – 12:30	High-level Panel Discussion Theme: Options for leveraging Agroecology and Agrobiodiversity for climate resilience and food systems transition Panellists 1. Carlo Fadda (Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT), Kenya 2. Mamadou Goïta , (IRPAD), Mali 3. Million Belay (AFSA), Uganda 4. Noel Oettle , (ASA), South Africa 5. Samuel Rigu , SAFI Organics Ltd, Kenya 6. Afantchawo Koudasse , President, Youth College ROPPA, Togo
C	12:30-12:55	Audience interactions (Q&A)
D	12:55 -13:00	Wrap-up Key issues Way forward

Annex 4

Side event

Boosting intra-Africa trade: the agricultural midstream in the value chain

Session organised by FARA, IFAD and COLEAD

Context

Intra-Africa trade has long been recognized as a crucial driver of economic growth and development for the continent. However, despite several initiatives and commitments made by African governments and regional economic communities to enhance intra-Africa trade, it still remains low compared to other regions. One sector that has the potential to drive intra-Africa trade is the agricultural midstream in the value chain which can enhance intra-Africa trade.

The agricultural midstream refers to the stages of production and distribution between farming and the final sale of agricultural products to consumers. It includes processing, storage, and transportation of agricultural products. It is the link between the primary production of crops and the final stage of consumption. The agricultural midstream is a critical stage in the value chain as it adds value to agricultural products, improves their quality, and makes them marketable. The midstream also plays a crucial role in reducing post-harvest losses, which can be as high as 30% in Africa.

Intra-Africa trade in agricultural products is hindered by several challenges, including poor infrastructure, high transportation costs, and low productivity. However, the agricultural midstream can help overcome these challenges. For example, investing in modern storage facilities can help reduce post-harvest losses and ensure the quality of agricultural products. Improved food safety can guarantee better markets while improving health. Improved transportation infrastructure can also reduce transportation costs and increase the speed at which agricultural products are transported, making them more competitive in the market.

Furthermore, the agricultural midstream can help promote regional value chains, which can drive intra-Africa trade. Regional value chains involve the integration of different stages of the value chain across different countries in the region. Regional value chains promote intra-Africa trade by creating a market for agricultural products within the region, which can drive economic growth and development.

Investing in the agricultural midstream also creates employment opportunities and promotes inclusive growth. The midstream is a labor-intensive sector, and investing in it can create jobs for both skilled and unskilled labor. This can help reduce poverty and promote inclusive growth, which is critical for the sustainable development of the continent.

To achieve this, African governments and regional economic communities must invest in modern storage facilities, transportation infrastructure, and value-addition activities. They must also promote regional integration and cooperation to create a conducive environment for regional value chains to thrive. By doing so, Africa can unlock the potential of its agricultural sector and drive economic growth and development.

Some innovations in the agricultural midstream

In recent years, several innovations have emerged in the agricultural midstream in Africa, which are helping to overcome some challenges and drive the sector forward.

In many parts of Africa, access to reliable electricity is limited, which makes it challenging to store perishable agricultural products. Solar-powered cold storage facilities have emerged as an innovative solution to this problem. These facilities use solar panels to generate electricity, which is used to power refrigeration units that keep agricultural products fresh. This technology has enabled farmers and traders to store their products for longer periods, reducing post-harvest losses and increasing their income.

Processing and value addition activities have emerged as a critical innovation in the agricultural midstream in Africa. These activities involve transforming raw agricultural products into finished products. By adding value to their products, farmers and traders can increase their income and create more employment opportunities in the sector.

Precision agriculture: Precision agriculture refers to the use of technology to optimize the use of resources in agriculture. It involves the use of sensors, GPS mapping, and drones to monitor crops, soil moisture, and weather patterns, enabling farmers to make data-driven decisions to improve productivity.

Mobile-based supply chain management systems use mobile technology to track the movement of agricultural products from the farm gate to the end consumer. They provide real-time data on inventory levels, transportation routes, and market demand, enabling farmers and traders to make informed decisions about when and where to sell their products.

Cold chain technology: The cold chain technology involves the use of refrigeration systems to preserve the quality and freshness of agricultural products during storage and transportation. This technology is crucial in reducing post-harvest losses and increasing the shelf life of perishable goods.

Smart logistics: Smart logistics refers to the use of technology to optimize the transport and distribution of agricultural products. This technology enables real-time monitoring of delivery routes, temperature, humidity, and other factors that affect the quality and safety of agricultural products.

By using smart logistics, farmers and traders can transport their products more efficiently, making them more competitive in the market.

Vertical farming: Vertical farming involves the use of vertical shelves or towers to grow crops in a controlled environment. This technology allows for year-round cultivation of crops, and its efficient use of space and water make it a sustainable alternative to traditional farming.

Agricultural biotechnology: Agricultural biotechnology involves the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to improve crop yields, reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides, and enhance the nutritional content of crops.

Access to finance is a significant challenge for farmers and traders in Africa. Digital financial services, such as mobile money, have emerged as an innovative solution to this problem. These services enable farmers and traders to access credit and other financial services using their mobile phones, making it easier for them to invest in their businesses and expand their operations.

Overall, these innovations in the agricultural midstream can help to increase efficiency, reduce waste, and improve the quality and safety of agricultural products, which ultimately benefits farmers, consumers, and the environment.

In conclusion, innovations in the agricultural midstream in Africa are helping to overcome the challenges faced by the sector, such as poor infrastructure, low productivity, and limited access to financing. By investing in these innovations, African governments and development partners can unlock the potential of the agricultural midstream and promote economic growth and development on the continent.

Introductory remarks: FARA, IFAD, COLEAD

Moderation (Isolina Boto)

Speakers

- Impacts of the midstream of value chains transformation on the food industry: prospects for Africa
Thomas Reardon, Professor, Michigan University
Sara Savastano, Director of IFAD's Research and Impact Assessment Division
- What innovations from the operators in the VC (processing, logistics, labelling...)
Jane Maigua, the Managing Director of Exotic EPZ Ltd, Kenya or Jane Maina, Managing Director, Vert Ltd Kenya,
Affiong Williams, Founder and CEO, Reelfruit, Nigeria

Conclusion