



AFRICA'S FOOD SYSTEMS FINANCING: COUNTRY-OWNED FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND STRATEGIES IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Spotting Opportunities | Anticipating Change | Leaving No One Behind



CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The vision for African food systems finance must rise to the moment — bold enough to inspire decisive action, clear enough to steer strategic decisions, and urgent enough to rally leaders and stakeholders to mobilize transformative resources."

- 1. In 2021, African leaders, through the African Union, set a common vision to transform food systems across the continent. Through the African Common Position on Food Systems, African leaders pledged to realign agro-industrial models, reform policies, and unlock public-private investment—both local and foreign. They called for analytical support for data-driven financing that empowers the most vulnerable in food systems. At the core of Africa's Common Position is a mindset shift: from tackling food systems sector and issues in isolation to coordinated action that reflects the deep interconnection of food system challenges.
- 2. Building on this, in January 2025, they adopted the Kampala CAADP Declaration (2026–2035), marking a bold shift from agricultural transformation to a continent-wide vision for resilient, sustainable, and high-performing agri-food systems. The Declaration prioritizes empowering those on the frontlines of African agri-food systems—especially small-scale entrepreneurs, women, and youth—and sets the course for Africa's next decade. Crucially, it redefines investment commitments by moving beyond the traditional 10% agriculture spending pledge to a bold goal: dedicating at least 10% of public resources to building resilient, high-performing agri-food systems across member states.
- 3. Amid escalating challenges and unprecedented shifts in development financing, African countries' own actionable strategies to unlock, scale, and repurpose financial flows for high-performing food systems have never been more vital. Facing evolving finance dynamics, climate shocks, conflicts, and trade barriers that directly impact food finance systems, investing in the Kampala CAADP vision for inclusive, resilient, and high-performing agri-food systems is not only essential—it is an urgent responsibility. The AU's 2024 Biennial Review reveals that none of the reporting Member States met their targets for enhancing agricultural investment. In a global context that increasingly strains Africa's ability to finance food systems transformation, falling short is not an option.



Context

- 4. Yet, for Least Developed Countries (LDCs)—33 of which are in Africa—the cost of transforming food systems is immense, estimated at nearly 40% of their GDP, underscoring the scale of resource mobilization needed to realize national food systems transformation pathways. Hence, financing their transition to higher-performing food systems relies on three core financial flows: domestic public resources, complemented by external development finance, and private investments. While attention may sometimes skew toward one source—external vs. domestic, or public vs. private—each plays a distinct and complementary role in supporting food systems. Domestic public finance is the primary lever of country development strategies. External development finance complements constrained national budgets for structural investments and provides critical support to the most vulnerable in food systems, including through food assistance. Meanwhile, private capital propels economic growth by financing agri-food businesses, generating income, creating jobs, and spurring innovation across agri-food value chains. Transforming food systems requires an integrated financing approach that unlocks, scales, and aligns these three streams in a complementary way to build inclusive and sustainable national food systems.
- 5. IFAD and AKADEMIYA2063 released an overview of key trends in external development financing for food systems in support of African countries—before and after the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit. Serving as a benchmark to assess progress toward scaling up concessional financing for food systems transformation, the report underscores the urgency of country-owned and actionable strategies for unlocking, increasing, and repurposing investments.
- 6. Africa still lags in securing the financing required to transform its food systems despite efforts to mobilize domestic resources, projections that Africa's agribusiness sector could generate US\$1 trillion by 2030, and receiving the largest share (38–42%) of global food systems-related development financing.
- 7. Food assistance continues to absorb a large share of external development financing for food systems in African countries, as many countries struggle with rising food insecurity, climate vulnerability, and other shocks, highlighting a tension between short-term relief and long-term transformative investments. More than one-fifth (23%) of external development financing for African food systems was directed toward social assistance—particularly food aid—diverting a significant share of external development finance to short-term relief at the expense of long-term structural investments. This stands in stark contrast to Asia (including South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific), where only 6% of food system financing was allocated to social assistance, reflecting a markedly different regional distribution of resources in response to diverse food systems challenges. In the context of limited resources, this underscores the urgent need to tackle the root causes of crises and conflict to shift the focus toward food systems transformation.



- 8. African countries rely heavily on a small number of donors for food systems financing, making them vulnerable to shifting priorities. Just seven donors account for 80% of bilateral flows to food systems, creating vulnerability to shifts in donor priorities. In addition, 11 countries received half of all donor disbursements, which were primarily directed toward food assistance.
- 9. Six African governments have requested access to the 3FS Framework to ensure comprehensive financial intelligence on their in-country food system flows. Following completion in Kenya and Niger, the 3FS is now being extended to the governments of Benin, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Tanzania—alongside Bangladesh and Indonesia. The 3FS Framework, co-designed by IFAD and the World Bank, empowers national leaders and stakeholders with critical financial intelligence—by combining financial data, actionable insights, and information across domestic, external, and private financing streams. It enables them to identify food
- financing opportunities, anticipate shortfalls—such as those many African countries are currently facing—and proactively mitigate risks
- 10. In a rapidly evolving food systems financing landscape, it is more critical than ever for African countries to lead and own their food systems financing strategies—clearly visualizing the role of each actor—government, private sector, and development partners—leveraging their comparative advantages and assembling a mix of financial instruments tailored to their country context. New and existing sources of financing must be mobilized and optimized —and gamechanging investments scaled up—to advance the food systems transformation agenda. How we handle the shifts in food systems financing architecture today is key for future social and political stability, as it will determine progress in reversing rising hunger in Africa and fulfilling the commitment of long-term, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems.

Objectives of the Session

At UNFSS+4, the Governments of Benin and Rwanda will convene African Union Member States, stakeholders, and partners for a high-level dialogue on Africa's Food Systems Financing: Country-Owned Financial Intelligence and Strategies in a Changing Landscape. The event will take place under the auspices of the African Union Special Envoy on Food Systems, in partnership with AKADEMIYA2063, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Bank, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), as well as AGRA and the Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF). The session will offer a much-needed platform at UNFSS+4 for African decision-makers and stakeholders to exchange knowledge, share bold solutions, and strengthen collective action on financing strategies that will transform the continent's food systems around three core objectives:

- Engage with first-of-its-kind financial intelligence for African food systems financing in a rapidly evolving global landscape—empowering decision-makers with country-led financial data and insights to inform much-needed exchanges on country-owned financing strategies, meeting Kampala CAADP commitments.
- Share country experiences in tracking financial flows across entire food systems—not just agriculture—to strengthen the CAADP accountability framework and enhance transparency, monitoring, and progress tracking. The session will spotlight countries piloting the 3FS Framework, which expands beyond traditional public expenditure tracking to offer a more comprehensive view of food systems financing.
- Showcase and learn from bold, actionable, country-led approaches pioneered across African countries to unlock, accelerate, and repurpose food systems financing—creating space for leaders and stakeholder to exchange solutions for scaling domestic public investment, optimizing external development finance, and catalysing private capital- that empower small-scale African agri-food entrepreneurs, women, and youth to fully participate in and take their share from Africa's growing agri-food industry, while advancing cross-sectoral food systems transformation.



Expected Outcomes

We have entered a new era of food systems financing—where leaders and citizens alike, from African countries, are no longer satisfied with food aid. Because there's no dignity in dependency, African people are calling for investments that deliver mutual benefits and a real path out of food assistance.

The session will seek to achieve:

- Deepened momentum around country-led financial intelligence—such as the 3FS Framework empowering decision-makers with timely, actionable data and evidence on financing flows, gaps, and risks to drive more strategic, evidence-informed national food systems financing.
- Exchanged bold and innovative country-driven solutions to unlock, scale, and repurpose financing across domestic public budgets, external development flows, and private investments. The dialogue will highlight integrated financing approaches that uplift small-scale agri-food entrepreneurs, women, and youth—fuelling inclusive, resilient, and high-performing food systems across the continent.
- Insights for strengthening the CAADP accountability framework through real-world country experiences in tracking comprehensive food systems financing—not just agriculture—enabling more transparent, coordinated, and results-driven progress monitoring of food systems financing across African countries.

The session is just a first step—a starting point for deeper engagement. This vital conversation will continue at the upcoming African Food Systems Forum in Dakar this September, Africa's premier gathering on agriculture and food systems, building on the momentum from this FSS+4 session.

Session Format

The session will adopt a Roundtable format to foster dynamic and engaging discussions among participants, acting as a bridge between speakers and the audience while maintaining focus on key themes. This approach encourages deeper idea exchanges than traditional panels, promotes equal participation, and enables an enriched dialogue, ultimately leading to actionable insights. A skilled moderator will guide the discussion, ensuring active engagement, facilitating the flow of conversation.

Annotated Agenda

Moderator: Ms. Redi Tlhabi, Senior Anchor and Executive Producer

13:00 - 13:20 (10 min) ___

Financing Africa's Food Systems: Why Country-Owned Financial Intelligence and Strategies Matter More Than Ever

The Moderator opens the session with sharp, fast-paced framing of the goals and vision for the session, engaging African leadership and partners for a dynamic, conversational start (no formal speeches) with direct, focused messages sparking momentum from the start.

- UN Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit, Dr. Agnes Kalibata
- Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources for Rwanda, Hon. Dr. Mark Cyubahiro Bagabe

Speakers introduce the critical importance of country-led financing strategies to transform Africa's food systems.

► The Moderator will encourage speakers to interact naturally with each other to maintain a lively pace.

13:20 - 14:50 (30 min)

DEEP DIVE 1 | Empowering African decision-makers and stakeholders through Country-Led Financial Intelligence

· Setting the scene

What is financial intelligence revealing about African food systems financing—key trends, emerging opportunities, and critical risks?

Roundtable Discussion

The Moderator engages Ministers from Rwanda, Kenya, and Nigeria to share key insights and experiences on how financial intelligence can help shape their country-led national food systems financing strategies amid rapid shifts in the food systems finance landscape.

- Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources for Rwanda, Hon. Dr. Mark Cyubahiro Bagabe
- Minister of Agriculture and Food Security for Nigeria, Hon. Senator Abubakar Kyari
- Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock Development for Kenya, Hon. Mutahi Kagwe

The Moderator then invites partners supporting country empowerment through the 3FS Framework—including IFAD, the World Bank, GAIN, AKADEMIYA2063, and AGRA—to share their perspectives on enhancing financial intelligence for food systems.

- AKADEMIYA2063 Executive Chairperson, Dr. Ousmane Badiane
- GAIN Executive Director, Dr. Lawrence Haddad
- AGRA President, Ms. Alice Ruhweza
- World Bank Global Director of Agriculture and Food, Ms. Shobha Shetty
- IFAD Associate Vice-President, External Relations, Ms. Federica Diamanti

Guiding Questions

In a rapidly changing development finance landscape:

- How can financial intelligence change the way countries strategically plan and monitor their food systems financing strategies?
- What are the main challenges in integrating intelligence on domestic, external, and private financing flows to food systems?
- ▶ The Moderator opens the floor to the audience, encouraging active participation and inclusive dialogue, inviting all participants to join the conversation on financial intelligence for country-led food systems financing strategies.

13:50 - 14:05 (15 min)

DEEP DIVE 2 | Showcasing country-owned strategies for Food Systems Financing

The Moderator invites the circle of speakers: Côte d'Ivoire to showcase their bold, actionable approaches that have unlocked, accelerated, and repurposed food systems financing to empower small-scale entrepreneurs, women, and youth.

 H.E. Mr. Amadou Koné, Minister of Transport, President of the Union of Cities and Communes, Mayor Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire

Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire's second-largest city, has become one of the first municipalities in UEMOA to receive a formal credit rating—marking a milestone in local government finance. In January 2025, the city was assigned a long-term rating of BBB and a short-term rating of A3, both with a stable outlook, by Bloomfield Investment Corporation. This rating empowers Bouaké to access capital markets directly, unlocking new opportunities to finance major infrastructure projects. The effort is part of the city's "Bouaké Nouveau" development agenda, led by Mayor Amadou Koné, which focuses on improving governance, expanding infrastructure, and stimulating economic growth. Launched in June 2024, the credit rating initiative represents a bold step toward modernizing municipal financial management and attracting external investment. Bouaké's achievement sets a powerful precedent for other African cities, demonstrating how local governments can mobilize resources independently to drive sustainable development.

▶ The Moderator will invite audience questions and comments, fostering a short conversation

14:05 – 14:15 (10 min) CLOSING INSIGHTS

The Moderator invites key insights and actionable recommendations from the Ministers of Agriculture from, Rwanda, Kenya, and Nigeria.

Closing Remarks:

• GAIN, Executive Director (on behalf of partners), Dr. Lawrence Haddad









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A UNFSS+4 Side Event

- □ July 28, 2025 🕲 13:30 14:30 EAT
- UNECA, Addis Ababa-Ethiopia

















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