

# Strategic Plan 2023-2027

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# 1 Introduction

<b>Technical questions: Africa's Food Systems Secretariat</b>	
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## Introduction

1. The [Africa Food Systems Forum](#) Strategic Plan 2023–2027 defines how the Africa Food System Forum Secretariat will engage with and work on the Food System Transformation Agenda over the next five years in Africa. The overarching goal is to scale up the continent’s efforts to build **healthier, more inclusive, sustainable, resilient and equitable food systems that have the power to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa by 2030.**
2. The Africa Food Systems Forum seeks to draw key stakeholders together around a common purpose: to unleash the full potential of Africa’s millions of smallholder farmers and their families who earn their livelihoods from small-scale farms and produce about 80% of the food and agricultural products consumed across the continent.
3. The plan proposes a continental approach to identifying and turning food systems vulnerabilities and related risks into opportunities to attract investments all along food systems value chains. It aims to reposition AGRF as Africa Food System Forum and become a partner of choice for the implementation of the African Union’s Comprehensive Africa Comprehensive Development Programme (CAADP), United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement<sup>1</sup>, thus helping to maximize the impact of the African Union’s programmes and policies on food systems transformation.
4. This Strategic Plan draws on AGRA’s new strategy (2023–2030) and is aligned with Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU), African countries national development plans (NDPs) and specific sectoral plans and seeks to reinforce private sector engagement. Based on lessons learnt from previous years of the AGRF, the Dalberg recommendations from an independent review in 2018, the open and inclusive stakeholder consultation process and feedback from partners during the first annual retreat meeting in 2023, the Africa Food System Forum partners meetings, and AGRA board meetings, this plan seeks to translate AFSF’s Strategy into action at the continental level.
5. The Africa Food System Forum’s long-term funding plan seeks **to mobilize at least USD 50 million for the next five years** from the AGRF’s current 26 partners and new strategic partners, including climate and environmental funds, as it refocuses its work from agricultural transformation to resilient food systems transformation. It also aims to trigger private and public investment, including green investment, for countries and MSMEs, particularly ones led by youth and women. These resources will enable AFSF to provide much-needed support for African countries’ efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving the commitments of their CAADP and increasing their self-sufficiency and food security. By mobilizing additional funding beyond the current allocations for the forum, in the form of measurable and concrete investments for governments and from the private sector, AFSF will be able to meet its ambitious goal of shifting from a **standalone event to**

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<sup>1</sup> Paris Climate Agreement : Signed in 2015 with an overarching goal to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and pursue efforts “to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

**a more impactful forum** that plays a leading role in driving the transition to resilient food systems across Africa.

6. The Plan focuses especially on **youth and women to promote inclusivity** and more equitable **representation of all regions (Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone and Arabophone)**. It aims to build synergies among activities, partnerships and innovations and to mobilize technical expertise and climate and environmental financial resources. The strategic plan is **a horizon scanning one**. It seeks to ensure that key outcomes go beyond growth in the agricultural sector and increase food security, self-sufficiency and income, while transforming entire food systems. This will result in enhanced **availability, affordability and accessibility** of nutritious and healthier food and, more importantly, the creation of jobs and wealth for youth, while building the resilience of African food systems to shocks (climate, biological, market-related, labour, health and political).
7. The main audience and expected users of this Plan are: the Africa Food System Forum Partners Group, Africa Food System Forum Steering Committee, AGRA senior management and country teams; key development practitioners; other United Nations agencies, including the Rome-based agencies (RBAs); national and regional institutions; bilateral and multilateral organizations; the private sector; civil society organizations, and the Africa Food System Forum Secretariat host country ( Rwanda).
8. Considering the rebranding from the Agricultural Green Revolution Forum to the Africa Food Systems Forum, this plan focuses on six strategic objectives: i) knowledge sharing and learning; ii) reporting and monitoring; iii) agenda setting; iv) policy and advocacy; v) partnership development and coordination, and vi) investment facilitation and finance. **The relocation of the Secretariat from Nairobi (Kenya) to Kigali (Rwanda)** and the new Africa Food System Forum staffing structure will ensure the effective delivery of the Plan's outcomes.
9. The Strategic Plan is comprised of five sections: i) **Strategic context** identifies the main and most urgent food system challenges, risks and opportunities affecting farmers and their communities and other stakeholders along food system value chains, now and in the future; ii) the **Africa Food Systems Forum's comparative advantage and role** summarizes the advances that the forum has made globally and regionally on food system transformation, which position AFSF **as a strong, bold and innovative partner of choice on food system transformation in Africa**; iii) **Priority areas of intervention and theory of change** presents a brief overview of the six lines of action that AFSF will undertake to address these challenges, risks and opportunities and the theory of change guiding them; iv) **AFSF operational pillars** highlights the lessons learnt that informed each of the six areas of intervention and describes the actions to be taken under each one, and v) **Enabling resources and accountability framework** gives an overview of the resources and framework required for the execution and monitoring of the Strategic Plan.
10. This strategic plan is a living document that may be updated and expanded on a regular basis to cover other areas not addressed in this version.

# 2 Strategic Content

## Strategic context

### The development issue

11. **Food systems in Africa are at a breaking point due to the confluence of multiple, mutually reinforcing crises** at the global and regional level. The Covid-19 pandemic, climate shocks and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have combined to exacerbate the structural vulnerabilities of food systems on the continent, setting resilience-building efforts back for years. Restrictions to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus caused major disruptions in trade and the cross-border movement of people and goods, affecting supply chains and driving up costs, food prices and unemployment levels. Global food prices rose to new heights in 2021 and the African food bill has increased to USD 100 billion annually. According to the [African Economic Outlook 2022](#), the pandemic pushed close to 30 million people in Africa into extreme poverty in 2021, and approximately 22 million jobs were lost the same year. Smallholder farmers and workers in the informal sectors, especially women and youth, were hit the hardest. It should also be noted that during the same period (2020 and 2021), 131 extreme-weather, climate change-related disasters were reported in the region: 99 floods, 16 storms, 14 droughts and 2 wildfires.
12. As the vaccine slowly trickled into Africa and **some countries started showing signs of recovery**, war broke out between Russia and the Ukraine, dealing yet another blow to the region's food systems. This happened at a time when governments had limited fiscal space to cushion the effects of increases in food and fuel prices as well as fertilizer prices because of the pandemic and growing debt levels. The war has caused even more economic disruptions – primarily in agricultural and fuel supply chains – and propelled inflation around the world. Countries or regions that are highly dependent on imported food are particularly vulnerable because of the rising cost of food imports and the burden it places on government resources. East Africa, for instance, **imports 84%** of its wheat and wheat products, which are widely consumed by the population, mainly from the Russian Federation (72 percent) and the Ukraine (18 percent) (GRFC, 2022). It is estimated that the fallout of the Russia-Ukraine conflict could push another 1.8 million people across the African continent into extreme poverty in 2022 and another 2.1 million in 2023 (AfDB, 2022).
13. **Climate change is another main driver of hunger and food insecurity and a major risk multiplier** in Africa. In 2021, Madagascar's Grand Sud and southwestern Angola experienced the worst drought conditions of the last 40 years and, as a result, crop production was 50 to 80 percent below the five-year average. Torrential rains and floods affected over 500,000 people and damaged over 219 000 hectares of farmland in Mozambique, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Eswatini and Malawi. In 2022, East Africa alone lost close to 2 million livestock as an accumulated effect of recurrent droughts and low response capacity. As consequence of climate change, the continent loses between 5 and 15% of GDP to climate change (AfDB, 2022). This fuels **conflicts**, greater instability and forced migration, especially of rural youth. This is particularly true in already fragile regions such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and small island developing states (SIDS).

Tensions from increased competition over diminishing natural capital add fuel to existing conflicts, which exacerbate the problem of poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

14. **According to recent projections**, precipitation levels will continue to decrease, while temperatures are expected to increase between 1 and 1.72°C for the 2031–2050 period compared to the 1986–2005 reference period. Agricultural production is expected to drop by at least 20% in certain regions of the continent, which will reduce food availability and farmers' incomes. This plan will provide strategic guidance for African countries' efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving the commitments of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and meeting the Paris Climate Agreement's target of **keeping global temperature rise well below 2°C** by the end of the century and support the **net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** by 2050.
  
15. **The combined effects of these global phenomena have led to food crises** of unprecedented proportions in the world, with some of the highest food insecurity levels in African countries. According to the Global Report on Food Crisis 2022 (GRFC 2022), in 2021, close to 193 million people in the world were experiencing acute food insecurity, 24% more than 2020. More than 60% of this total were in Africa: 45.56 million in Central and Southern Africa, 43.6 million in East Africa and 30.4 million in West Africa and the Sahel. A fifth of the African population (or 278 million) is undernourished, and 55 million of its children under the age of five are stunted due to severe malnutrition (Oxfam International 2023). The situation was particularly critical in 2021 in three African countries (Ethiopia, South Sudan and southern Madagascar), where over half a million people faced starvation and urgent action was required to prevent widespread starvation, death and the total collapse of livelihoods. The GRFC 2022 reported that major deteriorations were expected in northern Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Niger due to conflict, as well as in Kenya, South Sudan and Somalia because of consecutive seasons of below average rainfall. It is important to note that the **main driver of acute food security** in the region is **conflict and insecurity** (GRFC 2022). The fighting disrupts livelihoods, especially for farmers and rural communities who become cut off from their fields or grazing areas, markets, supplies, basic services, and food, thereby reducing overall agricultural production in countries. Furthermore, violence forces people to flee their homes, plunging millions into poverty and total food insecurity and generating tensions in areas receiving refugees due to increased competition for resources.

### **Africa: a land of opportunities and solutions for food systems transformation**

16. Since its creation as the African Green Revolution Conference in 2006 by Yara in Norway and thanks to its current 26 partners and the Government of Rwanda that hosts the secretariat, AGRF has become the **world's premier forum** for bringing stakeholders in the African agricultural landscape together to share best practices, solutions, knowledge and lessons learned and take concrete action to move African agriculture forward. Even though **agricultural and food systems risks** (climate, biological, market, health, political and policy-related) **in Africa are very high**, so are the number of opportunities and solutions, particularly in the context of multiple global crises. Major investment in climate

resilient agriculture is urgently needed to bring African food systems back from the brink of disaster and unleash the massive untapped potential of smallholder agriculture in the region.

17. **With the right investments and policy frameworks** in agriculture, poverty and hunger can be addressed and food systems, transformed. In sub-Saharan Africa, **agriculture is the backbone of many African economies and** economic growth from agriculture is **11 times more effective** at reducing extreme poverty than any other sector (IFAD Field Report, 2023). The sector is responsible for approximately 23 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's GDP (Goedde, 2019) and employs around 50 percent of the region's labour force. In addition, the estimated 33-50 million smallholder farms in Africa produce up to 70-80% of the continent's food supply. These figures clearly illustrate the **pivotal role of smallholder farmers in the region's economy and food systems**. Yet, investment in the agricultural sector is below the 10% target established by the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).
18. Contrary to common misconceptions about small-scale farming, with adequate financing, technical support and capacity-building, **smallholder agriculture can be productive**. A large study found that when sustainable agricultural techniques are adopted, yields increased by 79% (FAO, 2012). As sustainable agriculture systems are more diversified, with farmers producing over a dozen crops and annual products, they generate higher yields per hectare, are more resilient to shocks and provide numerous environmental benefits, namely biodiversity preservation (including many climate-resilient plant varieties and animal breeds).
19. Furthermore, when associated to better working conditions and rights, sustainable smallholder agriculture **can be a key driver for decent rural jobs, especially for youth and women**. This is fundamental given Africa's rapidly growing population – an estimated **440 million young people** will enter the labour market in Africa by 2030 (IFAD 2023) – and the recent job losses caused by the pandemic.
20. **Special attention** must also be paid to help **women** farmers overcome the numerous socioeconomic and cultural barriers they face and fulfil their potential. It is estimated that African women represent between 50 and 60% of the labour force employed in agriculture. They play a crucial role all throughout the different food systems, which is often not recognized. One study estimated that if women were given the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase the yields of their farms by 20 to 30%, which would lift 100 to 150 million people out of hunger (FAO 2012).
21. More recent reports show that investing in the **transition to sustainable food systems** will not only permit countries to avoid billions of dollars in damages and costs, but also **generate trillions of dollars in business opportunities**. For instance, investments in food storage and processing will enable food systems stakeholders to avoid post-harvest losses, which currently average at around 30% in sub-Saharan Africa and are estimated at around USD 4 billion every year. On a broader level, a recent publication by UNFSS 2021,

WB, FOLU and IFPRI argues that investing between USD 300-400 billion each year in global food systems transformation could generate USD 4.5 trillion in new business opportunities every year, create over 120 million decent rural jobs, help limit global warming and regenerate natural ecosystems and biodiversity, while also reducing the estimated USD 12 trillion in costs and waste currently generated by global food systems every year.

22. To achieve this food systems transformation and unleash African farmers' great potential, **major efforts to mobilize financing for climate resilient, sustainable agriculture in Africa are urgently needed.** The agricultural sector has historically received a disproportionately low level of financing. **Only 1.7 % of total global climate finance is allocated to smallholder farmers**<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, most governments in the region have still not managed to meet their commitments to direct 10% of their budget to agriculture. According to Oxfam International, the majority of African governments (48 out of 54) reportedly spend an average of 3.8% of their budgets on agriculture – some as little as 1%. As for the amount of funding needed, data submitted by 51 African countries indicate that together, these countries will need around USD 2.8 trillion between 2020 and 2030 to implement their NDCs, or approximately USD 250 billion per year. Current funding levels do not, however, come even close. In 2020, annual climate finance flows in Africa – domestic and international – totalled only USD 30 billion or about 12 percent of the amount needed. Based on its analysis of these data, CPI calculates the African countries' mitigation needs for the agriculture, forestry and land use sector at USD 108.1 billion and adaptation at USD 49 billion for the 2020-2030 period.

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<sup>2</sup> Examining the Climate Finance Gap for Small-Scale Agriculture *Report, IFAD, 2020*

# 3 The Forum's engagement: Lessons learned

## The Forum's engagement: lessons learned.

23. The Forum's approach to food system transformation draws on experience and learning from its more than a decade of work in agriculture and UN food systems. Key lessons learnt and experience from past and ongoing forums, the Food Systems Summit and from feedback from donors informed the drafting of this Strategic Plan.
24. Over the years, the AGRF has cultivated unrivalled power to convene top leaders, thinkers and implementers in African agriculture from across the private, public, development and non-profit, academic and research sectors. Stakeholders appreciate the high-level, diverse group of delegates they are exposed to at the Forum, allowing each one to derive specific benefits from the AGRF.
25. In late 2022, AGRF was rebranded as the **Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF)** to reflect the partners' ambitions on food system transformation. Recent evaluations and feedback from AGRF partners reveal that the AGRF is still seen as **a standalone event that faces challenges to enhance its impact further** (Dalberg assessment, 2018). AGRF has **not yet fully capitalized on the momentum generated at the Forum during the post-Forum periods, particularly** when it comes to measurable and concrete investments for governments and from the private sector. Other main lessons and conclusions drawn from AGRF's past experience and partner feedback are as follows:
26. **The greatest impact Africa Food System Forum has achieved in recent forums has been in the area of agenda setting** and partnership development and coordination: AGRF has helped to keep important issues, including Malabo Declaration commitments and related indicators from the CAADP, high on the agendas of heads of state and ministers.
27. **New technologies, modern farming systems, skills, knowledge and market opportunities are essential to attract youth in agriculture.** Misconceptions and negative image and perceptions about working in agriculture have discouraged young people from opting for a career in the agricultural and food systems sector.
28. **Inclusivity and targeting youth and women must be at the centre** of the AFSF's strategy to accelerate food system transformation. Although most forums in the past discussed youth and women, clear targeting mechanisms for both youth and women's participation and access to financing (deals), knowledge and technical assistance are still limited. AFSF will give more voice to youth and women under this new strategy.
29. **Geographical targeting and representation:** It has been reported that Anglophone countries have had a stronger presence at many AGRF forums than Francophone, Lusophone and Maghreb countries. To address this gap, it was suggested that geographical targeting of AGRF summits be incorporated into this new strategy with the home (Rwanda) and away (another African country).

30. **Technologies and business models that inspire and should be replicated must be carefully selected and shared.** Investments should target lower cost and easier to maintain equipment and technologies, as they are more adapted to the requirements and capacities of the target groups, thus greatly increasing the chances of sustainability. Proven best business models can be supported and showcased to be replicated through a leapfrog approach across the continent.
31. **While AGRF's event cycle and governance are fit for purpose, contributions of human and financial resources from the Alliance for AGRA are unsustainable.** In recent years, AGRA has stepped in to assume a disproportionate share of AGRF funding due to budget shortfalls. Insufficient, inadequate and unpredictable funding threatens the ability of AGRF to maintain a consistent level of quality and pursue new strategic initiatives.
32. **Extending impacts beyond the forum and unlock financing for both MSMEs and governments:** In 2018, AGRF introduced the Agribusiness Dealrooms and Generation Africa. The Forum managed to mobilize youth and MSMEs, investors and governments to engage in deal rooms via Generation Africa. However, the number of financed deals is still limited because of the bankability of the deals, ticket size and the deal owners' lack of technical support, collateral and capacity, among others.

# 4 Africa Food Systems Forum's comparative advantage and role

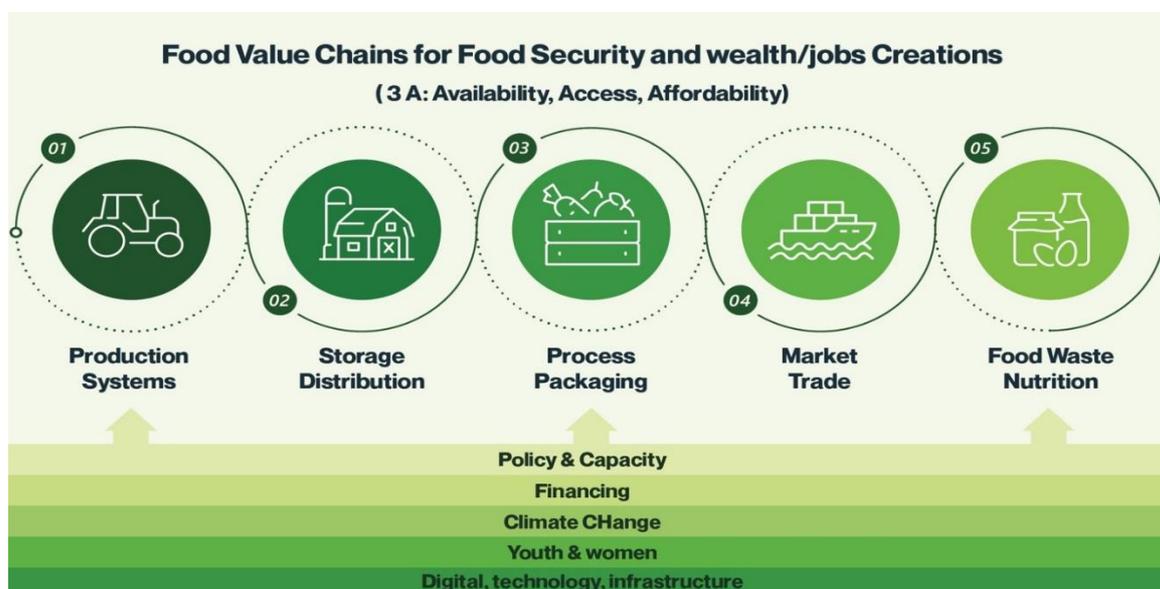
## Africa Food System Forum's comparative advantage and role

33. The Africa Food Systems Forum – (AGRF) is the world's premier forum for **convening stakeholders** in Africa's agricultural landscape so that together, they can take practical action and share lessons that will move African agriculture forward. Initially established as the "African Green Revolution Conference" in 2006, AGRF has continued to evolve over the years. Yara International established the African Green Revolution Conference in Oslo as an annual event focused on fostering public-private partnerships and mobilizing investments in African agriculture from 2006 to 2009. In 2010, adopting a proposal championed by Kofi Annan, the location of the conference was moved to Africa and the responsibility for the Secretariat shifted from Yara to the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). This premier platform contributes in shaping the continental agricultural agenda. It measures its strategic progress in alignment with the African Union's leadership by reviewing data on the CAADP Biennial Review.
34. AFSF's mission is to inform, influence and catalyse action in **six strategic areas**: i) knowledge sharing and learning; ii) reporting and monitoring; iii) agenda setting; iv) policy and advocacy; v) partnership development and coordination and vi) investment facilitation and finance. AFSF's unique focus is its targeting of women and youth and it is dedicated to supporting investment in inclusive and sustainable food systems transformation.
35. Over time, AGRF has become **an agile platform** which was able to incorporate new elements, including a **greater focus on food systems** and integrated approaches; government engagement; reporting and accountability, and private sector mobilization. Given the current global context, The Forum is now refocusing its work on **healthier, more inclusive, sustainable, resilient and equitable food systems that have the power to accelerate the achievement of SDGs by 2030 in Africa**.
36. **The Forum is a one-stop shop**: Through its thematic platforms and annual summits, AFSF seeks to address the most critical barriers faced specifically by the food systems, including **siloed policymaking and the disconnect** between policy and implementation, limited adoption of innovative practices and technology in agriculture value chains, unsafe food environment for healthy diets, lack of financing, private sector, trade barriers, the marginalization of youth and women, widespread unemployment and climate change impacts on farms. Other barriers include the high risks of investing in sustainable value chains and value addition, underdeveloped capital and financial markets, a weak institutional environment and the lack of standards and norms to boost continental and global trade. The forum thematic platforms (Youth, Women, climate and resilience, trade ...) play a critical role in addressing the above barriers in an integrated manner.
37. **An agile global convener for food system transformation**. The forum become a convener of all policymakers on the continent on agriculture. The Forum focused initially on agricultural transformation and green revolution. Since 2022, AGRF has been rebranded to Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF) to reflect the partnership ambition on

food systems transformation. The forum supports voice for youth and women and works together with Governments to bring together all stakeholders (government, civil society, private sector, academia) working on food systems value chains. The Forum was a to convene global leaders and various players around agricultural transformation with increasing numbers of participants and leadership representation. While the forum does not provide financial resources, it has provided leadership to influence policies and has played a major role in raising awareness about the financing challenges that smallholder farmers in Africa face and advocating for policies that create an enabling environment for them to access the resources they need. The Summit and the corresponding discussions have also contributed to the development of innovative solutions such regenerative agriculture, value addition to the challenges of Africa’s food systems.

**38. Convening governments and facilitating exchanges between countries:** The Africa Food System Forum’s policy engagement agenda will focus on removing bottlenecks for food system transformation by: (i) assisting African governments to create adequate regulatory frameworks for food system transformation; (ii) helping governments establish an enabling environment for the development of agribusiness enterprises; (iii) promoting infrastructure development, including renewable energy; (iv) supporting the establishment of sustainable agricultural financial institutions dedicated to smallholder farmers and MSMEs; (v) helping governments implement their rural land policies to guarantee equal access to land, particularly for women and youth, and vi) providing support for the development of effective trade and market policies. The Forum will contribute to the strengthening of new and ongoing partnerships among African countries and facilitate triangular cooperation with the countries of the Global South and developed countries in general. Exchange visits will be promoted through the AFSF thematic platforms and Africa’s Food System Forum Partners Group.

39. Through its new innovative elements, the Forum will kick-start the food system transformation process by helping to create the foundation for decent jobs for youth and women and for markets that lift farmers out of poverty and food insecurity.



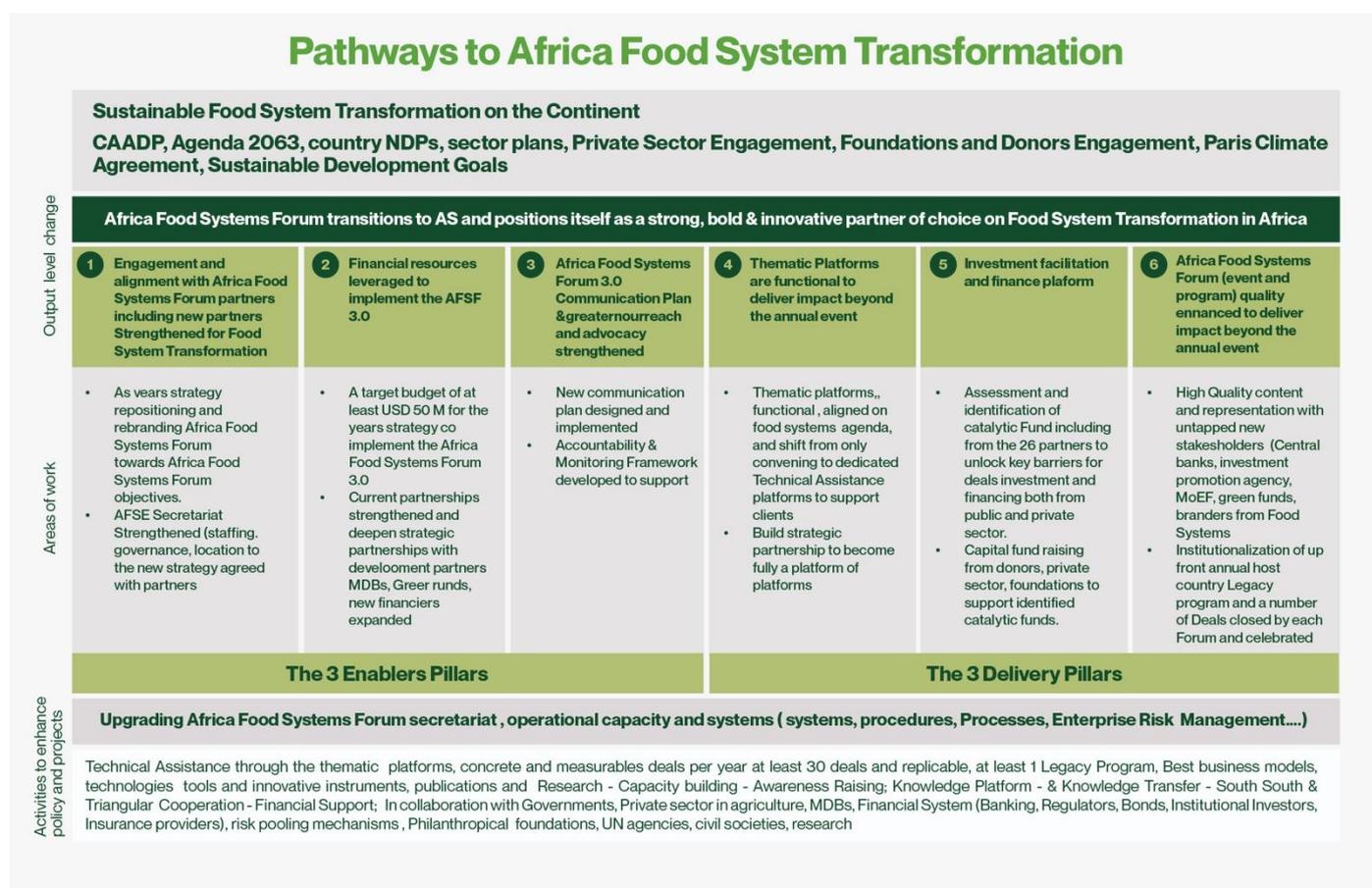
40. Building on **AFSF's comparative advantage**, this strategic plan (2023-2027) offers Africa Food Systems Forum partners and clients an opportunity to scale up investments that address the root causes of poverty and food insecurity. AFSF is taking steps to expand and upgrade the organization's strategic direction, delivery model and financial capacity. Africa Food Systems Forum is uniquely placed to support the African agenda on food systems and climate change to transform food systems so they **produce more nutritious food locally** and **improve how it is produced**.

# 5 Priority areas of intervention and theory of change

## Priority areas of intervention and theory of change

41. To build healthier, more inclusive, sustainable, resilient and equitable food systems in Africa and respond to demand from countries, clients and partners for assistance with mobilizing investment, the forum will use its comparative advantage as a premier forum and convener on agriculture in Africa. The new strategy will build on lessons learnt and feedback from the Dalberg Assessment, the First Annual AGRF Retreat held in 2023 and its partner's expertise on building resilient and inclusive food systems.
42. The **Strategic Plan** proposes **six priority areas of intervention**: i) Engagement and alignment with the forum partners; ii) The Summit (event and programme); iii) Thematic platforms & technical support; iv) Investment facilitation and finance; v) Resource mobilization, and v) Communications, advocacy and greater outreach.
43. These areas build on **Africa's Food Systems Forum role as a convener and facilitator**, which is discussed in more detail below. Across the six priority areas of intervention, AFSF will focus on gender, youth, climate change, infrastructure, nutrition, digitalization, state capacity and capacity-building.
44. AFSF intends to address global and regional challenges and contributes to the achievement of the SDGs and the commitments of the Paris Climate Agreement through the six interconnected lines of action summarized below.

## Theory of Change



## The enabling pillars:

45. **Engagement and alignment with the forum's partners:** Africa Food System's engagement and alignment with its partners will be sustained by its comparative advantage as the premier convener and facilitator in the agriculture sector, as it transitions to become the leading African stakeholder forum on food systems, following its rebranding as Africa Food Systems Forum. The forum will work in close coordination with its current 26 partners and new partners to complement investment and financing; offer technical assistance to MSMEs in food system value chains. It will also coordinate with partners including the media to enhance visibility, outreach and knowledge, and promote the sharing of experiences and solutions on food systems. AFSF investments will continue to address all barriers that the Dealrooms face, as well as context-specific drivers and impacts on food systems and agricultural value chains by: (i) strengthening the resilience of agricultural production, storage, processing, packaging and distribution systems, boosting markets and trade, reducing food waste and increasing nutrition; (ii) accelerating climate adaptation and strengthening natural resource governance; (iii) fostering inclusivity of women and youth and empowering marginalized and conflict-affected rural communities; iv) strengthening the capacity of states and clients, and v) promoting digitalization and infrastructure. The Forum will seek to maximize the resources available for the secretariat, the Summit and year-round activities beyond the Summit **to enhance its impact further.** The Africa Food Systems Forum will crowd in supplementary resources and complement the current base resources from the 26 main partners that are only dedicated to the organization of the annual summit and support the secretariat. New partnerships with other MDBs, global green funds (Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility), other UN organizations, foundations and the private sector will also be explored and expanded. New innovative ways of mobilizing financial resources will be introduced. This includes presidential fundraising pioneered by the United Republic of Tanzania during the 2023 launch event.
46. **Resource mobilization:** The Forum's ability to increase support for the continent's agenda on food system transformation relies on core contributions from partners. A long-term funding strategy remains the foundation of the Africa Food System Forum architecture and the institution's sustainability. According to the Dalberg evaluation, the Africa Food Systems Forum financial model is not sustainable and will need to be revisited. So far, the AGRA contribution of human and financial resources is considered unsustainable in comparison to other partners. The Secretariat needs to strengthen its staff, particular those working on its thematic platforms. The forum intends to deploy the staffing using a phased approach based on donors' contributions. There is also a need to increase investment to support a world-class event: The current budget allocated per summit is around USD 4 to 5 million per annual summit, excluding the host country's in-kind contribution. To raise the number of participants to at least 10,000 including 7000 online participants, with at least 10-to 15 head of states, the forum will need an increase in funding by 10 to 20%. The funds will be deployed for the organization of the event, but also to upgrade the host country's event facilities to meet international standards, which countries will be able to use after the event.

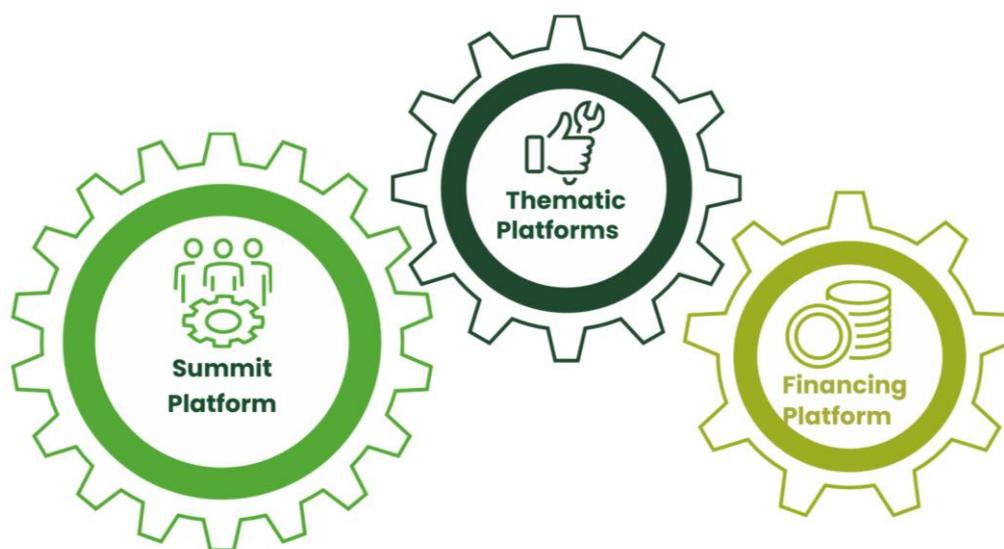
47. The Africa Food System Forum will continue to mobilize through its partners significant level of grants to support the organization of the summit, and it will also raise more resources to provide technical assistance through its platforms, engage in other year-round activities and sustain its secretariat. This strategy has a **target of at least USD 50 million for 5 years** of funding to support the Secretariat work on food system transformation in Africa. These resources will be used to organize annual world class summit, support the secretariat and the thematic platforms to foster year-round activities. The forum will build on its long-standing relationships with its 26 partners and explore and establish new strategic partnerships with multilateral development banks (MDBs), business eco-funds, in-country donors, academia and research, technical assistance partners and media for greater outreach. Africa Food System Forum will also explore new financing innovations to address the current global food crisis. This could involve a combination of increased contributions and financial structures already tested by other similar forums, such as WEF, as well as IFAD's collaboration with MDBs and climate funds. A resource mobilisation plan will be developed to support the implementation of this strategic plan. The forum will focus on an integrated resource mobilisation for the summit, platforms, secretariat, and other year-round activities. To maximize the mobilization of resources, resource mobilisation will be done through AGRA or directly through the Secretariat. The summit sponsorships and registration fees will remain also other source of funding for the forum.

48. **Communication, advocacy and greater outreach:** AFSF is set to fully rebrand itself in 2023. This will require a new communications plan. It will also expand its outreach and engagement with conventional stakeholders and new ones in the region to position itself as a partner of choice on food system transformation in Africa. Innovative initiatives such as the host country legacy programme will contribute to translating the agenda into more effective programming and impacts, policy dialogues, stakeholder awareness and partnership building all year round.

# 6 AFS Forum Delivery Pillars

## AFSF Delivery Pillars

49. The Africa Food System Forum's priorities areas for 2023–2027 will be underpinned by three delivery pillars: i) the Summit Platform; ii) Technical Assistance offered through the Platform of Platforms, and iii) the Financing Platform to mobilize and boost investments.



50. **The Summit Platform (event and programme):** A transformative annual event tailored to the countries and continent's contexts will continue to be at the core of AFSF's revamped business model. The renewed world-class forum will integrate **a high-quality annual event** with a **high-quality agenda** (in terms of both programme content and representation) and an **innovative host country legacy programme** to be launched at each annual summit. The Annual Summit will continue to grow as the leading convenor of stakeholders of both the agricultural and food systems sectors. In addition to its convening power, the Forum will play the role of an enabler of investment and financing and offer a technical assistance platform for countries and deals between stakeholders. AFSF's comparative advantage lies in its unique ability to deepen collaboration and coordination with other partners' platforms to build synergies and complementarity to accelerate food system transformation on the continent.

51. Over the coming years, the Summit Platform will increasingly be used to convene not only agricultural stakeholders but also those working on food systems in Africa and worldwide. The Summit Platform will be repositioned as a venue to set and reset the continental agenda and, more importantly, to celebrate and share Africa's solutions for food system transformation with the rest of the world. Effective policy engagement mechanisms will be designed and adopted to ensure that rural youth and women's voices and needs are given a special place in the continental agenda and national policymaking processes.

52. An important innovation of the Summit Platform is **the Legacy Programme on Food Systems**, which is now being introduced as an incentive for countries to compete to host the AFS Forum and a way to translate the country host agenda-setting capacity of each summit into concrete impacts through a programmatic framework. The Legacy Programme on Food Systems Components consists of three main components: 1) programme design; 2) resource mobilization, and 3) implementation.

53. The forum will work with AFS Forum main partners to **facilitate** the design and implementation of a series of host country Legacy Programmes on Food Systems, which will be aligned on each government's priorities. The Forum will facilitate a donor's roundtable at each Annual Summit through the Summit Program. Legacy programme could be scaled up and replicated across the continent to scale up country efforts to transform food systems. The full-fledged legacy programme and associated cost will be each year defined prior to the September 2023 summit with the secretariat facilitation.

54. The timeline for designing the legacy programme will be between January to August of each year. It will be implemented using a strategic and integrated whole-of-government approach that involves core agencies, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as other relevant sector ministries and government agencies, the Africa Food System Forum and partners. The Africa Food System Forum Secretariat will play a key role of **facilitator and convener**. The Secretariat will provide support on programme format, design and planning and mobilize potential collaborators and investors from the Forum's 26 partners to design and implement the legacy programme after the annual summit ends.

#### 55. **Thematic Platforms:**

56. Africa Food System Forum currently has 10 thematic platforms focused mainly on agriculture, which it inherited from its predecessor, AGRF. These platforms are: 1) Generation Africa; 2) Regional Trade; 3) Agribusiness Dealroom; 4) Policy & State Capability; 5) Women in Agriculture; 6) Agri-tech & Digitalization; 7) Food Systems & Nutrition; 8) Resilience & Adaptation; 9) Sustainable Productivity, and 10) Rural and Market Development. Thematic platforms were proposed to address key challenges faced by stakeholders along agricultural value chains. However, these thematic platforms have not been fully functional and they have not been integrated.

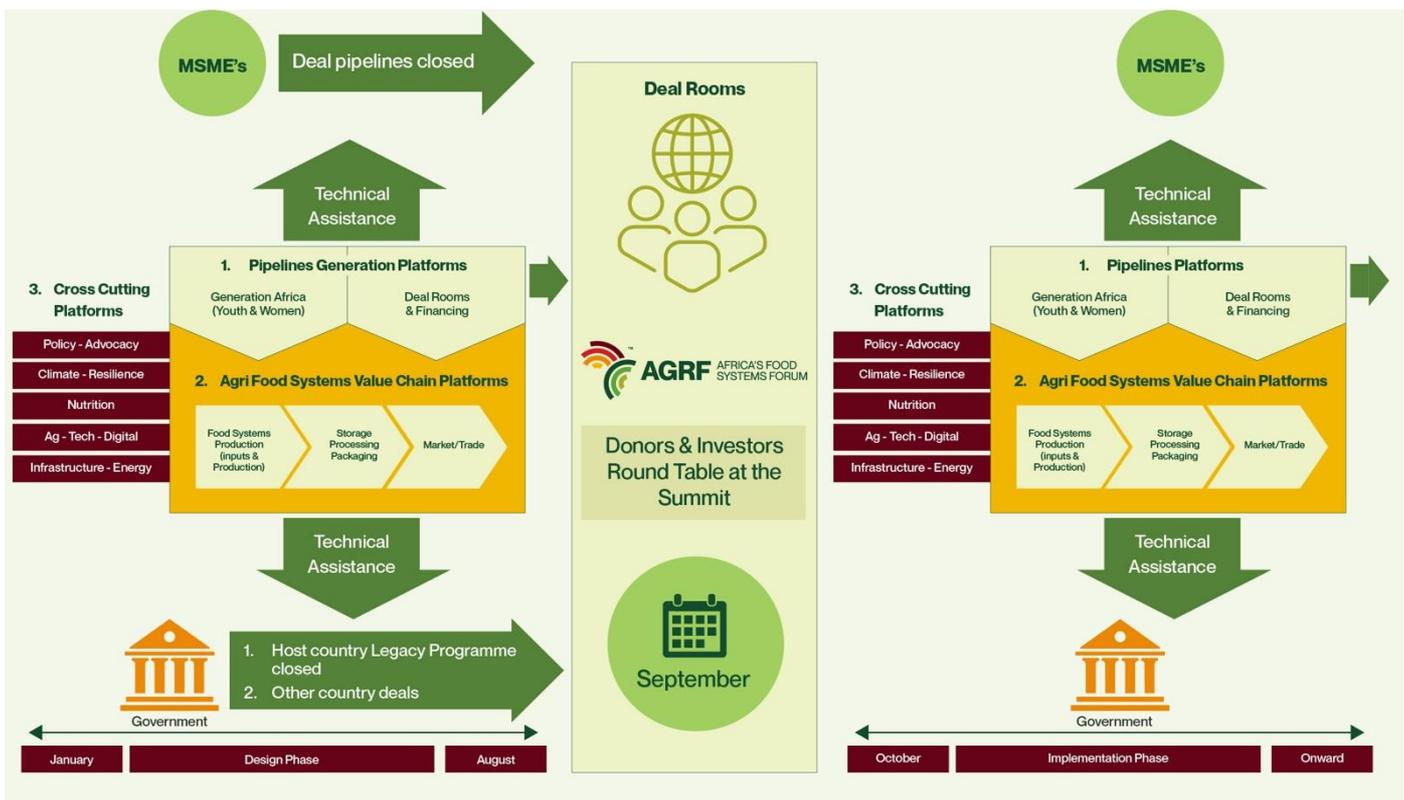
## AGRF - Thematic Platforms



Africa's Food Systems Forum, formerly AGRF, is the world's premier forum for African agriculture, bringing together stakeholders in the agricultural landscape to take practical actions and share lessons that will move African agriculture forward. The Forum advances its mission and works throughout the year to achieve targeted outcomes largely by working through a set of thematic platforms. These thematic platforms and working groups are composed of several member organizations that set a long-term strategy and annual work plan that includes but also extends beyond the annual summit to achieve specific outcomes.

57. Feedback from AGRF assessment and partners recommended that the forum go beyond the annual event and work on year-round activities to support countries, the Dealroom and knowledge and experience sharing. It was also suggested that thematic platforms play a key role in providing technical assistance to clients. New thematic platforms are being developed and repositioned as a platform of platforms and a one-stop data centre that provides MSMEs and governments access to information, data and knowledge to inform investment decisions related to food systems transformation. This technical assistance platform offers guidance on the development and implementation of bankable deals in food systems (food production, storage, distribution, processing and packaging, marketing and trade). It will offer clients advice on climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as digitalization, financial management services, financing opportunities and legal advisory services to meet local demand and international market needs. The Africa Food System Forum proposes a new design and planning process and

timeframe to ensure that by September of each year, concrete deals are finalized and a new legacy programme is developed prior to the Annual Summit. The proposed timeframe is illustrated below:



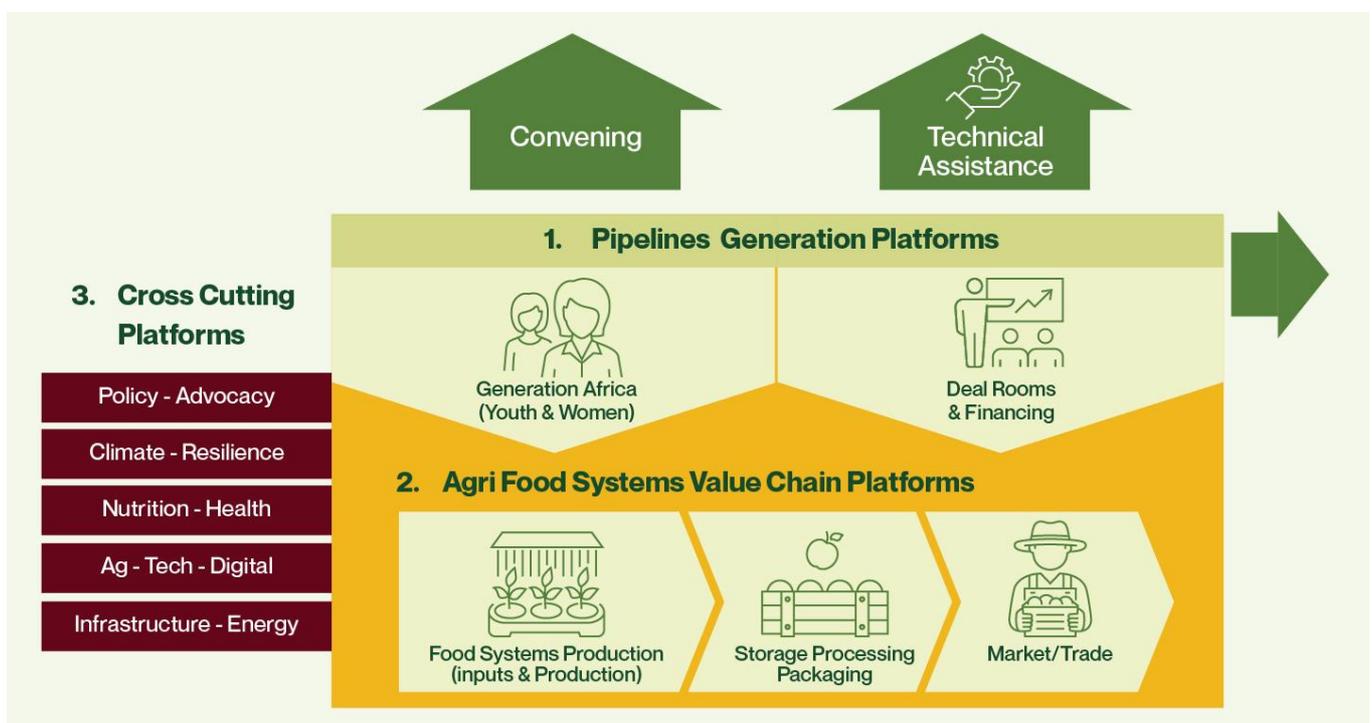
58. **The revised thematic platforms composed by specialists from the AFS Forum main partners** should play a key role **as one-stop data and knowledge centres** by providing analytical and technical advisory support based on local, national and regional knowledge, data systems and demand. This will also help countries in their transition to sustainable food systems. Data and knowledge will be used to assist the Dealroom to identify, screen and de-risk deals and ensure their bankability. This will involve enhancing M&E and knowledge and data systems for lessons learned in real-time and, at the corporate level, further strengthening the rigor of impact assessments. The Forum will continue to introduce machine learning, automation and artificial intelligence technologies.

59. With the rebranding of AGRF in 2023, these thematic platforms need to be recalibrated and new ones proposed to align with the food system agenda. An initial assessment of the platforms was carried out, and it was proposed that the 10 initial thematic platforms be regrouped into **three clusters** of platforms:

- **The Pipeline Generation Platform** will be composed by Generation Africa and the Dealroom. These platforms will work jointly to identify and structure pipelines ideas and deals proposed by youth and women and nurture them to their maturation.

- **The Food Systems Value Chain platforms** will combine all segments of the value chain from inputs and production systems to storage, packaging and processing, marketing and trade. The project pipelines generated by the pipeline Generation platform should focus on these segments of the food value chain with an objective to boost local food production and thus food availability, affordability and accessibility.
- **The cross-cutting platforms** (Policy advocacy, Climate Resilience, Nutrition and Health, Ag Tech- Digital, Infrastructure including energy ) are crucial components of the thematic platforms and must be from project ideas to implementation of all deals. A mainstreaming approach of the cross-cutting themes will be developed to support a full integration of these themes in all deals.

60. The cluster of platforms on the food system is presented below:



61. **Thematic platforms governance:** The Thematic platforms Management Unit (TPMU) is hosted by the Secretariat and headed by a head of thematic platforms. The TPMU will be headed by a platform coordinator (with demonstrated capabilities as coordinator and thought leadership in food systems) supported by other secretariat staff. The Thematic Platform coordinator will address the problem of siloed interventions and the disconnect between the platforms and the overall objective of the food system transformation agenda. The thematic platform coordinator will be responsible for overall Platforms work coordination and management, consolidation of annual work plans, monitoring and reporting on each platform progress and financial management to the secretariat. The TPMU will facilitate (i) efficient coordination and monitoring and evaluation of all platforms year round activities and (ii) integrated planning of activities and deliverables per partner and platforms iii) content development and coherence for the summit iv) Convening power v) technical assistance to government and small holder farmers (

youth and women) viii) stakeholder awareness and participation through timely and transparent communication of the forum work and consistent citizen engagement in food systems. Each new thematic platform will have a chair and co-chair to fulfil its function.

62. **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** will be established to provide technical oversight, direction, and guidance as well to ensure a broad base of inputs into program planning and development, the expansion of our capacity building offerings, and building our knowledge products. The TAC will provide Africa Food System Forum stakeholders with adequate information on the implementation of the KPIs before their smart city expeditions. The TAC also will ensure that the AFSF partners are kept apprised of the latest knowledge and developments related to Food Systems, including the status capacity at country, regional and global levels, emerging lessons and priorities, and significant developments. The committee will advise the Africa Food System Forum partners on funding priorities and critical gaps in Food Systems, as well as on funding allocation decisions, by providing analysis and evidence-based recommendations, based on an evaluation. The TAC will be formed by the head of each thematic platform. The TAC will on a regular basis

63. **The Financing Platform** will combine i) the agribusiness DealRooms, 2) Generation Africa and 3) a potential Catalytic Fund. This platform is a collaborative space that brings together MSMEs, public authorities, and investors to support food system transformation. The Agribusiness DealRoom is a matchmaking platform that convenes stakeholders from the entire eco-system to facilitate partnerships and investments in African agriculture. It specifically supports governments and MSMEs in gaining access to finance and partnership opportunities. To access to the Agribusiness DealRoom, Generation Africa, a partnership initiative, strengthens the ecosystem for youth and women entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector across the continent. The DealRoom is expected to attract over 800 companies, 15 government delegations and 150 public and private investors every year who are interested in exploring a wide range of investment opportunities. However, advanced deal still faces some barriers to access to financing. This Strategy Plan proposes to facilitate the identification a catalytic fund to beyond matchmaking and support investment in mature deals.

64. Several deals originated from the deal rooms and the forum has performed well in matching and connecting MSMEs to investors. However, the number of financed deals **is still very limited** because of the following barriers: need for upfront investment, the bankability of the deals, lack of technical support, collateral and of capacity of deal owners, as well as the absence of catalytic investment to crowd in private sector investment.

65. Therefore, there is a need for **Catalytic funds and investments** to crowd in private investment on deals is needed. AFSF will explore the existing financing mechanisms with two mechanisms i) Africa Food Systems Forum partners and their grant financial resources that can jump start mature pipeline deals and incentivized the private sector to invest into the mature deals with grant (matching or challenge grant) or ii) existing

catalytic funds within the African financial ecosystem such as such as the AECF (Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund) , The Agri Business Capital Fund, others similar funds. The Forum will carry out assessment to see to what extent the agribusiness deal rooms can tap into these funds or similar innovative financial solutions, instruments, and structures with high potential to unlock more private capital for deal rooms in support of inclusive food system transformation. A feasibility study will be carried out to assess the ecosystems and identify the suitable funds to address key barriers to access to financing. The financing platform will be coordinated by the head of partnership and deal development who will work closely with the head of thematic platforms.

### **Rwanda Special Programme (RSP)**

66. The Rwanda Special Programme (2023–2027) under this strategic plan main’s objective is to define Africa Food Systems Forum ‘s continuous engagement with the Government Rwanda as the host country for the Africa Food System Forum Secretariat. Delivering Food Systems Transformation results at the speed and scale in Africa to reach Agenda 2030 and the Africa 2063 depends on close partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders working towards common goals. Rwanda has been a success story in Africa on many fronts including on the agricultural- Food Systems and a strategic place to curate and emulate good practices across the continent. Africa Food System Forum’s strategic partnerships with the government of Rwanda will leverage the country successful experience, success stories, diverse capabilities, resources and knowledge and share through this continental platform.

67. Under the Rwanda Special Program (RSP), the Africa Food Systems Forum intends to collaborate closely with key relevant Rwandan Stakeholders to leverage deep Rwanda local experience, countries’ knowledge and shared experience, solutions and best practices; indigenous innovation and technologies, facilitate exchange of resources and South–South and Triangular Cooperation and Learning with other African countries and rest of the World. The key partners are the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, the Ministry of Environment, The Rwanda Development Board (RDB), The Rwanda Convention Bureau (RCB), Rwanda Cooperation Initiative (RCI), FONERWA, Kigali International Financial Centre (KIFC), Rwanda Development Bank among others. The RSP will define a set of year–round activities including the summit, curation of innovation and solutions, partnership from rich global network that are relevant to Rwanda Food System Transformation and to other African Country Food Systems Pathways. More specifically, The Africa Food System Forum and the government of Rwanda will jointly work with AGRA and other in country AGRF partners to:

- Continue shape the format of summit and year–round activities.
- Collate, document and share (marketing and commercialization) the Rwanda’s home–grown solutions on food systems to attract more investment and capacity in the country.

- Facilitate better access to finance including innovate finance for MSMEs and countries to accelerate food systems transformation.
- Leverage and share Rwanda's Development Model through RDB as well as Global Events Management through RCB to support South-South and Triangular cooperation.
- Support Rwanda in structuring each summit Legacy Program and closed deals through a joint program
- Leverage the forum bi-annual summit in Rwanda to support visitrwanda campaign

### **Innovations and scaling up for sustainable results.**

68. Under this new strategy, the secretariat will introduce innovation in terms of new policy and standards particularly on climate, gender and youth, innovative resources mobilization and scaling up, ICT for development, Internships program.

69. **Africa Food System Forum new policy and standard: Climate, Environmental and social risk assessment:** To address the impact of climate change, The forum will introduce a simple environment and climate screening tool promote and enhance the management of environmental, climate and social impacts in food systems value chains and promote good practices in environmental and social governance (ESG) to strengthen the adoption of ESG principles in all initiatives supported by the forum. The implementation of the safeguards and screening of agri-business deals through the climate platforms will ensure that comprehensive and robust environmental, climate and social screening and management systems are in place, financing and their social and environmental impacts are closely monitored, evaluated, and reported on. Simple measures to be applied are: i) verify that the deals being financed through the forum are not prohibited by law ii) verify that the deals being financed through the forum are not included in the forum 's List of exclusions of the forum partners iii) enforce compliance with national legislation related to permits and environmental licenses, use of natural resources and activities with dangerous substances iv) categorize and evaluate the environmental and social risk of the operations to be financed v) verify that the amounts requested by their clients include the implementation of the measures to minimize the environmental and social risks of their operations vi) present reports on the environmental and social management of its deals and other programs under the forum.

70. When ESMS systems are either not in place or are weak, Thematic platforms will provide technical assistance to help establish or improve such systems and, where possible, support deal owners in improving their ESMS to. During this screening phase of the agri-business deal rooms, deals will be revised according to the Environmental and Social Risk Analysis and Management System to ensure they adhere to local regulations and laws, including ESIA requirements.

71. **Gender and Youth assessment and action plan:** The Africa Food System Forum will promote youth and gender equality and women's empowerment within the secretariat, the Summit and platforms work. The gender and youth Action Plan of this strategy will support the use of youth and gender-disaggregated indicator systems, to collect and report on youth and gender-disaggregated data. The forum will support awareness-raising campaigns and set clear gender-sensitive targeting strategies. Africa Food System Forum will tackle many barriers to youth and women's access to financial services, including gendered division of labour, property rights and control over assets; lack or no awareness of financing opportunities and new instruments like green financing; lack of access to knowledge, particularly reliable climate information, and biased perception of the financial sector. Highly participatory approaches and cultural sensitivity will be promoted. Finally, the forum will support financial education through the design and promotion of training programs that contain specific strategies aimed at increasing the participation of youth and women in the forum.
72. **Innovation in resources mobilization:** Africa Food System Forum will deepen and strengthen the partnerships with its 26 partners to double the contribution for this strategy but will also explore new innovative ways to mobilize financial resources. The targeted partners are the green funds (green climate funds, adaptation fund and GEF); other MDBs such as the World Bank, BADEA, IFC, IsDB, regional banks; Private sector particularly the African Private investors and foundations, the forum host country resource mobilization (example Tanzania call for investors); in country donors partnerships particularly during the annual summit.
73. **Innovative data collection and analysis tools,** such as micro survey data, machine learning, artificial intelligence, and geospatial analysis produced by Africa Food System Forum partners for deal generation and other programs supported by the forum. Africa Food System Forum will partner with the geospatial analysis firms. By leveraging a combination of food systems data, Africa Food System Forum was able to assess the project results achieved for smallholder farmers, providing valuable data for the assessment of impact. Strategic partnerships will develop also with academia to produce relevant data and knowledge to shape the African Agenda.
74. **Internships program:** The primary objectives of the Internship Program at Secretariat are to deepen the Africa Food System Forum's efforts to advance Food System Transformation on the continent through capacity building activities of young graduates .The broad objectives of the Program are to provide the opportunity to acquire and develop the ability to work in an international environment, facilitate the connexion between African leading Universities and Academy's ; provide the Africa Food System Forum a pool of potential young candidates in the future and enhance the visibility of the forum across the continent but also support their placement within the Forum 26 partners . The format and content of the program will be further developed.

## AFSF's Institutional Resources, Results & Accountability Framework

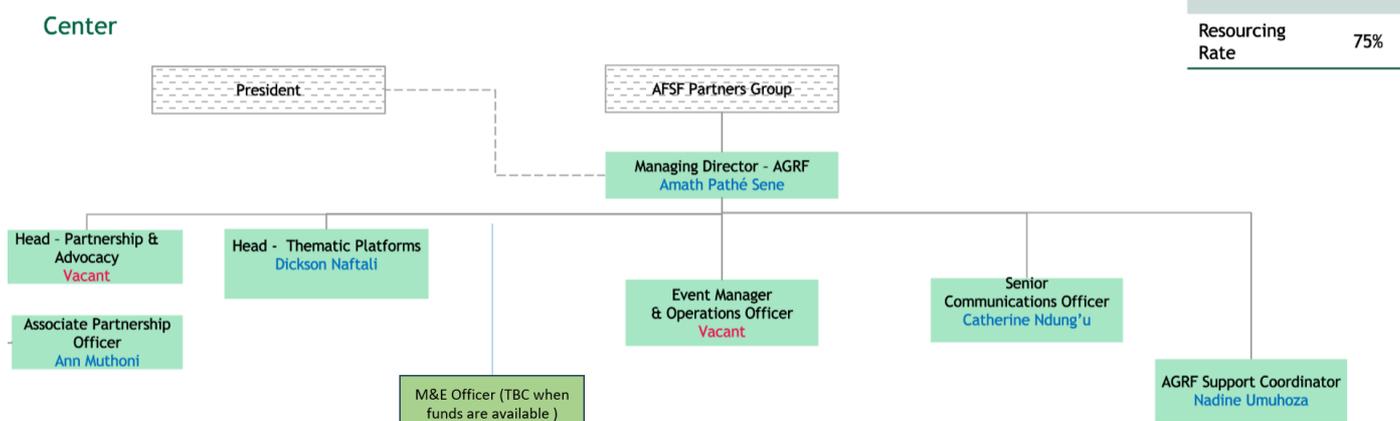
### Enabling resources

75. The estimated resources required for the execution of the Strategic Plan are presented in the table below. For the next 5 coming years, it is expected a total budget of at least **USD 50 million** to successfully implement this strategy. The secretariat is made of 4 staff excluding the staffing from Generation Africa and Agribusiness Deal Rooms. To implement this strategy the staffing should be deployed in a gradual way to reach a target of 12 staff (see organogram). Assessing actual resources and mobilization funding will be part of the annual work plan and budget, which will include contributions from partners and any other sources. The major resource groups covered include secretariat staff, consultants, forum organization and programs, year-round activities, catalytic fund. To implement this Strategic Plan, both financial and human resources are needed. A phased approach is proposed below.

	5 years Indicative Budget (USD)				
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1. Secretariat Staffing	400,000	1,500,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
2. Forum	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
3. Year-round activities	1,000,000	3,500,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000

### Proposed Organogram to deliver the Strategic Plan 2023–2027

## Africa Food Systems Forum



## Result and Accountability Framework

76. The accountability framework aims at measuring and maximizing the impact of the strategic Plan during its five years implementation period. This strategic plan will support the development of i ) at least 3 country host legacy program of which 1 from the secretariat host country and two from other countries when the forum is away ii) a pipeline of at least 100 deals per year of which at least 50% will be financed and under implementation iii) provide technical assistance through the thematic platforms and AFSF partners to 1,500 MSMEs and 2,500 Farmers Organisations (FOs) and cooperatives, as well as the transfer or licensing of 200 technologies and innovative solutions for climate resilient, low-emission agricultural development iv) reduction of the targeted countries' GHG emissions by 2 million tCO<sub>2</sub> eq over the lifetime of the strategy iv) generate a bank of innovative food system business models including on climate resistant breeds and crop varieties, sustainable land restoration techniques, solar energy to power drip irrigation and processing, packaging and storage equipment, among others, for the best selected value chains in Africa. The business plan will be scaled up through the agri-business deal rooms by the financial sector across Africa.
77. This strategy will reach at least 200,000 direct and 1,000,000 indirect beneficiaries, of which 50 % will be women, 50 % men (50 % youth and 50 % adult males. Through this strategy, The forum will facilitate the regeneration of 500,000 hectares of currently degraded land and soils, ii) safeguard food security for the 1,000,000 million people that go hungry every year; iii) support the creation of jobs to provide stable incomes for African women and youth; iv) build a global response to the migration and climate crisis.
78. Climate impacts will be monitored at the strategic level using mitigation/adaptation indicators, consistent with the Africa Food System Forum results management and performance measurement frameworks. The final impacts will be measured by an ex-post impact assessment with evidence-based proof and will depend on the portfolio of deals financed and legacy program in line with the set of eligibility criteria proposed. The M& E Officer will oversee the measuring and controlling of these impacts.
79. **Potential for scale up and replication:** By promoting the scaling up of agri-business deals, business models, good practices, country host legacy program, Africa Food System Forum will drive the transition to food system transformation and beyond. This is key to achieving a paradigm shift towards more food system bank portfolios and sectors not only in the region but throughout the developing world.
80. **Potential for knowledge sharing and learning:** Markets for food system solutions, particularly for small and medium-sized projects in African require support to develop at the pace needed to achieve national food system transformation targets. AFSF strategy is designed to foster the development of new markets for food system new deals, contribute to overcoming barriers and create a long-term enabling environment for investments in these sectors. Africa Food System Forum will facilitate through generation Africa and Agri business deal rooms the establishment of long-term robust structures for

financing identified deals when combined with the capacity-building on the development of business plans offered by the Thematic platforms to FOs, MSMEs, cooperatives and women and youth-led organizations, will help reduce the risks of both lending and borrowing in the sector, thus contributing to even more robust long-term impacts and sustainable market growth.

81. **Contribution to the continent and country regulatory framework and policies:** In addition to inadequate legal frameworks to systematically drive investment in food system projects, the element that is missing is accessible and affordable financing, which this strategy is designed to address through the identification of catalytic financing to jump start all identified deals. The strategy is well-aligned with country targets and priorities. Successful performance of this strategy and the creation of an enabling market environment will encourage national and local authorities to prioritize strong policies in these sectors and help shape the continental agenda. To address any remaining barriers, Africa Food System Forum will continue to carry out policy dialogue activities through its 26 partners and their program, the forum and leadership and other year-round activities. This strategy will support knowledge generation and data production, studies, trainings and monitoring of food system transformation impacts carried out throughout the strategy cycle by the thematic platforms.
82. **Sustainable development :** This strategy has identified and adopted the following UN SDGs and mapped each of the target sectors to them: No poverty (SDG 1); Zero hunger (SDG 2); Good health and wellbeing (SDG 3), Gender equality (SDG 5); Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6); Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7); Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8); Reduced inequalities (SDG10); Climate action (SDG 13); Life on land (SDG 15), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).
83. **Environmental Impact:** This strategy is designed to help secure multiple environmental benefits for water, air, land and nature by promoting the adoption of best adaptation and mitigation practices and technology, regenerative agriculture which will enhance the sustainable management of natural resources, protect threatened dryland biodiversity against erosion and desertification and increase the potential for carbon sequestration. These benefits could also contribute to the increased resilience of the region's ecosystems and human livelihoods to climate change and variability. Through its platforms composed by the 26 partners, this strategy intends to reduce the use of energy from biomass, including firewood and agricultural residues, imported diesel fuel and charcoal, which are the main sources of electricity while promoting renewable energy as source of energy for infrastructure and powering agricultural value chains and promotion of regenerative agriculture and agroforestry.
84. **Social co-benefits including health impacts:** The activities proposed under strategy will generate multiple job opportunities particularly for African youth and women, promote inclusion and support coherent investment through FOs, cooperatives, MSMEs and government programs. By promoting local climate resilient food systems solutions, this strategy will contribute to cost-saving health benefits thanks to cleaner air for local

communities and access to clean energy, water, and food, thus reducing food insecurity. A gender and youth action plan will support women's and youth's participation in the forum conversation, decision-making, increase their access to financing and assets and improve their livelihoods.

85. **Economic Impact:** The economic benefits of this strategy are linked to its high potential to reduce poverty through increased productivity of key crops and livestock production along the value chains, as well as income generation activities (IGA) through jobs creation, for youth and women along the food system value chain. By promoting IGA and opportunities for livelihood improvement through the deal rooms, it is expected a stable inflow of revenues from natural products and services is important in terms of exit strategies that contribute to the sustainability of the forum over time.
86. **Gender-sensitive development impacts:** In Africa, women play a central role in feeding their families and ensuring other basic needs (water, fuel for firewood, etc.). This responsibility has become harder to assume because of declining crop yields due to climate change (primarily higher temperatures and unpredictable rainfall patterns). The strategy will increase opportunities for livelihood improvement and provide concrete benefits to all stakeholder along food value chains including smallholder farmers and pastoralists, both men and women. Through its focus on gender mainstreaming and women's economic empowerment, this strategy will support the reduction of entrenched gender inequalities in rights to land resources and access to technology and information and financing that hamper women's capacity to fully engage on food system value chains.
87. The strategy has set targets: 35% % of investments from partners are to be granted to women-led MSMEs, cooperatives and FOs and least 50 % will be dedicated to Men of which 50% will be youth-led MSMEs, cooperatives and FOs in which young women participate. Specific actions will be developed to strengthen the technical and managerial capacities of women aimed at providing them with appropriate tools for identifying and developing bankable agribusiness deals and improving their level of financial education. A gender-disaggregated data will be assessed against the appropriate indicator to measure women's enhanced access to financing, participation to the forum and educations. This strategy intends to close the gender gap, as women represent 60 to 70% of the work force and do not have access to productive assets, finance and knowledge.

## Strategic Plan Result & Accountability Management Framework

<b>SDGs (Agenda 2030)</b>	No poverty (SDG 1); Zero hunger (SDG 2); Good health and wellbeing (SDG 3), Gender equality (SDG 5); Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6); Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7); Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8); Reduced inequalities (SDG10); Climate action (SDG 13); Life on land (SDG 15), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).		
<b>Africa Food System Strategic Objective (2023–2027)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Agenda setting</b> – identifying and driving continent- and country-wide top-level priorities and commitments to agricultural growth</li> <li>2. <b>Policy and advocacy</b> – promoting policy changes in line with the growth priorities identified.</li> <li>3. <b>Knowledge sharing and learning</b> – spreading strategies, methods, and insights about what works and what does not</li> <li>4. <b>Investment facilitation and finance</b> – unlocking new investment and business pipelines for smallholder farmers and SMEs</li> <li>5. <b>Partnership development and coordination</b> – forging new working relationships and advance existing ones and helping drive efficient allocation of institutional resources.</li> <li>6. <b>Reporting and accountability</b> – sharing the results of political, policy, and financing commitments made in AGRF and progress against the Malabo Declaration, Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and Sustainable Development Goals</li> </ol>		
<b>Goal</b>	Scale up the continent’s efforts to build <b>healthier, more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable food systems that have the power to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in Africa by 2030.</b>		
<b>Objective</b>	Be the partner of choice for the implementation of comprehensive <b>Africa Comprehensive Development Programme (CAADP)</b> , Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the <b>Paris Climate Agreement<sup>3</sup></b> , thus helping to maximize the <b>impact of African Union (AU)’s programs and policies on food systems transformation</b>		
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
<b>Agenda Setting and advocacy</b>	Number of Continental, regional and countries agenda influenced and shaped through the Africa Food System between 2023–2027	AU reports RECs reports. Country reports	Food System Transformation is high on the continent and countries agenda
<b>Evidence-based Policy Reform</b>	Number of policy reforms identified,	AU reports RECs reports. Country reports	Political stability, and willingness from AU, RECs and countries to undertake the policy reforms to accelerate food system transformation.

<sup>3</sup> Paris Climate Agreement : Signed in 2015 with an overarching goal to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and pursue efforts “to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

	advocated for and undertaken through Forum's facilitation between 2023-2027	AFSF Annual Performance Reports	
<b>Investment Facilitation &amp; Finance</b>	Total number of deals and investments facilitated and financing volume  Number of MSMEs and government benefited	AU reports RECs reports Country reports The Forum Annual Performance Reports	The financial market is functional and de-risked and no and financial economic crisis
<b>Knowledge Sharing &amp; Learning</b>	Number of knowledge products (reports, publications, blogs, papers...) developed launched and disseminated through Forum and partners,  Number of learning events facilitated	AU reports RECs reports. Country reports The Forum Annual Performance Reports	Countries are committed to host AGRF and partners provided resources, technical partners are willing to collaborate
<b>Partnership Development &amp; Coordination</b>	Number of new partnerships developed and contributions received  Number of initiatives coordinated	AU reports RECs reports. Country reports The forum Annual Performance Reports	AGRF partners and new partners including private sector , countries and AU are willing to partner with the Africa Food System Forum
<b>Reporting and monitoring</b>	Annual, mid-term and final reports produced	The Forum Annual Performance Reports	The Secretariat is staffed and M&E unit is functioning

#### 4. Project/programme performance indicators

Expected Results	Indicators	Means of verification	Target		Assumptions
			Mid Term	Final	
<b>Engagement and alignment with AFSF partners and countries strengthened</b>	Number of MoU signed with partners and resources for the forum mobilized through a Secretariat and AGRA	Forum Annual Performance Reports AGRA annual reports	26 partners renewed.	26 partners renewed.	Assuming interest of 26 Africa Food System Forum partners and new partners in financing the forum.
	A fully functional Secretariat delivering the strategic plan		at least 10 new signed	at least 15 new signed	
<b>AFSF Forum (event and program) enhanced to deliver impact beyond the forum</b>	Number of participants in Africa Food System Forum event disaggregated by heads of State, Ministers, Women, Youth	Africa Food System Forum summit report & thematic platforms progress reports	At least 10 head of state per forum,	At least 15 head of state per forum,	Assuming interest of the 26 Africa Food System Forum partners and new partners in financing the forum.
	Farmer Organizations, Private sector, Other prominent Leaders		At least 3 sectors ministries on top of the ministry of agriculture	At least 3 sectors ministries on top of the ministry of agriculture	
	Number of		At least central banks, new investors (pensions, insurance, banks...)	At least central banks, new investors (pensions, insurance, bonds, banks)	

	external events Africa Food System Forum participates in (e.g., COP26, UN Food Systems Summit etc.)		At least 4 important external forum per year	At least 6 important external forum per year	
<b>AFSF Thematic Platforms are functional and provide technical assistance</b>	<p>Number of deals supported and closed</p> <p>Number of host country programs supported.</p> <p>Number of knowledge products and business models supported.</p> <p>Number of policy reforms influenced.</p> <p>Number of continental agenda supported</p>	Africa Food System Forum summit report & thematic platforms progress reports	<p>At least 25 deals closed per year</p> <p>At least 50 business models supported of which 25 closed.</p> <p>At least 2-3 policy reforms</p> <p>At least 1-2 continental agenda</p>	<p>At least 50 deals closed per year</p> <p>At least 50 business models supported of which 25 closed.</p> <p>At least 2-3 policy reforms</p> <p>At least 1-2 continental agenda</p>	Assuming interest of the 26 AFSF partners and new partners in financing the thematic platforms
<b>Investment facilitation and finance:</b>	Number of SMEs with deals closed and financed through the following AFSF engagement ( deal rooms and other platforms )	Africa Food System Forum summit report & thematic platforms progress reports	<p>At least 25 deals closed and financed per year.</p> <p>At least 10-20 million USD</p>	<p>At least 50 deals closed and financed per year.</p> <p>At least 50 million USD investment facilitated</p>	Assuming participation and interest of MSMEs and investors in the forum

	<p>Total volume of investment (disaggregated per ticket size)</p> <p>Technical support and capacities built for MSMEs, and pipeline of bankable projects</p> <p>Number of legacy Program financed</p>		<p>investment facilitated</p> <p>At least 300 MSMEs receiving TA</p> <p>At least 2 legacy program supported</p>	<p>At least 500 MSMEs receiving TA</p> <p>At least 3 legacy program supported</p>	
<b>Resource mobilized to implement the strategic plan</b>	Total budget mobilized for the 5 years cycle from the 26 partners and new partners	Africa Food System Forum summit report & partners reports	At least 30 million USD	At least 50 million USD	Assuming participation and interest of the 26 partners and new partners in the forum
<b>Communication, advocacy, and greater outreach</b>	Number of audiences reached, download and targets	Africa Food System Forum summit report	1,000,000 people	5,000,000 people	The secretariat is staffed and functional

# 7 Enabling resources and accountability framework

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

### 88. **Reporting from Africa Food System Forum Secretariat to Africa Food System Forum**

**Partners:** Progress in the implementation of all the work plan activities will be monitored, evaluated, and reported on a regular basis by the Africa Food System Forum Secretariat. A digital platform will be set up to track all results and progress under each priority areas of interventions. A mid-term review of the strategy will be carried out in 2025. This process will help promote accountability to Africa Food System Forum partners, the host country, clients, development partners, and donors themselves, among others. A M&E consultant will be hired to support this work until the position is fully staffed with the contribution of partners.

89. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation arrangements will comply with Africa Food System Forum and AGRA policies, as well as the MoU signed by Africa Food System Forum and all partners. Africa Food System Forum through its secretariat will provide annual progress reports on the status strategy implementation throughout the relevant reporting period, based on the logical framework and reporting. The secretariat will consolidate above described annual, mid-term and final reports and send them to AGRA within additional thirty (30) days after 31 December. AGRA will transmit the document no longer that 28 February to all donors. The Secretariat will deliver numbers in a log frame format: a) annually within sixty (60) calendar days after the end of each year of the strategy implementation; b) at mid-term within thirty (30) months from the effective date of the strategy approval.

90. **Monitoring and reporting:** The Forum will apply the standard procedures established by Africa Food System Forum and AGRA for monitoring and evaluating all contributions, including in country contributions. The Secretariat will compile and maintain all information, indicators, and parameters necessary for the preparation of strategy reports, including annual reports, midterm review and final evaluation to be submitted to AGRA and AGRA to forum's partners. Gender and youth action plans approved by the AGRF partners will be monitored against the set indicators. The monitoring process intends to follow up on the execution of the strategy to identify the intermediate milestones achieved in each phase and evaluate its outcomes and fulfilment of proposed targets.

91. **ESG reporting** for all approved deals, the secretariat through the agribusiness deal rooms will receive an annual report on the ESG performance of the targeted deals. The Agri business dela rooms teams will take inputs from relevant teams and compile the annual report for each applicable reporting period. Annual climate impact reporting will be performed by all platforms supported by the Climate and Resilience platforms and the M&E specialist.

92. **GHG reporting and carbon market:** Africa Food System Forum will work with relevant partners and AGRA on the reporting on GHG emissions in line with the methodology in the FAO EXCAT. The estimated GHG reduced or avoided could be trade in carbon markets.

93. **Impact assessments:** The Secretariat will take an ex-ante/ex-post approach to assess the contribution of the Forum activities to the paradigm shift of food system transformation. It will entail the development of a questionnaire to define the outcome variables before this new strategy starts. A baseline will be established at the beginning of the implementation of the strategy and the same questionnaire will be submitted upon completion of the 5 years strategy.

### Risk factors and mitigations measures

94. The strategy may face risks in several categories: Political/governance, macroeconomic, implementation, financial, technical, environmental, and social. The levels of these risks are considered low medium and high and expected to be mitigated by Africa Food System Forum and partners' operational tools and control mechanisms. The forum will regularly evaluate the overall potential risks related to the implementation of the forum and provide recommendations for procedures to mitigate and address the risks. With regard to COVID 19, Africa Food System Forum has prepared a comprehensive COVID-19 risks management approach, which includes the setup of hybrid and virtual forum to support countries in addressing the impact of COVID-19; guidelines for remote and hybrid.

Risks	Risk rating	Mitigation measures
Political/governance	Low to Medium	Every two-year Rwanda hosts the forum and the secretariat is located in Kigali. The country is one of the most stable countries in Africa. During the years, the forum is away in another country, the secretariat will ensure that the selected country to host the stable is politically stable
Macroeconomic	Medium	Promote fiscal discipline and respect of engagement from the AGRF partners
Sector strategies and policies		Provide support for country policy formulation and contribute to policy dialogue through the thematic platforms and AFSF partners.
Regulatory & Institutional capacity risks	Medium	changes in regulations or legislation, could affect the forum. Provide support to the legal frameworks and internal policies to ensure that the activities they oversee are implemented within the forum timeline while supporting countries to enhance their regulatory frameworks. Provide comprehensive capacity building through the thematic platforms
AFSF priority intervention areas	Low to Medium	Closely monitor the Forum progress; provide support in Forum management, knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation
Fiduciary – financial management/procurement	Medium	Provide support and closely monitor fiduciary aspects
Fiduciary – procurement	Medium	Provide support and closely monitor procurement. Management
Environment and climate	High	Mainstream resilience into all Thematic Platforms activities and engage with other partners in dialogue with government in support of Climate Resilient and sustainable Food Systems Transformation
Social	High	Create remunerative jobs for youth and women to stem rural-urban, migration and job unemployment



**STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2027)**

**AGRF PARTNERS**



**AGRF Africa Food Systems Forum**

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