



**African Forum for
Agricultural and
Advisory Services**

Strengthening capacity of
national agricultural extension
and advisory services systems



AFAAS REFRESHED STRATEGY

2018 - 2027

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAS	Agricultural Advisory Services
AEAS	Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
AfDB	African Development Bank
AUC	African Union Commission
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme
CF	Country Fora
ED	Executive Director
EU	European Union
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
GA	General Assembly
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
ICT	Information and communication technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KM	Knowledge management
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MEL	Monitoring evaluation and learning
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPCA	NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
S3A	The Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa
S4AC	Science for Agriculture Consortium
SDG	The sustainable development goals
SSANAAS	Sub-Saharan Africa Network on Agricultural Advisory Services
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
ToC	Theory of Change
TWGs	Thematic Working Groups

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and context

The African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) is the continental African body that brings all agricultural extension and advisory services (AEAS), stakeholders, and state and non-state actors under one umbrella. It embraces both public and private actors who have a stake in AEAS along the agricultural value chain - not just the providers of AEAS. AFAAS developed its first Strategy and Operational Plan (combined in one document referred to as the Strategic Plan) for the period 2011-2017, whose implementation was concluded. This is AFAAS' second Strategy (hereafter referred to as the new Strategy) developed for the ten-year period from 2018-2027. Its preparation was informed by internal consultations within the AFAAS Secretariat and analysis of the results of a survey that was sent through AFAAS networks and partners. There were 107 respondents (24% female) from 28 countries (24 from Africa). The majority of the respondents (81%) were operating at the national level and embraced diverse domains of work that included public and private sector, AEAS providers, agricultural support services, non-government organizations (NGO), national agricultural research, higher education, farmers' organizations, and civil society.

1.2 Overview of AFAAS

1.2.1 Historical origin of AFAAS

AFAAS has its origins in the First Regional Networking Symposium on Innovations in the Agricultural Advisory Services (AAS) held in Kampala, Uganda, 11-14th October 2004. During this symposium, stakeholders agreed to form the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) Network for Agricultural Advisory Services (SSANAAS). The main objective of the SSANAAS was to facilitate information sharing and exchange of experiences on approaches and best practices of agricultural advisory service providers in Africa, mainly sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It was envisaged that SSANAAS would enable AAS to become strategic components of new rural development institutional frameworks – notably by a Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Hence SSANAAS was established with the explicit aim of providing a voice for AAS in the continental agricultural development agenda. A second symposium was held from 24th to 27th September 2006 in Kampala. At this symposium, it was decided that the network should go beyond the SSA and embrace the whole of Africa. This necessitated the change of the name to the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services.

AFAAS adopted an institutional structure with membership open to both the individual and institutional stakeholders engaged in or having a stake in agricultural advisory services on the continent. The members are organized within the 'Country Fora (CF)'- at the national level. Membership to the CF is predominantly through the application, followed by subscription on acceptance. The apex governing body is the General Assembly (GA). The GA is made of the CF representatives and key AFAAS stakeholders along the agri-food systems value chains, including the ministries of agriculture, national agricultural research organizations and the private sector. The governance is implemented by a Board, and the management of the organization is undertaken on behalf of the Board by the Secretariat headed by an Executive Director (ED).

1.2.2 Strategic orientation of AFAAS

These mission and objectives statements were agreed up on by the AFAAS general assembly (GA) to define the strategic orientation of AFAAS as an institution and are listed in Textboxes 1 and 2 below.

¹ Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (AEAS) refers to Agricultural Advisory Services (AAS) in earlier AFAAS documents. The two terms are used inter-changeably in the document depending on the context of the reference being made.

Textbox 1: Older version of the mission and objective statements

Mission: “To promote lesson learning and add value to initiatives in agricultural advisory services through sharing of information and increased professional interaction” Vision:

“Agricultural Advisory Services that effectively and efficiently contribute to sustained productivity, profitability and growth of African agriculture for poverty reduction”

Development goal: “Enhanced utilization of improved knowledge and technologies by agricultural value chain actors for improving productivity oriented towards individual and national objectives”

Textbox 2: New version of the mission and objective statements

Purpose: “Agricultural Extension and Advisory services have sufficient capacity to effectively support value chain actors towards increasing agricultural productivity and food security in a sustainable manner”

Specific objective: “To ensure availability and accessibility of knowledge and technologies on agricultural extension and advisory services in Africa and worldwide”

1.2.3 Mission and objective statements

During the meeting in Kampala, GA and stakeholders discussed and amended both the vision and mission with a number of suggestions. The inputs were synthesized by the Secretariat, which came up with the following mission and objective statements:

Vision: “Agricultural extension and advisory services that effectively and efficiently contribute to sustained productivity, profitability and inclusive growth of agriculture for food, nutrition and income security, job and wealth creation in Africa.”

Mission: “To promote professionalization and participatory lesson learning, strengthen the capacities, enhance visibility and influence, facilitate and enhance effective and continuous knowledge generation and information exchange, and add value to initiatives in agricultural extension and advisory services through advocacy, skilling, sharing of experiences and information, and increased professional interaction.”

Development goal: “Enhanced utilization of improved knowledge, skills and technologies by agricultural value chain actors to catalyze sustainable, inclusive agricultural development and create prosperity for Africa”.

Purpose: “Agricultural extension and advisory services have the combination of critical broad-spectrum scientific, technical and professional profiles and skills, and sufficient capacity to effectively and efficiently support agricultural value chain actors in an inclusive and sustainable manner.”

Specific objective: “To ensure availability and accessibility of knowledge and technologies on agricultural extension and advisory services in Africa and worldwide.”

Specific objective: “To facilitate professional interaction, enhance availability and last-mile accessibility of knowledge and technologies on agricultural extension and advisory services, and develop the technical, organizational, and management skills and practices of the AEAS providers and agricultural value chain actors to improve food productivity, profitability and sustainability of agricultural systems, livelihoods and citizen wellbeing”.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

2.1 Performance Analysis of Strategic Plan (2010-2017)

The performance analysis of the previous strategy for the period 2010-2017 formed the benchmark for the development of the current strategy (2018-2027). The Analysis revealed that;

a) Resource mobilisation

The Strategic Plan (2010 – 2017) was implemented using donor funds from diverse sources. The major sources of funding agencies were the European Union (EU) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The EU funds were channelled to AFAAS through a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) that was managed by the World Bank.

b) Key achievements

Implementation of the AFAAS strategy (2010-2017) was supported by the EU and IFAD and had led to the following achievements:

- i) AFAAS attained the political mandate:** to provide leadership in guiding AEAS aspects in the continental agendas. This recognition is enshrined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the AFAAS and the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2014. The obligations of AFAAS under the MoU are mainly focused on guiding AEAS.
- ii) AEAS institutional structures:** AFAAS established the foundation for the continental AEAS institutional architecture to support networking and coordination of the AEAS programs. The building blocks for this architecture are Country Fora.
- iii) The functional management structures and systems:** AFAAS developed, sustained and consolidated the institutional governance structures and management systems with the the General Assembly as the supreme governing body and day-to-day governance undertaken by the Board and supported by other functional units.
- iv) The Africa-wide Extension Weeks (AAEW):** AFAAS held three Africa-wide AAEW, each with over 400 participants from within and outside Africa, to deliberate on the AEAS.
- v) Capacity building of CF:** Strengthening country-level capacities to contribute to national CAADP roundtable and post-compact implementation through the country fora (CF).
- vi) Proof of concept for the CF:** AFAAS has developed a proof of concept providing the CF as a viable institutional arrangement for mobilizing resources locally (including from national governments) and implementing AEAS networking, coordination and innovation activities.
- vi) Creation of regional AEAS bodies:** AFAAS support the establishment of two sub-regional AEAS bodies, namely the West and Central Africa Network Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (RESCAR-AOC) and Southern Africa Regional Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (SARFAAS).
- vii) Institutionalization of the bi-annual week:** Institutionalizing the holding of biennial Africa-wide Agricultural Extension Week as mechanisms for enabling physical interactions between AEAS stakeholders from the continent and outside for purposes of knowledge exchange and learning and fostering the AEAS innovation.
- viii) Development of the Knowledge Management (KM) Strategy:** Developing and initiating

implementation of a KM Strategy that also provides systematic approaches for the governance of AFAAS as the AEAS knowledge management network, generation of content, engagement with internal and external audiences, developing of physical and virtual tools and platforms, and fostering sustainability of other KM activities;

- ix) Development of the Gender and Youth Strategy:** Developing AFAAS gender and youth draft strategies, guidelines for the CF establishment and strengthening, CAADP and other core documents.
- x) Creation of inter-agency linkages:** AFAAS has created strong functional inter-institutional linkages with regional and continental AEAS networks, including the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS). GFRAS is the body that brings continental and regional AEAS bodies under one umbrella. Through GFRAS, the foundation has been set for the South-South and South-North cooperation in AEAS across Africa.
- xi) Supporting AEAS linkages and partnerships:** Establishing linkages and partnerships with 49 organizations and formalized relationships through MoUs and/ or Letters of Agreement with 29 of these organizations.

2.2 Performance of the Strategic Plan by stakeholders

The higher performance rating in the areas for CAADP engagement and communication and knowledge management in part reflected the fact that these are areas where there are “low-hanging fruits” in terms of engagement compared to the other areas - particularly the CF development. The relatively low performance in the area of partnership development can be attributed to the reality on the ground that partnerships were formed but not consummated in tangible activities.

2.3 Key lessons learnt from implementing the Strategy

The key lessons from implementing the AFAAS Strategy (2010-2017) include the following:

- i) The need for a flexible organizational structure:** Given that AFAAS cannot guarantee that all the technical positions at the Secretariat can be filled - or even required at a point in time - it has to have a flexible and dynamic staffing structure that can be easily adjusted for the tasks feasible with the available resources.
- ii) Need for systematic work plans:** The way to manage emerging uncertainties, including the funding deficiency in one program or unit being implemented. In this case, the available funds in another unit or program could be used to finance some activities and be re-imbursed later. However, this requires reverting to the de-facto annual rolling work-planning approach.
- iii) Network members can augment Secretariat capacity:** As a forum owned by members, co-opting members to undertake forum-wide tasks on an ad hoc basis can make up for shortfalls in Secretariat and CF capacities.
- iv) Establishing the CF takes more time than AFAAS previously anticipated:** This echoes a salient lesson from the external evaluation of the IFAD-funded project on: “Strengthening Country-Level Agricultural Advisory Services”.
- v) Champions and volunteers are key to success in establishing the CF:** Where AFAAS has attained relatively quick success in establishing CF, there has invariably been a champion involved.
- vi) Demonstration of the impact of AFAAS interventions is achieved relatively faster:**

through engaging in policy processes and communication and information management.

- vii) The AEAS information exchange and experience sharing does not happen in the abstract:** As such, tailoring systems that enable this to happen and building the associated culture requires that it is proactively linked to the AEAS activities. The approach shall generate tangible benefits and impact from the AEAS information and experience shared - such as technology outreach activities, capacity building, innovation etc.
- viii) Engaging in national policy processes is an effective entry point for establishing CF:** The CFs that got the fastest traction and buy-in by national governments were ones where the focus of champions was on influencing national AEAS policies.
- ix) Getting the value out of partnerships:** requires capacity for owning a stake in partnership activities - not just being a conduit for the AEAS partners to channel resources for pursuing their agendas.
- xi) Partnerships AEAS projects are effective entry points:** for establishing and strengthening the CF through partnerships. AFAAS can be able to participate in activities that catalyze the pursuit of its strategic objectives without a “mission creep”.
- xii) Unconditional grants and innovation grants:** to members, for activities directly linked to AFAAS deliverables are effective mechanisms for enabling them to contribute to the outputs of AFAAS and the CF while at the same time building their capacities.

3. DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND AGENDA FOR 2023 - 2027

3.1 Attainment of agricultural development targets

The global and African development context is set by the challenges facing agricultural development as well as the events that have taken place that are driving the development agendas. In 2003, the African Heads of State committed their governments to adopt policies, increase investments in agriculture and build robust functional partnerships for the goals of accelerating economic growth, reducing poverty and increasing food and nutrition security through agriculture using the CAADP as the framework. Although African agriculture has experienced the longest period of sustained growth over the past fifteen years, the growth rate falls short of the 6% target that was considered necessary for attaining the CAADP goals.

3.2 Making agriculture an option for economic diversification

Africa’s population is relentlessly increasing and is estimated to reach two billion by 2050, and agricultural productivity has to sustainably keep pace with the demands on agricultural products that will accompany this growth. Already agricultural trade deficits are widening, and about one-third of all calories consumed in Africa are imported, resulting in a negative net agricultural trade balance of USD 35 billion in 2015.

Countries that are heavily reliant on minerals and oil for their foreign exchange earnings are also pushing for economic diversification in response to the price volatility of natural resources. Agriculture is a strong option and viable for diversification as it exhibits lower price volatility and has substantial untapped potential in most of the affected countries. All these factors highlight the heightened urgency to accelerate agricultural productivity and value addition.

3.3 The need to transform agriculture

Hitherto, the growth in agricultural production has largely been a result of expanded areas under

² African Development Bank (2015), Feeding Africa: An Action Plan for African Agricultural Transformation Report of Work stream Sessions

agriculture, often encroaching on marginal lands and even forests – often leading to ecosystem degradation. Furthermore, farming systems are too fragmented to demonstrate meaningful economies of scale. The demand for food, feed, fuel and fibre is continuously increasing due to fast-growing populations. The dietary needs are changing as incomes rise, food markets become globalized, and urbanization accelerates. All these lead to requirements for higher standards of production and post-harvest conditions taking into consideration safety and nutrition.

On top of these factors are the uncertain production conditions imposed by climate change. The overall response to all these factors has to be the transformation of agriculture. The principal driver of the transformation is science, technology and innovation (STI) and specifically the development, wide-scale adoption and effective application of improved technical inputs, production processes and knowledge in all segments of commodity value chains. The core challenge, therefore, is how to ensure that frontline actors in agricultural innovation - the rural farmers, the actors in the value chains that support them, and the advisory service providers on whom they all depend - are effectively integrated into the STI processes.

3.4 Strengthening Last Mile Advisory and Extension Services (AEAS) delivery

In the pursuit of agricultural development targets through increasing the productivity of crops and livestock, agricultural transformation requires an environment that enables and catalyzes the development of novel interventions. The critical ones include favourable policies and/ or regulatory instruments and frameworks, innovative institutions and organizations, and effective markets. All these are currently constraining factors for agricultural development.

Access to AEAS services is critical to removing these constraints, but the service delivery capacities and mechanisms - especially in communities where knowledge-enhancing services - are very weak. With particular regard to AEAS, a joint study by AFAAS and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) identified many factors hampering AEAS delivery in Africa. The ratio of AEAS extension agents to farmers varies widely among countries. For example, the reported ratios in Ethiopia are 1:476, South Africa is 1:487, DRC is 1:535, Kenya is 1:949, Ghana is 1:1500, Uganda is 1:2500, and Nigeria is 1:33334. The reach of the AEAS is also low - approximately only 30% of the farming population is reached.

The results confirm that the AEAS delivery systems and methods in many African countries are ineffective in responding to the demands and technological challenges of various types of clients and in reaching the rural poor. Yet only 5-7% of the women farmers are reported to be receiving AEAS, and even then, the services are rarely relevant to their needs. There is also a growing tendency for elite capture of the services. In Swaziland and DRC, for instance, the state extension services have been reported to be skewed towards large cash crop farmers. In Uganda, there was a low participation rate of vulnerable households, essentially those headed by women, youths and disabled persons. In Cameroon, the AEAS services are channelled via commercial farmer organizations, with less engagement of smallholders and women farmers.

The inadequate performance of the AEAS in Africa is partly attributed to poor governance and a lack of incentives for extension agents. Besides, the knowledge and technical skills of the agents are preconditions for the effectiveness of extension services. Most agents have limited knowledge and skills to work in the complex and rapidly changing agricultural development paradigms. Their knowledge is often deficient in areas needed for value chain and innovation systems development. These areas are dynamic and require that the providers be continuously re-tooled and have access to the new AEAS and knowledge management (KM) systems.

³FARA and AFAAS (2014): a critical review and analysis of agricultural extension in Africa within a science and innovation system context. FARA Secretariat, Accra & AFAAS Secretariat, Kampala.

⁴Davis, K, B. Swanson, D. Amudavi, D. A. Mekonnen, A. Flohrs, J. Riese, C. Lamb, & E. Zerfu. (2010). In-depth assessment of the public agricultural extension system of Ethiopia and recommendations for improvement. IFPRI Discussion Paper 1041. Washington, DC: IFPRI.

Under the current Strategy (2018-2027), AFAAS is supporting the advancement of the AEAS as one of the Pillars of the strategy. The strategic objective is to leverage partnerships with national fora and framework projects for the advancement and effective delivery of the AEAS in Africa. To fast-track delivery of the AEAS within the national fora and agricultural networks across Africa, AFAAS is part of the consortium under GFRAS implementing the Last Mile program. The Last Mile program, “Delivering Extension Services to the Last-Mile: Improving Smallholders’ Access to Innovation and Pluralistic, demand-driven extension Services,” is a 5-year program expected to reach about 14,000 – 16,000 direct beneficiaries, including the extension service providers. This is to be achieved through capacity-building plans to develop a range of skills across the value chains from technical to social, communication and business skills with two specific objectives, namely;

- Mobilise/organise and build the technical/human capacity of public/private AEAS service providers to provide effective, innovative services, with links to research services for smallholder farmers; and
- Generate and contribute knowledge to promote the scaling-up of climate-resilient good practices towards improving AEAS last-mile linkages.

The last Mile Delivery of Extension Services has been a key stated terminal output of AFAAS interventions. This was designed to spur livelihood transformations to the most remote, least accessible and many times most resource, technical knowledge, input market and improved technology exposure disadvantaged farmers. The Last Mile Programme seeks to contribute to the achievement of “improved incomes, sustained market linkages and reduction of climate vulnerability for the smallholder farmers (women, men and youth) based on Agricultural Innovation Platforms (AIPs) that bring together synergies from youth, men and women farmers, extension agents, local leaders, markets, governments agriculture departments, digitally-based communication and Farmer Field Schools (FFS) participatory farmer managed on-farm technology demonstrations.

3.5 Gender Transformative Approaches, Inclusivity, Youth demographics, Consequences and Engagement

- a) **Gender Transformative Approaches:** At a minimum, gender-transformative approaches should avoid entrenching or exacerbating existing gender inequalities. As far as possible, this strategy’s gender approaches aim to challenge those taken-for-granted assumptions that perpetuate existing inequalities between and among women and men and take steps to promote gender justice and equality. This strategy will promote the equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, visibility, empowerment, and participation of women and men; taking into account the different roles, responsibilities, interests, and needs of different genders and how these are shaped by and interact with other systems of power and identities (e.g., age, ethnicity and disability).
- a) **Inclusivity:** The strategy will ensure consideration of age, gender and diversity including the commitment to being accountable to affected people while ensuring that all people of concern have equitable and non-discriminatory access to agricultural extension and climate response interventions in addition to recognizing that the strategy will seek to amplify local and marginalized voices and to ensure AFAAS’s decisions and actions are not only shaped by their concerns and perspectives but also enable them to transform their lives.
- a) **Youth demographics:** Many youths enter the job market every year. In Africa, over 11 million youths will enter the labour market annually for the next decade . But only 25% of youth expect to find jobs. Lack of employment opportunities undermines social cohesion and political stability with outcomes beyond Africa in the form of migration in search of job opportunities. In the immediate term, the opportunities for jobs for the youth

are in agriculture - not only in production but also in the form of services to the value chains and agribusiness. This calls for urgent adjustments in the agricultural knowledge systems to embrace the needs of the youth in these areas.

- a) **Policy engagement:** The Strategy will guide meaningful engagement of relevant legal and policy frameworks/ institutions, develop guidance and catalyze relevant dialogues including conducting research and evidence-based advocacy in the context of agricultural extension and climate change.

3.6 Agricultural Technology Innovation, Climate Change Adaptations, Digitalisation and Agri-food Systems

- a) **Agricultural Technology Innovation:** Access to agriculture extension services/ advisory services in Africa is still low. National Governments are currently transforming the extension service for purposes of increasing access. The extension service has been effective in providing demonstration materials to scale up agriculture production. There is however, need to increase the integration of Climate Smart Agricultural (CSA) extension information to scale up impact on productivity and resilience of agricultural systems in order to increase profitability of farming enterprises. This will require retooling extension agencies/ personnel, development of appropriate Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials extension/ advisory tools. Research and innovations are still weak in the agricultural extension and advisory sector. This has implications on evidence based decision-making, policy and advocacy. Climate Smart Agriculture/ Agro-ecology knowledge is still scanty, but also limited to a few stakeholders, therefore knowledge generation and dissemination need will be enhanced by this strategy's second phase (2023-2027).
- b) **Climate Change Adaptation:** Within the AFAAS networks, the national agricultural research institutions, AEAS service providers, the private sector, and farmers play a central role in promoting sustainable agri-food systems in Africa in addition to enhancing efficient use of natural resources and climate change mitigation through capacity building, training and AEAS programs. To respond to the challenges of climate change, this strategy will embed adaptation priority sectors/ area. This will ensure that adaptation goes further to reach the Last Mile.
- c) **Digitalisation:** With in this strategy, digitalisation will offer a platform in addressing the challenges of resilience, productivity and sustainability facing agriculture in Africa in addition to fostering inclusion. AFAAS will do this through three main pathways namely, Smart tools, Information and Communication technology and Knowledge management.
- d) **Agri-food Systems and Pluralistic Extension**
- i. The African agri-food systems, including the AEAS delivery, suffers from a huge investment gap in terms of technical manpower, funding, infrastructure and supportive policies coupled with the informal planning and delivery of food production and extension programs. Other constraints and institutional bottlenecks include limited coverage of the AEAS programs, weak research-extension-farmer linkages, and low adoption of ICT and e-training platforms for the RAS and extension service providers. In response, more drastic solutions and intervention actions with people-centred and demand-driven approaches are needed to address the challenges at all nodes of the agri-food value chains and within the functional pluralistic extension systems.
 - ii. The context of AFAAS agri-food systems and pluralistic extension is grounded on the growing efforts for last-mile delivery of the AEAS at the national and regional levels across Africa. The AEAS delivery systems via AFAAS networks of national fora and farmer field schools across Africa are pilot models that have the potential to create backward and forward linkages between researchers, RAS and private extension agents, and farmer groups.

⁵ Filmer D and L. Fox (2014), Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa, Africa Development Series, World Bank Washington, DC, 251pp

⁶ Adaptation brings the idea of change in response to environmental change

- iii. In its response through the current strategy at a continental level, AFAAS continues to operate at country and regional levels through established networks of Country Fora and Regional Fora, respectively.

4. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

4.1 Alignment and Relevance of AFAAS with National, Regional and International Development Agenda

4.1.1 Stakeholder perception of AFAAS

Based on the recent reviews of the first half of the AFAAS strategy (2018-2022), all stakeholders overwhelmingly consider that AFAAS is still relevant. From the stakeholder consultations, the ten most important factors for the continued relevance were, in order of priority:

- Meaningful partnerships and collaboration with key strategic partners. Which continued to generate credible evidence for policy advocacy;
- Innovations in extension services and Private sector involvement in Agriculture;
- Invested in strengthening institutional capacities and systems of partner organizations to adequately expand their networking and advocacy;
- Information sharing and professional interactions among/ between AEAS actors;
- Advocating for and informing formulation of supporting policies for AEAS;
- Facilitating coordination and harmonization of AEAS actors at all levels;
- Facilitating the development of AEAS in Africa;
- Promoting AEAS professionalism;
- Enhancing the effectiveness of demand for AEAS;
- Promoting appropriate AEAS delivery approaches, methods and practices;
- Enhancing AEAS organizational and institutional capacities;
- Innovating appropriate funding approaches for AEAS; and
- Enhancing the technical competencies of AEAS providers.

Stakeholders also advanced many other reasons for the continued relevance of the AFAAS. The outstanding ones could be summarised as the role of AEAS in addressing emerging issues - most notably engaging youth in agriculture and climate change.

4.1.2 Strengths of AFAAS and AEAS networks

The mission of AFAAS as a continental body spearheading knowledge sharing among AEAS stakeholders gives AFAAS a highly relevant and well-defined niche within the continental agricultural development institutional architecture. The pursuit of this mission is greatly strengthened by the political legitimization that has been accorded to AFAAS by the AUC as the body that shall provide leadership on AEAS aspects within the continental agricultural development agendas.

Overall, within the agricultural development institutions in Africa, AFAAS is bridging a gap that they all need - but are ill-equipped for - to enhance impact through its robust network of AEAS services currently embracing over 20 countries. The network can be used to provide outreach services for other actors in agricultural development - particularly research and the private sector. AFAAS

has firmly anchored its network into the continental institutions that are supporting agricultural innovation and development. In particular, it has a formal partnership with FARA, the FARA-led S4AC and GFRAS. Through these partnerships and the others it has formed with regional, continental and global STI institutions, AFAAS is well positioned among its peer institutions to add thought leadership on AEAS to its value proposition.

AFAAS has institutionalized governance and management processes that were endorsed by its stakeholders and the development partners that have supported it so far - most notably the European Union and the World Bank. The AFAAS Secretariat has demonstrated resilience under circumstances of very constrained resources. This has generated lessons that can be the foundation for an organizational management culture and Strategy that enables continuous adjustments to enhance efficiency in resource utilization.

The track record of AFAAS has unique aspects that contribute to its strengths. These include the convening of a biennial Africa-Wide Agricultural Extension Week that brings together individuals and organizations from all over the world to share information and experiences in ways that catalyze networking. It has, therefore, demonstrated capacity and convening power for the AEAS systems in Africa.

4.1.3 Weaknesses of AFAAS and AEAS networks

The resource mobilization efforts have not yet diversified to embrace other possible sources - such as AFAAS projects, membership subscriptions, crowd funding by social entrepreneurs, and services to AEAS networks and other partners. With a low capacity to mobilize funding, the strengths of the AFAAS can easily mutate into weaknesses, as indeed identified by most of the stakeholders.

From the operational perspective, AFAAS has inadequate technical staff to fully manage its operations, especially across and at the member countries and themes. Currently, AFAAS has resorted to filling the staff gaps with volunteers (champions) and thematic working groups (TWGs), though with difficulties in providing and sustaining incentives to motivate them, leading to waning interest over time.

In any case, some areas are difficult to sustain in this mode of work, and they remain weak. With the low funds to support field activities, AFAAS has had to be more directive in what the funds it provided to the new CF are used for. This has led to a perception of a top-down approach that is not desirable in managing a network.

Strategic communication and engagement to ensure the visibility of AFAAS to influencers in the domains that AFAAS wants to have an impact on, such as the policy makers, beneficiaries, and development partners, is weak. This is partly caused by the high cost of participating in activities organized by other stakeholders. However, another cause is the inadequate capacity of AFAAS actors at all levels to sufficiently utilize AFAAS's online platforms and social media presence as channels for engagement. This weakens internal communication for networking among members and managers. The AFAAS predominantly uses English as the professional language for communication. This is a major communication weakness as it limits engagement with people in Francophone, Lusophone and Arab countries, of which there is a substantial number in Africa.

At the network level, the inadequate funding weaknesses, including the low capacity to support the operationalization of the CF to a higher level that they can functionally take off after their institutional establishment. This causes qualitative weaknesses in the CF in critical areas such as deepening participation of key stakeholders in the CF activities, particularly grassroots AEAS providers, farmers, youth, women and private sector actors. Overcoming this requires AFAAS to

provide closer technical support to the new CF as they are operationalizing their strategies and programmes. This capacity is weak, with one consequence being the inadequate capacity of AFAAS to sustain a programme addressing a common continental agenda.

The weakness of the AFAAS in the partnership domain is its inability to sufficiently leverage partnerships and participate as an equal partner in partnership activities, which poses the danger of the AFAAS being used as a vessel for pursuing external agendas that are not adequately rooted in its own agenda. Although AFAAS has a partnership strategy that has provisions for mitigating this weakness, there is a need to build the leveraging capacity to implement it effectively.

4.1.4 Opportunities and positive trends

There are many events that have already taken place that AFAAS can capitalize on to create opportunities for pursuing its agenda more forcefully. The main ones that have a bearing on agricultural development include:

- i) Sustainable development goals (SDG)
 - : of the United Nations⁶ provide a common guide for all development initiatives. Agriculture directly contributes to Goal 2 of the SDG, namely, to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Through this goal, agriculture contributes to the SDG goals of reducing poverty (SDG 1), good health and wellbeing (SDG 3), gender equality (SDG 5), economic growth (SDG 8); combat climate change (SDG 13), biodiversity and halt land degradation (SDG 15).
- ii) Malabo commitments of 2014 by the African Heads of State
 - : The commitments are the result of the review of CAADP implementation
 - . The review resulted in a shifting of focus from planning, the major preoccupation in the first ten years, to implementation to achieve the CAADP development outcomes.
- iii) Framework for sustaining CAADP momentum: in pursuit of the Malabo Commitments.
 - The framework has three strategic thrusts, namely: (i) strengthening and aligning institutions, policies and leadership, (ii) knowledge and knowledge support, and (iii) financing and investments in agriculture.
- iv) Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A)
 - : that has been formulated and endorsed by the AUC to guide the formulation of actions to implement the commitments of the Malabo Declaration.
- v) The creation of the S4AC in 2015: to coordinate collective actions by supra-national STI organizations to spearhead the implementation of the S3A.

The 2014 AFAAS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Union (AU): The MOU legitimizes AFAAS to spearhead the AEAS agenda in the S3A.

The GFRAS Strategic Framework 2016–2025¹⁰. The GFRAS is implementing a strategy that has the following three fields of action: (i) Advocacy and support for an enabling policy environment and appropriate investment in rural advisory services, (ii) Professionalization of rural advisory services; and (iii) Facilitation and enhancement of effective and continuous knowledge generation and exchange.

National policies on AEAS. In some countries, explicit policies on the AEAS have been

⁷ The SDGs of the United Nations can be seen here: <https://goo.gl/ZzwxQ0>

⁸ The Malabo commitments can be seen here: <https://goo.gl/OCxStX>

⁹ The sustaining CAADP Momentum document can be seen here: <https://goo.gl/oVDiOz>

¹⁰ The S3A document can be downloaded from here: <https://goo.gl/JRxvQ6>

¹¹ The GFRAS Strategic Framework document can be downloaded from here: <https://goo.gl/P6TtFz>

formulated that need the type of knowledge and network support that AFAAS can give through the CF to aid in implementation. The African Development Bank (AfDB) has put in place the “Feed Africa Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa, 2016-2025”, which will guide its support for interventions aimed at ending hunger and rural poverty in Africa in the decade via transformation and scaling up agriculture as a business through value addition.

The European Union-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership focuses on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture. The initial focus of the partnership includes supporting innovation processes. There are emerging issues and felt needs that provide AFAAS opportunities for developing programmes that are marketable to funders who have these on their agendas. These include the focus on the links between agriculture and youths, climate change action, health, nutrition, post-harvest handling and management, sustainable intensification, and post-conflict recovery, among others. There is an urgency to identify the knowledge and technologies available to address these issues. AFAAS is well-positioned to provide the needed leadership in the AEAS space.

The deployment of information and communication technology (ICT) solutions to the AEAS provision is one of the key trends that will increasingly affect the way AFAAS operates as a knowledge network. Much as the current usage of ICT solutions in AEAS (e-extension) is relatively low, it is likely to surpass traditional means in the near future. The challenge will be how to manage the trend to minimize the random deployment of solutions that have not been adequately proven to be effective.

AFAAS can position itself as the advocate/champion and clearing house¹³ for enabling users to make informed choices on the adoption of ICT. It can also create the environment for innovation of ICT solutions, especially by the youth. Indeed, this can become one of the areas that AFAAS uses to attract the youth to support agricultural value chains. There is a strong trend of using social networks - especially online networks - as the foundation for businesses in the private sector. This trend is beginning to be adopted in social enterprises and the public sector.

The biggest asset that AFAAS has is its network. It can use the network to develop a business model whose value proposition could be that the AFAAS is the only network in Africa that can channel knowledge and technologies to thousands of AEAS providers and, through them, reach millions of farmers. It, therefore, presents the opportunity to use the network as the foundation for a socially networked business.

The promotion of agribusinesses and/ or agripreneurship is increasingly being seen as one way of stimulating private sector-driven agricultural value chain development. The trend is especially driven by the focus on youth. AFAAS can take the lead in this area by using its network to discover market opportunities for the youth and even incubate such businesses.

In all the areas where the AFAAS has opportunities for interventions, there are concomitant opportunities for partnerships. AFAAS has the opportunity to become proactive in designing partnership programmes and becoming a convener and lynchpin of its present - and future - partners to design joint programmes that can tap into public and private (philanthropic) development funding possibilities at national, regional, continental and global levels.

4.1.5 Threats and negative trends

The major threats to AFAAS are the external factors that can lead to the amplification of its weaknesses. At the global level, the evident political and economic introversion in the AEAS-developed countries of the North is a threat to the continued flow of funds for supporting development programmes in the South. This particularly applies to funding for continental bodies and programmes, including AFAAS. The AFAAS strategic interests in the Northern countries may

¹² The AfDP Feed Africa Strategy can be downloaded from here: <https://goo.gl/Qs73cE>

¹³ Read about the EU-AU Partnership on STI here: <https://goo.gl/s4Q6PM>

be harder to justify than the support to national level programs.

The S4AC is emerging as the partnership through which the continental and regional African bodies shall mobilize and manage resources for pursuing the Malabo commitments of the African Heads of State. Within this consortium, the fate of AFAAS will be tied to that of the other members. Failure of one will impact the credibility and prospects of the others. The critical aspect where this poses a potential threat to AFAAS is the area of fiduciary management. If any of the members fail to live up to the highest standards of stewardship for resources from donors and stakeholders, AFAAS will also bear the consequences.

AFAAS has anchored itself firmly to a broad continental agenda for agricultural development, and it expects to synergize and be synergized by the programmes of other actors. It is, therefore, not the sole determinant of its success. Among other things, volatility in the continental, regional and national political processes may lead to failures to implement agricultural development programmes with the intensity envisaged by the Malabo commitments. This is a threat to the demand for AEAS and, therefore, for AFAAS support. There is also a threat of African governments changing course in their AEAS policies and putting in place policies that counter the AFAAS principles. With divergent policies on AEAS in member countries, AFAAS will be unable to develop and sustain coherent support programs.

There is a threat to AFAAS institutional and organization cohesion caused by stakeholders who may want to cannibalize the AFAAS mandate by replacing it with their alternative institutional and organizational forms. This threat will be magnified if AFAAS too fails to quickly demonstrate impact on and relevance to the target beneficiaries - more especially the farmers. For example, researchers, development partners and private sector actors who want to achieve impact quickly in their programs may circumvent the AFAAS mechanisms and create alternative pathways. The potential they have to undermine AFAAS is substantial because their interventions, though short-term, are usually much better funded. The cohesion of AFAAS may also be undermined if there is elite capture of its agenda or if there is the capture of the network by a block of members. The latter possibility is likely to emerge sooner than later if the perception that the Anglophone countries are dominating AFAAS is not quickly stemmed. Failure of the AFAAS to configure its management systems in ways that are responsive to and empower members to pursue the agendas of their choice is also a threat to its cohesion.

The continued failure to project AEAS provision as a profession threatens the advancement of AFAAS. The infiltration of AEAS by people whose credentials as service providers cannot be ascertained undermines the confidence of consumers in the services. This is particularly so because AEAS are intermediaries of knowledge that the clientele uses to make decisions that, if inappropriate, can have very adverse consequences to livelihoods. So, professionalism has to be matched with robust quality assurance mechanisms.

The AEAS are not immune to the threats from vagaries brought about by natural and man-made disasters. As such, there is a constant threat to AFAAS - especially at the CF level - from civil conflicts that often become protracted and affect AEAS services in ways that may require rebuilding from scratch. Disease epidemics can devastate the human base of AEAS. Drought is an ever-present threat to livelihoods that depend on agriculture. All these and other unpredictable phenomena are threats to the sustained prioritization of AFAAS in development agendas.

4.1.7 Continued relevance of the strategic orientation

There is broad stakeholder consensus that the strategic orientation of AFAAS, as framed in its mission, vision, goal, purpose, and outputs, is still valid. Nevertheless, stakeholders feel that

AFAAS has not struck the right balance between focusing on its mission of: “promoting lesson learning and adding value to initiatives in AEAS service delivery through sharing of information and increased professional interaction” and pursuing the development objective of: “Enhanced utilization of the improved knowledge and technologies by agricultural value chain actors for improving agricultural productivity oriented towards their individual and national development objectives”.

To pursue the development objective: more holistically, they expect AFAAS to embrace the activities that support capacity development for the actors, national AEAS policy processes, technology dissemination to the end-users, coordinating AEAS in Africa, AEAS innovation, professionalization of AEAS, thought leadership in AEAS, initiating and managing programs that create jobs in agriculture for the youth, etc.

All these have a knowledge management dimension, and there are stakeholders who feel that AFAAS should only go as far as this dimension requires and that doing otherwise would be tantamount to “mission creep”. However, others fear that if the AFAAS fails to be more directly involved in these areas, its impact on development will not be felt. This is a dilemma that AFAAS has to find a way to resolve.

Further, the strategic goal and pillars of the AFAAS strategy are relevant to the national, regional and international development agenda in the following ways:

i) The national agenda and development plans

The strategic goal of enhanced utilization of improved knowledge and technologies by agricultural value chain actors to catalyze sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed Africa and create prosperity for Africa” is consistent with the Malabo declaration and national agendas encapsulated in the National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIP) including agricultural policies and frameworks which recognize the importance of agriculture and emphasize the need to increase agricultural production and productivity in a sustainable manner.

ii) The sustainable development goals (SDGs)

The strategic interventions address SDG 1 (End poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) AND sdg 13 (Climate Change), which are achieved through the three strategic pillars. The strategic goal of feeding Africa and prosperity through improving food security and livelihoods is consistent with the SGDs but also with the different national development agendas for the focus country chapters.

iii) The agricultural extension and advisory services (AEAS)

The strategic interventions address the pressing needs of smallholder farmers following a need for scaling out technologies and innovations. Through the advancement of the Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (AEAS), the interventions address constraints that hinder farmers from improving their key livelihoods.

iv) The multi-institutional and social dimensions

The strategy gives specific attention to the institutional, social and environmental dimensions. The strategy focuses on addressing gender relations and climate change-related issues.

5. THE AFAAS STRATEGY (2018-2027): PILLARS AND SUB-STRATEGIES

5.1 Context of the AFAAS strategy (2018 -2027)

The stakeholders surveyed endorsed the continued relevance of the strategic and orientation of the Strategy (2018- 2027) leans on the mission and objective statements. However, the driving force of the Strategy is the strong desire of the stakeholders for AFAAS to balance the pursuit of its mission without losing focus on its stated development objective.

But striking a balance between the mission and objectives demand sustaining the emphasis on activities targeting its mission (promotion of lesson learning and adding value to agricultural advisory services through sharing of information and increased professional interaction) while enhancing emphasis on activities that directly impact the development objective (enhanced utilization of improved knowledge and technologies by agricultural value chain for improving productivity oriented towards their individual and national development objectives). This is reflected in the new Theory of Change (ToC) for the 2018 -2027 Strategy.

5.2 Theory of Change for the Strategy (2018 – 2027)

The ‘Theory of Change (ToC)’ that the 2018 - 2027 Strategy adopted to take into account the heightened urgency to deliver on the development objectives is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

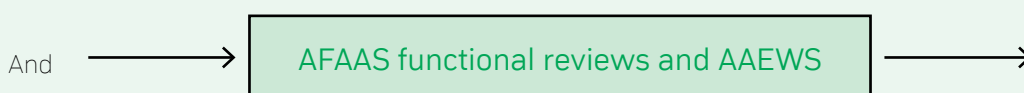
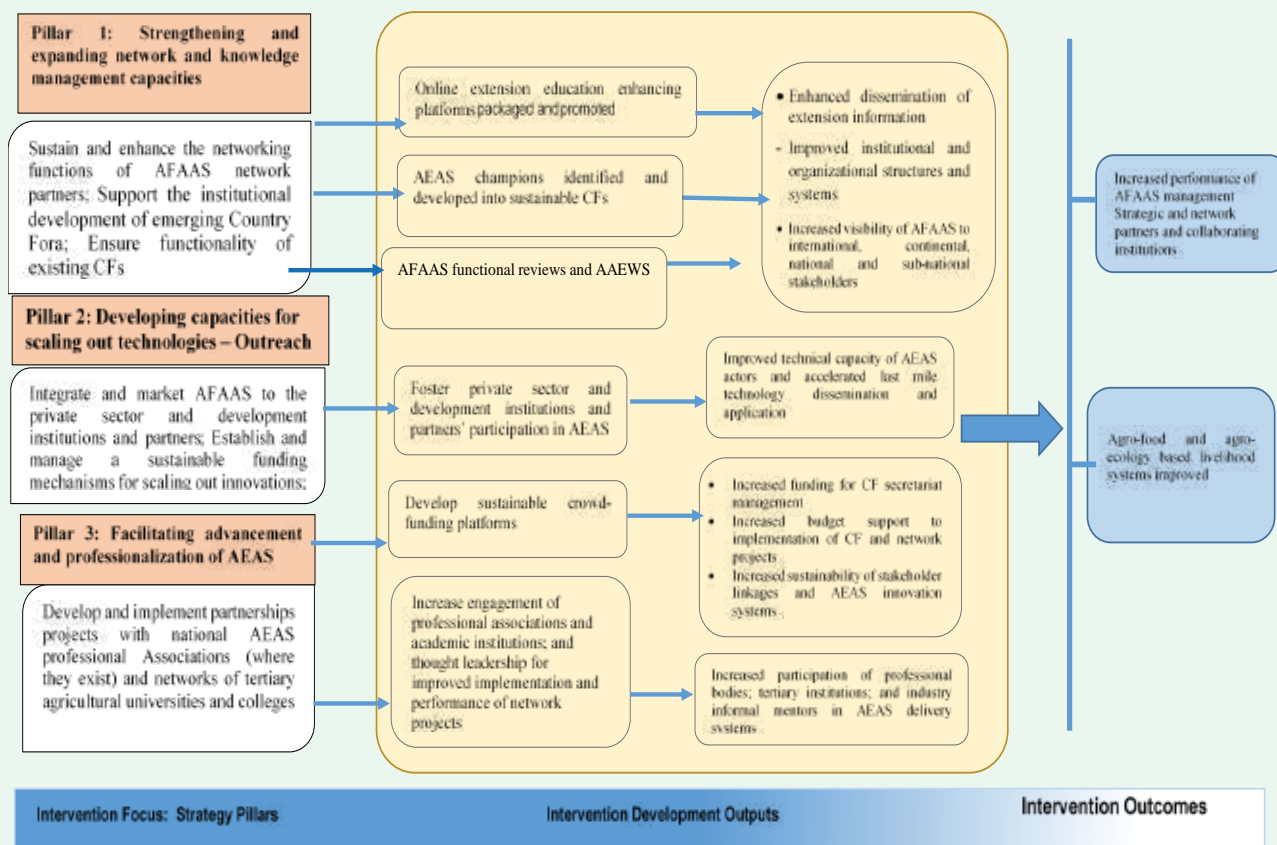


Figure 3: AFAAS Hierarchy of objectives and intervention areas



Implementation of Strategy (2010-2017), mainly focused on creating institutional mechanisms for networking and AEAS knowledge management. This was expected to lead to a cascade of changes starting with AEAS providers sharing information and interacting at the professional level, which would lead to enhancement of their knowledge that was assumed to be the capacity they would need to promote knowledge and technological change. The additional hypotheses that the ToC for the 2018 - 2027 Strategy is putting forward are that the use of the knowledge acquired by the AEAS actors through networking and professional interactions requires that they have: (i) direct access to the technologies needed to trigger the use of the knowledge, and (ii) means to enhance their technical and professional competencies.

5.3 Guiding Principles for the Strategy 2018 – 2027 Strategy

The consensus from the consultations of the AFAAS stakeholders was that the following principles (as derived from the 2010 - 2017 Strategic Plan) should continue to guide this Strategy:

- a) **Information Sharing.** Information on innovations (methods and tools), lessons learnt and best practices will be shared and treated as a public good to the greatest extent possible.
- b) **Continental focus.** AFAAS initiatives will be designed to benefit all of Africa.
- c) **Quality assurance.** This will be pursued largely through improvement in the quality of AAS providers and their functional skills. In addition, there will be a need for professionalism through the registration and regulation of providers.
- d) **Accountability.** AFAAS will focus and orient itself towards the attainment of impact. AAS providers must be accountable to clients and other end-users. In addition, efforts must be made to empower subsistence farmers and allow for adequate demand articulation processes.
- e) **Partnerships.** Partnerships, including public-private and public-public, will be sought in order to more efficiently provide AAS in the region.
- f) **Efficiency and effectiveness.** There is a need for increased efficiency and effectiveness to ensure the sustainability of AEAS and agricultural extension and better resource utilization against a backdrop of dwindling funding for agriculture and extension.
- g) **Innovativeness.** The AEAS must continue to adopt innovative tools and methods to ensure improved and more effective delivery of services.
- h) **Market orientation/ commercialisation.** The majority of farmers in Africa still rely on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods. AFAAS aims to transform large subsistence agriculture into a commercial one. This can be attained by ensuring that production is market-oriented by facilitating the development of market-oriented AAS.
- i) **Pluralism.** There is room for service provision by the private sector, civil society and farmers. There is a big potential for the private sector (including farmers) to play a larger role in resource mobilization.
- j) **Subsidiarity.** AFAAS places responsibility and control of resources for agricultural extension and training activities at the lowest appropriate level of aggregation.

1.4 Clientele and stakeholders

The AFAAS stakeholders' consultation also generated a consensus that the following clientele and stakeholders identified in the 2011 - 2017 Strategic Plan should sustain this Strategy:

- a) Farmer organizations that provide a link between AEAS providers and farmers;
- b) Agricultural advisory services professionals who are directly involved in delivering information, new technologies, management practices, and other innovations to agricultural value chain actors;
- c) Farmers, including both men and women livestock and fish producers, should be regarded as the ultimate targets of AFAAS;
- d) Research institutions at all levels that have an interest in AEAS from the perspective of enhancing the availability of information and technologies for agricultural value chains;
- e) Education and training Institutions at all levels in the context of training future AEAS providers and providing continuous professional training;
- f) National and local governments from the perspective of policy environments and making investments for meeting the needs of the resource-poor farmers;
- g) Private sector entrepreneurs in the specific context of the provision of AEAS;
- h) CAADP implementing institutions; for guiding the setting of the continental agendas and coordinating their cascading to national levels.

In addition to the above, this Strategy also places a strong emphasis on the youth as stakeholders of AFAAS. They will be stakeholders from the perspective of being potential actors in AEAS provision. They will be beneficiaries from the perspective of being consumers of information from the AEAS to become entrepreneurs in agricultural value chains.



6. PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGY GUIDED BY PILLARS, OBJECTIVES AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Strategy hinges three pillars, each of which has a set of objectives. The pillars correspond to the intervention areas highlighted in the ToC.

6.1 Pillar 1: Strengthening and expanding network and knowledge management capacities

6.1.1 Objective 1.1: Sustain and enhance the networking functions

Sustaining the AFAAS networking functions shall embrace ensuring that the core governance and management structures and systems of AFAAS (the GA, Board, Secretariat and CF) are operating in ways that comply with their guidelines and regulations. These structures can be regarded as living organisms, and it is therefore extremely unlikely that the ones that will be in place at the beginning of the implementation of this Strategy will still be appropriate from the beginning to the end of the ten years of the Strategy. There shall therefore be a need to continuously review them and subsequently adapt and align them to the functional needs of the Forum. This may vary from quantitative changes (such as increases/ decreases in the number of staff serving the same function) or qualitative changes (such as bringing on board new staff with entirely new competencies or changing the terms under which the staff are retained). It may also mean that the management effort on some functions (such as complying with fiduciary requirements for managing resources) may be high at the beginning but, over time, become overshadowed by other functions (such as managing partnership projects). Indeed the institutional and organizational structures and systems may undergo a total metamorphosis such that the AFAAS of 2027 may not be recognizable as having evolved from that of 2018. The sub-strategies and associated key performance indicators for enhancing network functionalities shall be as follows.

Sub-Strategy 1.1: Undertake a functional review of the AFAAS once every three years and undertake appropriate adjustments in its institutional and organizational structures and systems to align the form with the functions, taking into consideration current agricultural trends and available funding.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Number of functional reviews of AFAAS
2. Functional review recommendations implemented

Sub-Strategy 1.2: Support AFAAS at all levels to implement all aspects of its KM Strategy

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Systems for the governance of knowledge sharing, exchange and other interactions;
2. Systems and capacities for communication and engagement with diverse actors – especially the farmers and value chain actors;
3. Systems and capacities for the generation of content for internal and external audiences;
4. An ecosystem for ICT tools and platforms for enabling KM to evolve;
5. Mechanisms for KM sustainability

6.1.2 Objective 1.2: Support the institutional development of emerging Country Fora

AFAAS is disadvantaged when it comes to getting off the starting line in countries that express

interest in networking AEAS in that its building blocks - the CF - are not in place at the time. This is in contrast to other similar continental networks operating in the agricultural STI space like FARA, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture, Pan-African Farmers' Organization, among others. These were initiated when their national and/or regional level foundation structures were well established. In contrast, in the period of its first Strategy, AFAAS had to proactively support the establishment of the CF and generate proof of concept that the CF could deliver on its strategic objectives.

Going forward, AFAAS has to adjust its Strategy for supporting the emergence of new CF, not least because it will not be able to mobilize the resources needed to move a CF from being an idea in a country to be fully established and functional institutionally. Essentially the Strategy has to shift away from proactivity (push) to reactivity (pull). This means that countries that wish to establish CF shall themselves take the lead in mobilizing some of the required resources for the purpose, with AFAAS playing a catalytic role. The experience that the Secretariat has gained points to two mechanisms for catalyzing the emergence of a CF. First is through local AEAS champions who have a passion for mobilizing AEAS actors around an initiative, such as engaging in national policy processes or promoting an AEAS approach. The second is through partnerships with institutions or projects that have objectives of bringing AEAS actors together around an intervention. Based on this experience, the Strategy for supporting emerging CF shall be as follows:

Sub-Strategy 1.3: Identify champions and/or catalyze the leveraging of partnerships with institutions or projects that can mobilize national AEAS stakeholders around an overt AEAS objective in which they have a vested interest and work with them to create interim CF that can subsequently be expanded beyond the original interest and be formalized.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Number of champions and partners spearheading CF development
2. Number of CF that has been established through partnership activities

6.1.3 Objective 1.3: Develop suites of services for members

The AFAAS and CF Secretariats exist to primarily provide technical support and services to their respective members. Ideally, the recipients should pay for the services. However, in the formative years, this has not been the case, especially in the case of CF paying fees to belong to the network. So external funding has supported the delivery of services to the CF members. Some CF has been quite successful in getting members to pay fees, but even then, the amounts raised have been nominal relative to the needs for sustaining the CF. Furthermore, they have presented a barrier to entry at the first stage. So, membership fees should not be relied on as the initial basis for sustainability but, rather, as a demonstration of commitment by members, which can be used as the lever for continuing to solicit external support. That said, there are other ways that the CF Secretariats can use to earn revenue from members. From their vantage points as managers of the network, they have a bird's-eye view of the activities being undertaken by members and, therefore, have the ability to identify and/ or anticipate the types of services they are likely to need. Their first responsibility is to enable such members to themselves locate the sources of these services from the network. However, the Secretariats can facilitate service exchange between members by gathering intelligence on what they do, the services they need or are likely to need temporally and spatially, and the best sources of these services. They can subsequently provide a premium brokerage service for which they can generate fees.

Beyond the above brokerage service, the Secretariats may identify service demands for which there are no service providers within the network. This is likely to happen particularly in the emerging areas of e-extension. These are opportunities for business development. The Secretariats shall have several options for dealing with these opportunities in ways that generate

revenue. They can establish or act as investment brokers, linking innovators from within the network to investors for a fee, or incubate the businesses and have equity in them when they mature or develop and manage the businesses themselves (i.e. develop business plans and look for investors). The sub-strategy that embraces the above options shall be:

Sub-Strategy 1.4: Put in place an intelligence-gathering system for identifying network members' needs for services and subsequently, either (i) develop business arms to provide the services, (ii) provide an investment brokerage service for developing the services, or (iii) provide an incubation service leading to owning equity in the matured businesses

Key Performance Indicators:

1. The number of services that AFAAS and the CF can provide to members;
2. The number of services demanded by and provided to members.

6.2 Pillar 2. Developing capacities for scaling out technologies

6.2.1 Objective 2.1: Provide outreach services to development programmes and partners

As was indicated in Section 4.5, the biggest asset that AFAAS has is its growing continental network of AEAS actors. The network has the potential to embrace thousands of AEAS actors that have the capacity to reach and effectively provide services to millions of farmers and other value chain actors. The AFAAS can use this network as its capital for proactively engaging with research, development institutions and partners as well as the private sector. Many of them have challenges of going to scale with their results and/ or products in order to maximize impact or increase revenues.

The consultations that informed this Strategy identified the increasing availability of agricultural innovations that AFAAS should be involved in. AFAAS, with its network, can address this expectation by creating an innovation grant system, as well as positioning itself as the mechanism that development organizations/ programmes can use to get their technologies to scale. It shall use the following strategy to pursue the objective:

Sub-Strategy 2.1: Position and market the AFAAS to the private sector and development institutions and partners as a mechanism for outreach and going to scale in reaching farmers and value chain actors through its members.

Key Performance Indicators:

- 1) The number of public and private development programmes/ initiatives that are using AFAAS to take their technologies to scale;
- 2) The number of innovations that AFAAS members are scaling out using innovation grants
- 3) The number of innovations that AFAAS members are scaling out on behalf of the development programmes/ initiatives identified through AFAAS systems.

Sub-Strategy 2.2: Establishing and managing a challenge fund for scaling out innovations and developing innovative ways of doing so;

Key Performance Indicators:

1. The number of innovations scaled out
2. The number of end users reached
3. Number of innovations for scaling out technologies

6.2.2 Objective 2.2: Develop a crowdfunding platform for open outreach

The emphasis for AFAAS outreach and scaling out has hitherto been through the traditional big donor programmes and projects. In many cases, such donors are more familiar with and have instruments for funding big AEAS programmes through governments or NGOs. AFAAS provides an opportunity for AEAS actors at the CF level to support individual groups of farmers or value chain actors to develop small and short-term bankable projects targeting their food security and income generation needs. Such projects are usually too small to attract big donors. Increasingly social investors and entrepreneurs are coming in to fill this gap, especially through crowdfunding mechanisms. AFAAS will therefore develop mechanisms and a platform to provide this service through the following sub-strategy:

Sub-Strategy 2.2: Partner with social entrepreneurs to develop and manage a platform for brokering projects originating from AEAS actors targeting rural farmers and other value chain actors to social investors.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. An AFAAS crowd funding/sourcing platform in place with evidence of use
2. Number of successful transactions brokered through the platform

6.3 Pillar 3: Facilitating advancement of AEAS

6.3.1 Objective 3.1: Leverage partnerships and projects for the advancement of AEAS

The AFAAS Secretariat and the stakeholder consultations underpinning this Strategy identified a number of areas of immediate critical concern necessitating better coordination and advancement of AEAS. These included supporting AEAS innovation, coordination of AEAS, capacity development of AEAS providers, the professionalization of AEAS, reforming of AEAS policies, and initiatives for enabling the youth to engage in AEAS entrepreneurship. Given the austere and uncertain resource mobilization environment, the challenge is how to mobilize the resources for AFAAS to address them. In this Strategy, AFAAS shall become proactive in initiating such projects using the following Strategy:

Sub-Strategy 3.1: Develop partnerships with national AEAS professional Associations (where they exist) and networks of tertiary agricultural universities and colleges to develop and implement projects for supporting the advancement of AEAS.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. The number of initiatives addressing AEAS innovation, coordination, capacity development and professionalization
2. The number of AEAS actors whose capacity has been enhanced through AFAAS partnership projects.

6.3.2 Objective 3.2: Foster thought leadership in the network

AFAAS should aim to become recognized as the authority and trusted source of knowledge and innovative ideas on AEAS. This will partly come from the implementation of the KM Strategy. Indeed the KM Strategy provides ways to surface high-quality thought leadership content and share it. However, from the experiences gained during the implementation of the first AFAAS Strategic plan, it is clear that thought leaders in AEAS are either few or not visible, and there is a paucity of thought leadership content for sharing within the network. AFAAS, therefore, has to be proactive in fostering the emergence of thought leaders and content. The approach it has used so far is to commission studies based on recommendations from the AFAAS Board as well

as drawing on thought leaders and content from outside the network – mainly through GFRAS as the main partner and gateway into the global thought leadership on AEAS. The Strategy that AFAAS shall use shall continue with this approach and shall be:

Sub-Strategy 3.2: Partner with GFRAS to continuously identify the specific areas for thought leadership, identify thought leaders from the global network and commission studies for generating thought leadership content on topical issues surfacing from the network and endorsed by the AFAAS Board.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Number of studies undertaken to provide thought leadership on AEAS
2. Database of thought leaders on AEAS in Africa

6.4 Key Strategic Actions areas for 2023-2027 emanating from the Mid-term review of the strategy.

I. Strategy Pillar One

- (i) Follow up and implementation of key Commitments and decisions made through the AAEW and GA platforms.
- (ii) Invest sufficient human and financial resources in interactive digitalization technology.
- (iii) Technical personnel from Government Extension systems included to ensure that at least two Executives from registered networks in the member countries are incorporated in the General Assembly.

II. Strategy Pillar Two

- (i) Establishing producer or business actor demonstrations on productivity and profitability enriching interventions on crop, livestock, fisheries and natural resource systems.
- (ii) Enhanced improved performance, digitisation, technology and innovation adoption, productivity and profitability enhancement by country-level stakeholders by knowledge sharing and access to organization databases.
- (iii) Climate change/Agro-ecology mitigation and adaptation measures through CSA and SLM approaches for natural resources, rangelands, livestock and crop husbandry, soil health, and solar-powered irrigation mainstreamed in projects with the youth and women being integral participants for effective and sustainable implementation.
- (iv) Involvement of Private Sector partnerships in a phased approach to effectively gain the necessary, sufficient experience.

III. Strategy Pillar Three

- i. Capacity Building: This will focus on three levels including; Organisational, Systems and Individual level. At individual level, training and re-tooling of key stakeholders (Agricultural extension agents, service providers and partners in delivery/ dissemination of Climate change related interventions including fostering of the existing and or establish Climate Smart Agriculture learning/ demonstration centres of excellence and use of avenues like the Tropical Agricultural Platform (TAP).
- ii. Strengthening Country Fora through capacity building in addition to creating linkages

and resource mobilisation engagements.

- iii. **Sustaining Partnerships and Engagements.** With this strategy, AFAAS will continue to pursue strategic partnerships with key stakeholders to generate credible evidence for policy advocacy. The strategy will invest in strengthening the institutional capacities and systems of partner organizations to adequately mitigate and respond to crises, while enabling them to expand their networking and advocacy for enhanced influence. As a defining element to this strategy, focus will be on how to prioritise the quality, mutuality and type of partnerships. Create more sustainable partnerships to utilize AFAAS as a continental organization and also define the value proposition for each organization within this strategy.
- iv. **Sustainability:** To ensure sustainability, the strategy will use standard finance pathfinder approaches to mobilize resources from within and outside Africa. In addition, competing for advisory work (like consultancies) to enhance the AFAAS reserve fund; Accessing funds from partner institutions with funds generated over time, such as ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF, NASRO, RESCAR and FARA.

Key Cross Cutting Issues for Phase two of the Strategy (2023-2027)

- i. **Strengthening the enabling institutional and policy environment for for climate change/ agro-ecology including an agricultural development strategy**
- ii. **Institutionalising Gender Transformative Approaches.** This strategy recognises that both women and men are critical to securing a greater inclusion and more equitable access to resources and benefits of agricultural extension and development. Local fora and dialogues will also allow for gender issues to be discussed in order to bridge information gaps identified during strategic implementation. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning will document case studies on gender dynamics including shared, and gender-specific sustainability measures to ensure that both men and women continue to benefit from and influence change beyond the strategic period.
- iii. **Coherence with existing systems, structures, and practices:** This strategy will leverage and build on existing systems, practices and ongoing plans to not create parallel structures and maximise the sustainability of the activities and their impact.



7. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The implementation arrangements substantiate Objective 1.3 of Pillar 1 of this Strategy, namely: “To sustain and strengthen the AFAAS governance and management systems”. The environment in which AFAAS shall operate in the period of this Strategy shall, in all likelihood, be very dynamic. This Strategy, therefore, suggests the following three organizational scenarios under which AFAAS may be governed and managed.

- (i) The regressing scenario: AFAAS fails to sustain the level of activities in the 2010 - 2017 Strategy.
- (ii) The static scenario: The conditions under which AFAAS operates stay largely the same as in the 2010 - 2017 Strategy.
- (iii) The progressing scenario: AFAAS is widening and deepening its activities beyond what it was doing in the 2010 - 2017 Strategy and increasingly becoming more sustainable.

These scenarios are not fixed in stone and may overlap at any point in time. Therefore they should not be used as prescriptions for organizational planning but, rather, they should be used for general guidance. As previously mentioned, the driver of the scenarios shall be the availability of funds. In this regard, the three critical uncertainties around which the scenarios are built are the availability of: (i) core funds to sustain the institutional and organizational functioning of the Forum, (ii) funds that are restricted to support projects with or without a component of overheads for the institutional and organizational support, and (iii) internally generated revenue that can be used for institutional and organizational support. Because of the uncertainties in all three areas, this Strategy shall be operationalized through rolling annual work plans that shall be updated throughout the planned year as necessary to accommodate the dynamic availability of funds. What will be important for operational planning is to prioritize objectives and activities therein that can be rolled into or out of the plan. The objectives and/ or activities not addressed or not sufficiently addressed shall form the basis for resource mobilization. The availability of funds shall trigger the migrating from one implementation scenario to another.

The governance and management of AFAAS shall sustain the organs put in place in the old Strategy and shall be guided by the guidelines that are already in place. These include the Governance Manual, the Human Resources Management Manual, the Operations Manual, the Procurement Manual and the Audit Charter and Policy. The scenario of implementation shall automatically determine the scope of the monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) activities, but the activities themselves shall not vary substantially.

The activities shall include but not be limited to i) a baseline survey, ii) participatory MEL involving the CF members in tracking the use of inputs, activities, outputs and results guided by the Project results framework, iii) biannual supervision missions of funded activities. These shall include field visits to the stakeholders of the activities, iv) annual review, lesson learning and planning meetings that shall involve the Board and partners.

During the review, information shall be shared on the achievements, challenges and lessons. The plan for the following year shall be presented and ratified. An annual report with the plan shall be prepared and disseminated to all stakeholders. Biennial external evaluations focus on assessing the achievement of results, attainment of impacts, and recommending adjustments in activities and implementation arrangements.

8. SUSTAINABILITY

Stakeholders of AFAAS believe that it cannot be fully sustained by depending entirely on grants from donors. In particular, the sustainability of the CF should not be tied to resources mobilized centrally from donors. Effectively, the Secretariat and the CF have to develop and implement operating models that will enable them to generate revenue in ways that do not detract them from their mandates or make them competitors with their clients - the network members. Hence sustainability has to be rooted in the activities under Pillars 1, 2 and 3 (Table 1). Table 1 highlights the sustainability factors under the different Pillars and objectives of the Strategy.

Table 1: The sustainability factors under the different pillars and objectives

Pillars and Objectives	Sustainability Factor
Pillar 1: Strengthening and expanding networking and knowledge management capacities	
Objective 1.1: Sustain and enhance the networking functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The credibility of AFAAS as a one-stop centre for AEAS networking and knowledge management · The credibility of AFAAS as the continental lynchpin for continental AEAS policies, strategies and programs; · The increased willingness of network members to pay subscriptions as a result of the value they get from the networking; · Revenue from networking and knowledge management services;
Objective 1.2: Support the institutional development of emerging Country Fora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The emergence of champions in countries that wish to establish CF · Development of partnerships within countries that wish to establish CF · Partnership projects
Objective 1.3: Sustain & strengthen AFAAS governance and management systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Flexibility in governance and management structures and systems · The credibility of AFAAS as an efficient and effective network among stakeholders and donors
Objective 1.4: Develop suites of services to members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Revenue generation fro services offered by the AFAAS and CF Secretariats · Engagement as business partners with the private sector
Pillar 2: Providing outreach services	
Objective 2.1: Provide outreach services to development programmes/ projects and the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Grants and fees from outreach services offered through the AFAAS network · Brokerage fees
Objective 2.2: Develop a crowd- funding platform for greater outreach to youth, farmers and value chain actors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Brokerage fees · Funding from social investors and social entrepreneurs
Pillar 3: Facilitating advancement of AEAS	
Objective 3.1: average partnerships and projects that contribute to the advancement of AEAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Credibility as a trusted partner in project implementation · Grants for partnership projects
Objective 3.2: Foster thought leadership in the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Recognition of AFAAS as the provider of thought leadership on AEAS

9. RISKS

Table 2 presents a summary of the identified risks, the level associated with them, and the measures that shall be put in place to mitigate them.

Table 2: Risks and mitigation measures

Objectives	Description of Risk	Level	Mitigation measure
Pillar 1: Strengthening and expanding network and knowledge management capacities			
1.1: To sustain and enhance the networking/ knowledge management (KM) functions	Members do not participate in network/ KM activities	Low	Base activities on identified priority needs Diversify mechanisms for networking and KM Develop capacity for using ICT for networking and KM Build trust in AFAAS and the CF as trusted sources of knowledge (KM) governance)
1.2: To support the institutional development of emerging Country Fora	No champions or partnership projects that can catalyze the emergence of new CF	High	Be clear on the benefits that partners will get from the established CF
1.3: To sustain and strengthen the AFAAS governance and management systems	Failure to get the sufficient core funds for supporting governance and management at all times	High	Flexibility in governance and management arrangements (scenarios) so as to continuously align form with function
Pillar 2: Developing capacities for scaling out technologies			
3.1: To develop suites of services for members	Lack of funding for developing and/ or incubating services	High	Diversify the search for investment funding to include the private sector and financial institutions
3.2: To provide outreach services to development programmes/ projects and the private sector	Low confidence in AFAAS as an effective outreach service provider	Medium	Comprehensive profiling of the network members and their track records in reaching farmers and other value-chain actors
3.3: To develop a crowd-funding platform to enable social investors to fund farmers and value chain projects through AEAS	Low interest in social entrepreneurs to invest in developing the crowdfunding platform	Low	Engage with the social entrepreneurs with <u>business</u> cases supported by feasibility studies
Pillar 3: Facilitating advancement of AEAS			
2.1: To leverage partnerships for projects that contribute to the advancement of AEAS	Failure to get funds for having a leveraging stake in partnership projects	High	Undertake strategic communication with potential partners and donors
2.2: To foster thought leadership in the network	Failure to identify thought leaders	Low	Widening the catchment for thought leaders through the alliance with GFRAS

10: IDENTIFIED GAPS AND PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS IN THE STRATEGY

Below are the identified gaps and proposed adjustments to bolster strategy implementation during MTOP 2 by pillar and indicator.

Table 3: Identified gaps and proposed adjustments for Pillar 1 to bolster strategy implementation during MTOP 2

Pillar 1: Strengthening and Expanding Network and Knowledge Management Capacities		
Pillar and Sub-strategy Indicator	Institutional Management Gaps/Constraint(s)	Proposed Operational Action in MTOP
AFAAS Functional Reviews	AFAAS staffing for long-term and short-term assignments elevates budget burden; Board participation in AFAAS management is lacking; Data, reporting, and M and E systems are dominated by on-line design and feedback systems, yet many actors lack digitalization and computer literacy	Restructuring of human resource – shared staff AFAAS-ASARECA, hire ad hoc staff on demand; Improve reporting and making internal institutional performance enhancement; improving gender sensitivity in staffing; Improve continental positioning of AFAAS - at the apex level, AFAAS would be a data and information reference institution; Simplify M and E input and feedback systems.
A E A S Champions	The process of champions and/or catalyst partnerships with candidate institutions evolving into Country Fora (CFs) led to CFs that are neither fully responsive to AFAAS nor national Ministries of Agriculture agendas and strategic objectives	Strengthen the capacity of the CFs/networks; Increase Board participation in AFAAS management; The General Assembly (GA) should be defined to ensure that at least two Executives from registered networks in the member countries include technical personnel from Government Extension systems. This strengthens the link, functionality and sustainability of the CF-AFAAS-Government structure.
Online Platforms	Online digital platforms face constraints of heterogeneity of target beneficiary needs, applicability; access to smart devices (phones, tablets, computers and TVs) and the internet; and human and financial resources to support on-line technologies.	Directorate of Programs and ICT should ensure sufficient human or financial resources; invest in interactive digitalization technology, facilitate Master trainers with (smart devices and internet data and facilitate physical meetings) utilize social media training videos as TOTs to re-train farmers/VCA; account for TIMPS, stakeholder numbers, training typologies and locations covered; together the M and E follow up effects of training; Initiate, package and fund analogue knowledge products (Radio, TV and print media) – spot adverts, call-in talk shows for farmers not endowed with smart systems.

AAEWs	Commitments /decisions made are commonly revisited after two years, but tracking of recommendations and action points is not specifically assigned to AFAAS staff.	AFAAS secretariat should establish a technical team to follow up and ensure effective implementation of key action points, recommendations, commitments and decisions taken during AAEW and GA platforms
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Table 4: Identified gaps and proposed adjustments for Pillar 2 to bolster strategy implementation during MTOP 2

Pillar 2: Developing Capacities For Scaling Out Improved Productivity and Profitability Enhancing Technologies to Primary Producers and Value Chain Actors		
Pillar and Sub-strategy Indicator	Institutional Management Gaps/ Constraint(s)	Proposed Operational Action in MTOP
Implementing Private Sector, Development Institutions and Partners	The funding level for projects is far below (around 25 per cent) the budget levels proposed in the proposals. This has affected the scope and intensity of interventions for the potential beneficiaries.	Use of available funds should be limited to areas with high returns to investment, and direct support to CFs should be limited to about four CFs. The bulk of CFs should be supported to develop internal capacity for writing and presenting funding proposals to enable budget support to run their projects and functions. The model of tapping funds from Ministries of Agriculture, strategic partners like Sasakawa, and AGRA to organize events like AAEWs should be considered to make joint collaborative engagements that transcend individual CFs or projects.
Crowdfunding Platforms	This platform did not take off well and has not been identified as a substantial source of funds in the current phase, yet there are no clear prospects for the next MTOP.	AFAAS, RFs and GFRA should identify a profile of potential small donors and their funding priorities and enhance the capacity of CFs and Partner Projects to tap into this potential funding portfolio. A consultancy that examines demand articulation for crowdfunding amongst CFs and network partner institutions and projects; Potential crowd funding donor communities and their priority funding objectives; and Capacity development for candidate crowdfunding platforms/ CFs/institutions/ network projects. Then establish a task team to roll out the crowdfunding concerted - action implemented.

Table 5: Identified gaps and proposed adjustments for Pillar 3 to bolster strategy implementation during MTOP 2

Pillar 3 Facilitating advancement of AEAS by Leveraging Effective Partnerships		
Pillar and Sub-strategy Indicator	Institutional Management Gaps/Constraint(s)	Proposed Operational Action in MTOP
AEAS Professional Associations	Professional associations comprise registered and recognized groupings that bring together technical and professional actors in advisory systems, extension service delivery and farm commodity and enterprise value chain management. In many cases, the group spans public frontline community workers, national and sub-national actors, academic institutions, quasi-private institutions like NGOs and Faith-based institutions, and private companies and firms offering agricultural commodity value chain/enterprise enhancement training; Input and product marketing firms; and Practical skilling and related consultancy services. AFAAS's focus and meticulous engagement with this platform were rather obscure.	AFAAS should, through CFs, Ministries of Agriculture and tertiary institutions of Agriculture and Veterinary education, get profiles of existing AEAS professional associations and their trans-institutionary, multi-disciplinary objectives and task a specific team to determine areas of convergence between Association and AFAAS strategic and sub-strategy pillars; and develop collaborative plans and programs backed by MOUs, then roll out packages for effective collaboration with the Associations
Partnerships and Projects for Advancement of AEAS	There are nine partnership projects being implemented in the AFAAS network. In all cases, budget support is much lower (around 25 per cent) than the proposed budgets. This has affected the scope and intensity of interventions for the potential beneficiaries. For instance, in the CAADPX4 project, the number of beneficiary countries was reduced from 39 to 10 due to unrealized budget support.	Development agents tend to stick to their conditionalities, and in the case of a consortium, harmonizing this gets confounded. Once not adhered to, donors decline budget support to projects. During project design and funding proposal development, the issues of diverse conditionalities and funding objectives should be harmonized in a robust manner. In case of unforeseen and unanticipated funding gaps, the use of reserve accounts with accumulated funds for future purposes and crowdfunding arrangements to cater for the deficiencies in the budget could be explored.
Thought leadership in the network	Thought leaders are informal individuals whose expertise, industry innovations and thrilling successes provide unique guidance and inspiration that influences similar struggling contenders, campaigners, actors, firms or enterprises.	AFAAS, RFS and GFRA should identify a profile of available thought leaders and engage CFs and Partner Projects to understudy the same and use them as living examples of successes to inspire struggling cases exposed to similar conditions. A consultancy that examines dynamics of thought leader–project enhancement opportunities/platforms; and latter, a task team examine the project challenge–push and thought leader success–pull that boosts influencer and inspired candidates effective interlinkages.

Pillar 3 Facilitating advancement of AEAS by Leveraging Effective Partnerships		
Pillar and Sub-strategy Indicator	Institutional Management Gaps/Constraint(s)	Proposed Operational Action in MTOP
Strategy Pillars Overall	There are no specific staff members tasked to specifically manage and fast-track Strategy Indicators within each pillar to ensure effective implementation, routine feedback, reflection and re-planning processes.	The AFAAS secretariat should identify AFAAS Pillar indicator Task Leaders and/or Technical Teams to enable the robust attainment of indicators





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Strengthening capacity of
national agricultural extension
and advisory services systems

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