



Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

Regional Consultation on the Post-Malabo CAADP Agenda: Central Africa Region Synthesis Report

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Acronyms

ADIF	African Diaspora Investment Fund
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUDA NEPAD	African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Development
BR	Biennial Review
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAP	Common Agricultural Plan
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
CET	Common External Tariff
EAC	Eastern Africa Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
PAC-CEEAC	Common Agriculture Policy
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TWG	Technical Working Group

I. Introduction

A. Background Information on CAADP

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) is Africa’s policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security and nutrition, economic growth, and prosperity for all. An Agenda 2063 continental initiative, CAADP aims to help African countries eliminate hunger and reduce poverty by raising economic growth through agriculture-led development. In Maputo, Mozambique, in 2003, the African Union (AU) Summit made the first declaration on CAADP as an integral part of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). The principles and values that inform the implementation of CAADP include African ownership and leadership, accountability and transparency, inclusiveness, evidence-based planning and decision-making and harnessing regional complementarities. In addition, the sets of principles and values important to CAADP include people-centeredness, private sector-driven development, systemic capacity, subsidiarity, peer learning, and multi-sectorialism.

Through CAADP, African governments agreed to allocate at least 10 percent of their national budgets to agriculture and rural development and to achieve agricultural growth rates of at least 6 percent per annum. Underlying these investment commitments are targets for reducing poverty and malnutrition, increasing productivity and farm incomes, and improving the sustainability of agricultural production and use of natural resources. CAADP also supports countries to enhance resilience to climate variability through the development of disaster preparedness policies and strategies, early warning response systems, and social safety nets.

B. Background Information on the ECCAS Region

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has 11 members: Gabon and Equatorial Guinea are classified as upper-middle-income countries; Angola, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, and São Tomé and Príncipe are all considered lower-middle-income countries; and Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), and Rwanda are all low-income countries.

The region is diverse, spanning tropical rainforests, savannas, and vast river basins. The climate ranges from equatorial to subtropical, with varying precipitation patterns. Endowed with immense natural resources and arable land, the region is characterized by low agricultural productivity. The countries’ economies rely primarily on agriculture, with a focus on cash crops, livestock production, and natural resource extraction. However, poverty and food insecurity remain persistent challenges. Key crops include cassava, maize, and rice, as well as cash crops such as coffee and cocoa. Marine and continental aquatic resources are not fully exploited because of a lack of adequate investments in fishing capacities and modern aquaculture practices. Instead, foreign vessels exploit the resources and traditional transhumance—the seasonal movement of people with their livestock between geographical or climatic regions—to greener areas in the south, resulting in different forms of conflicts between farmers and herders. Political and climate change-related conflict is a major challenge in the region.

The total population of the ECCAS community was 199 million in 2019, and it is expected to increase to 384 million by 2043. Because of its youthful population, ECCAS will only benefit from a demographic dividend during the second half of the 21st century. The DR Congo has the largest population in ECCAS, but the Angolan economy (at 43 percent of ECCAS) is significantly larger than any other. The region seems to give emphasis to service sector (banking, communication, wholesales, retail trade and professional services, which dominates the economy, at the expense of production sector. The region has significant agricultural potential: If the average crop yields increased by 60 percent, the sector could reduce the percentage of people living in extreme poverty by almost 10 percentage points to 28.4 percent by 2043.

In 2019, the average crop yield in ECCAS was 3.7 metric tons, slightly below the average for Africa, which is at 3.9 tons. In the Current Path forecast ([ECCAS - ISS African Futures](#)), yields for ECCAS would improve to 4.9 tons by 2043 and to 7.7 tons in the Agriculture scenario—a difference of almost 60 percent. In the Current Path forecast, the contribution of agriculture to the gross domestic product (GDP) of ECCAS declined from 17.2 percent in 2019. In the Agriculture scenario, agriculture would still contribute almost 11 percent to GDP by 2043, and the ECCAS region would produce 115 million metric tons more crops by 2043, compared to the Current Path forecast. The import dependence of ECCAS is set to reduce to 15.7 percent of demand by 2043 instead of the Current Path forecast of 41.4 percent. ECCAS would therefore import \$62.7 billion less agricultural produce in 2043 than in the Current Path forecast. In 2019, total agricultural demand exceeded production by 11 million metric tons—a gap that is expected to increase to 139 million metric tons by 2043. The ECCAS region is, therefore, becoming increasingly food insecure, not only because of poor domestic production but also because of changes in dietary preferences. The DR Congo produced the equivalent of 51.45 million metric tons of crops, meat, and fish in 2019, the largest by volume among the ECCAS members. The DR Congo is followed by Cameroon (32.28 million tons) and Angola (27.06 million tons). São Tomé and Príncipe was the smallest agricultural producer at 134,000 tons in 2019 and is set to double its import dependence. By 2043, the DR Congo will produce 84.81 million tons, and Cameroon will be the second largest agricultural producer, having overtaken Angola. These three countries, the DR Congo, Cameroon, and Angola, produce significantly more agricultural produce than other ECCAS members. Cameroon, the only ECCAS member that exports a modest amount of agricultural goods (at \$1.516 billion in 2019), will see a decline in exports such that it will only export agriculture to the value of US\$161 million in 2043.

While CAADP has been the backbone of agricultural research, the fight against climate change, and the implementation of sustainable procedures and strategies for the agro-food supply chain, the region has not been able to produce satisfactory results toward the achievement of the CAADP agenda, though individual countries in the region are showing positive results.

C. Background on the Post-Malabo CAADP Agenda Process

The post-Malabo agenda provides an opportunity to revisit existing and outline new approaches for Africa's agricultural transformation. The post-Malabo agenda development process is an inclusive and multi-stakeholder consultative process that will embrace stakeholder consultations and research and

analysis to generate evidence-based approaches that will inform the technical design and drafting as well as the political mobilization for the next 10 years agricultural transformation agenda for the continent.

After two decades of CAADP implementation, the continent has made enormous progress in economic and agricultural growth, poverty reduction, nutrition outcomes, expansion of agricultural trade, and public investments in agriculture. Africa is in a remarkably better position than at the time of the Maputo declaration in 2003; average incomes, agricultural output and productivity, agricultural trade, and agricultural investments are significantly higher, while hunger and poverty have declined. The 2014 CAADP Malabo Declaration is coming to its conclusion in 2025, which provides the opportunity to look at the persistent challenges, emerging trends, and opportunities to establish a new agenda for the continent. Development of the post-Malabo agenda provides an opportunity to validate the theory of change, revisit the commitments, and outline the agenda, strategy, and targets for the next 10 years. The post-Malabo agenda is expected to retain the strengths of the CAADP agenda, while adjusting and deepening it to respond to emerging issues, including transforming sustainable food systems in a context of accelerating climate change and risks of shocks from multiple sources.

To develop a strong post-Malabo agenda, the AU is focusing on three workstreams: stakeholder consultations; research and analytical work; and technical design and drafting. Political mobilization across the continent is ongoing and will culminate in the declaration of a new agenda and commitments by the Heads of States and Governments (HOSG) by the end of January 2025.

The stakeholder engagement and dialogue workstream which was led and supported by the Feed the Future Policy LINK Program encompasses a series of dialogues spearheaded by Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with their Member States and stakeholders.

To prepare the next post-Malabo plan, the ECCAS Regional Economic Community (REC), in partnership with AU, and the Feed the Future Policy LINK Program organized regional stakeholder consultations for the Central Africa region. The objectives of stakeholder consultations are as follows:

- Facilitate outreach, awareness, socialization, momentum building, and political buy-in for the post-Malabo process and issues.
- Facilitate stakeholder reflections and learning on the last 20 years of CAADP to inform the future.
- Enable stakeholders to provide input into and inform the post-Malabo agenda.
- Have a wider perspective and begin building consensus on key issues and technical options.
- Develop a synthesis report to inform the final drafting of the post-Malabo agenda.

The participants at the consultation were: the CAADP focal points and government representatives of different countries, as well as private sector and non-state actor representatives from the seven ECCAS Member States. We had representatives from Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, CAR, Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, and the Republic of Congo. We also had representatives of ECCAS, the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD/African Union Development Agency (AUDA), and the Feed the Future Policy LINK Program, in addition to a team of facilitators. Four countries did not participate in

the consultation: Angola and the DR Congo participated in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) consultation, while Burundi and Rwanda attended the Eastern Africa Community (EAC) meeting.

II. The Future of Agriculture and Challenges in the ECCAS Region

A. Agriculture and Economic Transformation in the ECCAS Region

Agriculture will continue to play a central role in the ECCAS region and its economic transformation in the next decade. Agriculture contributes a huge part of Member States' GDP and support for its population. Neglecting agriculture is neglecting ECCAS citizens' well-being because of its contribution to the GDP and most citizens' employment and livelihoods. The ECCAS region is blessed with so much potential that, if properly harnessed, could transform the sector and the region's economy. The tropical regions are suitable for crops such as coffee, cocoa, and oil palms, while the savanna regions support grain crops as well as root crops and legumes. Pastoralism is more prevalent in the drier areas to the north and south. The region has exceptional biodiversity and some of the largest intact forests in the world. Forest and woodland are the dominant land cover types, covering 61.5 percent of the region. Agriculture is a wealth creator and a job avenue for everyone (children, young people, women, and men). The total population of ECCAS was 199 million in 2019 and is expected to increase to 384 million by 2043. Because of its youthful population, ECCAS can make use of this labor force in the agricultural sector, to boost economic transformation. Placing the agriculture sector as a priority in the region will result in economic growth (it contributes significantly to GDP, reduces foreign currency lost on food imports, and therefore orientates dividends to other actions). Agriculture varies across the region, with agricultural production value varying from about \$100 to \$600 per capita (based on FAOSTAT data). Agriculture contributes up to 50 percent of GDP. In continuation, agriculture in ECCAS would still contribute almost 11 percent to GDP by 2043, and the ECCAS region would produce 115 million metric tons more crops by 2043, compared to the Current Path forecast. Thus, ECCAS's economic growth and transformation is very much dependent on agriculture. With a boost in agriculture, the region's dependency on imports would be drastically reduced. The import dependence of ECCAS is set to be reduced to 15.7 percent of demand by 2043 instead of the Current Path forecast of 41.4 percent. The Community would therefore import \$62.7 billion less agricultural produce in 2043 than in the Current Path forecast.

B. Major Issues and Challenges Affecting Agriculture and Food Systems in the ECCAS Region.

Agriculture has the potential to boost wealth, but it is also subject to many challenges, particularly in the ECCAS region. CAADP implementation has faced persistent challenges within the ECCAS region. The key challenges and the underlying factors that constrain the realization of the CAADP agenda in the region are described below:

1. Poor Governance and Enabling Environment, Inadequate Political Will, and Insecurity.

- Countries in the ECCAS region have weak political systems that affect CAADP implementation. Governance-related armed conflicts, persistent insecurity of states and people, and transnational crimes hinder sustained policy implementation and stability for agricultural activities.
- The inability to translate commitments on agriculture made by the heads of state into concrete actions is attributed to inadequate ownership, political will, and good governance at the country level. Lack of political will contributes to little or no adoption and implementation of agricultural and industrial policies to support the process of structural transformation within the region. Agriculture is (politically) not considered a top priority within the region, leading to low national agricultural budgets to meet CAADP's investment targets.
- Finally, CAADP is perceived as an external framework, which undermines commitments to CAADP's objectives.
- High levies and taxes for imported equipment and materials needed for agricultural modernization hinder the adoption of advanced technologies.

2. Inadequate Institutional, Human Resource, Technical, and Coordination Capacity

- The ECCAS region has weak regional coordination and implementation capacity in the agri-food systems sector. Limited collaboration (for example, insufficient information-sharing) in CAADP implementation among ECCAS Member States has led to a lack of coherence and alignment between national agricultural policies and efforts. For instance, the Common Agriculture Policy and Investment Plan that would create synergy at national and regional has not yet been endorsed by the Heads of State and Government. And lack of concrete strategies for the development of intra- and inter-regional trade and harmonized policies limits the implementation and facilitation of market facilitation schemes and hampers the unlocking of the full economic potential of the agricultural sector.
- Weak institutional and technical capacities for effective planning, implementation, and monitoring of agriculture programs at the national and regional levels have hindered the achievement of CAADP targets in the region. Weak capacity is evident in agronomic and livestock research, seed systems/breeding, and agriculture advisory services.
- Likewise, inadequate and inappropriate extension support systems and structures for smallholder farmers have limited their ability to adopt modern technologies and climate mitigation and adaptation practices. Inadequate human resources and limited technical skills and expertise among government officials and agricultural stakeholders have contributed to poor/slow implementation of the harmonized policies and programs across the ECCAS Member States.

3. Inadequate Financing and Investment in the Agricultural Sector.

- Agricultural budget allocations are still low and public funding insufficient, forcing ECCAS countries to rely heavily on external funding, which can be unpredictable, for agricultural development. This inadequate public and private investment in agriculture, silvo-pastoral, and fishing is the result of competing development priorities amidst resource constraints. This results in food production shortages that are mainly addressed through food imports. The high rates/heavy dependence on imported agricultural products exhausts foreign exchange reserves and exposes Member States to global market and forex fluctuation risks.
- Inadequate funding and investment in the agricultural sector, particularly in research and value addition and processing, limits the ability to maximize the value of the farm produce and return on investment, thus making agriculture less attractive.
- In the region, the agricultural sector is perceived as risky. As a result, private sector engagement and investment are weak. The situation is caused by weak financial risk management that would provide credit guarantees and respond to the vagaries and fluctuations of international financial systems. For example, most countries do not have effective systems to assess credit worthiness.
- Difficulty in accessing credit and loans, farm inputs, and other factors of production and resources by smallholder farmers persists in many countries. Equally, inadequate access to foreign currency to buy farm inputs hinders access to and proper use of appropriate technologies and seeds in many ECCAS countries.

4. Under Development and Investment in the Livestock Sector

- There has been persistent neglect and low investment and development of the livestock sector, which has contributed to the sector's decline, even though it is a main source of livelihoods and incomes in the region.
- Increasing cases of climate change-induced transhumance and agro-pastoral conflict occasioned by drought and receding and disappearing bodies of water require urgent attention and a long-term strategy.

5. High Cost of Farm Inputs and Agricultural Imports.

- Smallholder farmers in the ECCAS region still face difficulties in accessing quality farm inputs like seed, fertilizer, and pesticides due to inadequate last-mile distribution channels and high input costs. This limits the appropriate, sufficient use of farm inputs, leading to low yields and food insecurity. This same scenario applies to and affects access to extension services provided by the private sector and input suppliers.
- Equally, the region experiences limited access to innovative, production-enhancing agricultural technologies (mechanization, digitization, artificial intelligence [AI]).

6. Inadequate Support System and Services for Strategic Value Chains (Research, Advisory, Finance)

- Limited investment in the agricultural sector over time has constrained farmer extension and advisory, research, infrastructure, and other value chain-related services. This has left farmers to their own devices, creating both information and capacity asymmetries.

7. Land Degradation and Land Management and Property Rights Related Constraints.

- Limited land for agricultural production results in low production, forcing countries to rely on imports and exposing them to external/global trade-related risks.
- Land tenure issues, coupled with ineffective, bureaucratic land administration and management systems, make it difficult to acquire land property certificates.
- Inadequate access to water for irrigation and agricultural production.
- Land, soil, and water degradation is becoming a common phenomenon in the region.

8. Slow Pace of Regional Policy Harmonization and Integration.

- Although several trade and market integration-related agreements, protocols, and conventions have been signed among ECCAS Member States to promote and facilitate cross-border trade, the implementation of these arrangements has been slow. Among the main trade bottlenecks are poor infrastructure development, maintenance and connectivity issues, conflicts and insecurity issues within the sub-regions, and complex policies and bureaucracies at the national level. Moreover, several of the continent's railways and roads lead to marine ports rather than land borders, as do logistical services, which are largely set up to support international trade, not cross-border or regional trade. Internal waterways are similarly underdeveloped, making it difficult to conduct intra-continental business.

9. Poor Capacity for Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change.

- The frequency of climate change-related insecurity and soil degradation is becoming a major challenge in the ECCAS region, which is experiencing increasing cases of climate change-related human and animal demographic pressure and conflict between pastoralists and crop farmers/communities that affect food production and security. The region's high vulnerability to climate change is because it cannot respond to climate change's increasing impacts, such as drought and erratic rainfall patterns that threaten yields and productivity. For example, there are no appropriate programs to strengthen smallholder capacity in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

10. Weak Participation of The Youth, Women, And Vulnerable Groups.

- Access to land and productive resources in the region is low, especially among women, youth, and vulnerable groups. They are often missing from agricultural projects, despite making up most of the population employed in the sector. Women and youth suffer from cultural norms and customs that make accessing land and credit difficult. And there is inadequate involvement of women and youth in designing and implementing agri-food programs.
- Equally, the region does not have an employment (creation) strategy or opportunity structures for women and youth in the agricultural sector. Young people are leaving rural areas because programs and strategies to create employment opportunities across the value chains are ineffective and because agriculture does not offer attractive economic opportunities.

11. Weak Private Sector Engagement In CAADP

- A weak enabling environment and the limited involvement of the private sector have contributed to the slow implementation of CAADP in the ECCAS region. The poor enabling environment has created (1) difficulties in obtaining land property certificates; (2) complications in receiving authorization to import seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and equipment (motorization, irrigation equipment, drones, digitalization-IT, AI, etc.) for the modernization of agriculture; and (3) problems in accessing appropriate credit schemes at reasonable interest rates. Heavy taxation, bureaucratic business processes, and a lack of structured engagement mechanisms have created hurdles that explain the low levels of private sector engagement in the region.

12. Poor Infrastructure and Adoption of Technology.

- ECCAS has infrastructure deficits, notably poor rural road networks, storage facilities, and irrigation systems that limit access to farm input, agricultural services, and commodity markets. Secondly, there is little investment in and adoption of innovative technologies for farm management, irrigation, and climate adaptation (for example, drones, AI, and irrigation and water management technologies).

13. Weak Data, Monitoring, and Evaluation System

- The ECCAS region still experiences data collection, reliability, and quality challenges in most countries. Strong data, monitoring, and evaluation systems are absent at the country level. Effective food security information systems are almost non-existent.

NB: In rural areas, populations generally occupy land they have received through inheritance or by allocation from the community without titles. This lack of security of tenure in rural areas (coexistence of customary law and positive law) leads to numerous land conflicts, which do not favor the sustainable management of natural resources or local development.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS FOR POST-MALABO AGENDA

A. Summary of Key Recommendations and Priorities

Food systems in Central Africa are challenged by population growth; slow productivity and income growth; inadequate access to finance, investment, and technology; inadequate capacity; climate change; and increasing insecurity. At the same time, urbanization and related trends are creating new opportunities for the region's agricultural value chains to meet nutrition and employment needs, including those of women and young people. Endorsement by the ECCAS Heads of States and Governments of the Common Agricultural Plan (CAP) and Plan of Investment, coupled with Member States' commitments to create/strengthen attractive conditions for agriculture sector investment, provide a good opportunity to implement the following recommendation and strategic interventions to improve the agricultural sector's performance:

1. Trade Competitiveness

Strengthen the competitiveness of strategic agricultural value chains by enhancing productivity, strengthening trade facilitation and advocacy organizations (the ECCAS Commission, trade associations, regional chambers of commerce), implementing industrial and regional policies, and building the capacity of export companies. In addition, creating awareness and enforcing ECCAS and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) market integration and trade liberalization schemes and instruments will harmonize quality standards and eliminate trade barriers, ultimately boosting trade.

2. Food Systems, Livestock, Technology, and Land Tenure System

Transforming ECCAS's agri-food system should be a multi-pronged effort that includes improving access to inputs (seed, fertilizers, phytosanitary products, equipment) and value chain support services (research, training, extension, advisory services, and networking) to enhance agricultural productivity, and scaling up investments in the livestock sector, including through financing trainings, infrastructure development, technology adoption, and research. In addition, ECCAS should promote sustainable farming practices, access to research, and the adoption of technologies and innovations for enhanced productivity, nutrition, climate adaptation and mitigation, and the inclusion of smallholders, women, youth, and other vulnerable. Member states should also invest in roads, and storage facilities to reduce post-harvest losses and improve access to markets for farmers and good quality products to consumers. Lastly, ECCAS Member States must strengthen land administration and management, including by establishing land use planning policy.

3. Climate Change, Insecurity and Resilience

To address the negative impacts of climate change and build resilience, the ECCAS region should develop a comprehensive regional climate change action plan, build the capacity of regional and national agencies

to provide climate-related services, promote climate-smart agriculture and appropriate technologies (which would also enhance production), and build resilience to climate shocks. These efforts will also reduce climate change-related conflicts in the region, providing the needed stability for agricultural activities. Lastly is to work on regional strategic food reserve.

4. Finance and Strategic Partnerships

Inadequate financing is a major bottleneck to CAADP implementation that should be addressed by creating an enabling environment for private-sector investments and public-private partnerships (PPPs) that leverage private-sector and development partner investments to bridge public-sector funding gaps. Cutting-edge financing strategies and models, such as blended financing, agri-business bonds, and green financing, are needed to mobilize investments in the agricultural sector and food systems more broadly. More funding and investment are required in the livestock, silvopastoral, and fisheries sectors, in particular.

5. Stakeholder Engagement

ECCAS needs a strategy for creating more jobs for women and youth in the agricultural sector. This strategy should, for example, empower youth through education, skills training, and entrepreneurship opportunities in the agri-food sector.

6. Mutual Accountability

Improving the Biennial Review (BR) as a mechanism for mutual accountability requires strategic partnerships with national statistical agencies, regional research institutes, and data sources. It also requires strengthening national statistical systems.

7. Institution and Coordination Capacity

Institutional strengthening includes developing and executing policies to incentivize sustainable, productive agricultural practices that support environmental health and nutritional adequacy. At the same time, leveraging, working with, and building the capacity of regional and national institutions and agencies to deliver on the CAADP agenda is critical. This includes establishing and strengthening specialized platforms and trade and professional organizations to support value chains, facilitating the creation or harmonization of federations, and establishing a regional chamber of commerce and agriculture. Strengthening institutional capacity should create platforms for knowledge sharing as well. These platforms, which facilitate learning and the exchanges of experiences on successes, failures, and challenges, could focus on production, climate change mitigation and adaptation, marketing, etc.

Details on the Recommendations and Strategic Interventions are discussed in the subsequent (Recommendations and Strategy) section below. The priorities, recommendations, and strategic interventions are organized around the 13 thematic areas (13 TWG) outlined in AKADEMIYA2063's issues paper.¹

¹ Wambo Yamdjeu, A., and H. Diop. 2024. Thematic Guidance to Inform Stakeholder Dialogues in the Post-Malabo Agenda Development Process. Post-Malabo Issue Paper Series, No. 1. Kigali: AKADEMIYA2063.

B. Recommendations for the Declaration, Strategy, and Actions for the Thirteen Technical Areas

1. Competitiveness and Trade – Proposed Technical Interventions

Summary of Key Message:

- Economic theory and empirical evidence across the ECCAS region suggest that the region’s current food security challenges can be better addressed by revisiting policies that govern domestic food markets as well as regional trade. Improving ECCAS regional trade competitiveness requires developing strategies to increase food production, investing in food processing, enhancing food safety and quality standards for better nutritional outcomes, and facilitating cross-border trade.
- Develop competitive agriculture, livestock, and forestry fisheries value chains based on the comparative advantages of Member States.
- Strengthen institutional capacity of the ECCAS Commission to drive intra- and inter-regional trade.
- Prioritize regional and national value chains for trade enhancement support and strengthen capacity of regional institutions to facilitate trade.

Malabo commitment five (boosting inter-African trade in agricultural commodities and services) committed Member States to harnessing markets and trade opportunities at the national, regional, and international levels by tripling intra-African trade and creating and enhancing trade policies and institutional conditions to facilitate trade. Trade competitiveness as a technical area is based on the theory that effective trade is critical in moving commodities from surplus to deficit areas, therefore alleviating food insecurity.

The discussions in these thematic areas (TWG6) focused on underlying issues affecting intra-Africa/ regional trade; key tariff and non-tariff barriers; policy, regulatory, and institutional measures to reduce these barriers; key investments required to boost regional market integration and to enhance domestic and regional agri-food trade competitiveness; and assessments of the effectiveness of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in addressing agriculture trade issues.

Domestic market and trade liberalization policies affect food security considerably across African countries. Economic theory and empirical evidence across the ECCAS region suggest that the region’s current food security challenges can be better addressed by revisiting policies that govern domestic food markets as well as regional trade. Improving ECCAS regional trade competitiveness requires developing strategies to increase food production, investing in food processing, enhancing food safety and quality standards for better nutritional outcomes, and facilitating cross-border trade.

Strategies and actions that ECCAS can take to strengthen production systems for improved production include:

- Implementing strong economic policies and programs to support agricultural development.

- Developing competitive agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries value chains based on the comparative advantages of Member States.
- Intensifying agriculture and improving agronomic practices through the proper use of quality seeds and agrochemicals, mechanization, soil fertility management, and food safety management.
- Scaling up investment in strategic agricultural value chains and facilitating access to credit, for example, by developing credit reference, guarantee schemes, and agriculture insurance systems.
- Facilitating access to secured agricultural land.
- Strengthening research, training, and advisory support.
- Integrating more women and youths (who form the majority of the labor force in the production sector).

Improving trade competitiveness through processing requires the implementation of policies that attract investment in food processing and value addition, contributing to the establishment of processing units, research and innovation, and capacity building (training and advisory support). The processing of livestock products (meat, hides, etc.) will reduce post-harvest losses, enhance product storage and shelf-life, and increase the returns on investment from agricultural products.

Intra-African trade presents huge opportunities for sustained growth and development on the continent. It has the potential to reduce vulnerability to global shocks, contribute to economic diversification, enhance export competitiveness, and create jobs. Intra-African trade not only helps to identify and exploit flagship value chains and products, but it also promotes intra-regional integration and attracts large-scale investment.

When trade flows are faster and more cost-effective, the region's businesses and consumers benefit (as it creates employment, industrial linkages, and structural transformation). Compared to other RECs, ECCAS 11 Member States ship the largest share of its intra-African exports outside the region. On average, only 46 percent of ECCAS's intra-continental trade remained within the REC in 2016–2018, which is a significantly lower share than in 2005–2007 (58 percent). The top 10 intra-African exporters account for roughly 70 percent of the formal market. Agricultural imports are more widely dispersed, with the top importing countries accounting for only half of formal trade. Further emphasis on upgrading national transport and infrastructure can create linkages among regions and improve the movement of goods and services across the continent. Regional infrastructure development programs, such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, are optimum ways to achieve continental connectivity for Africa.

Other than transport, investments in aggregation, cold storage, warehousing infrastructure, and market information systems are needed. It is equally imperative that African countries and RECs invest in the effective implementation of regional policies and the elimination of trade barriers.

Specifically, ECCAS needs to carry out the following activities to promote regional trade and integration:

- Facilitate the adoption of a common Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC)/ECCAS common external tariff (CET), operationalize joint border control services and systems to improve and streamline customs procedures, and eliminate trade barriers.

- Implement a protocol on the free movement and right of establishment of ECCAS nationals.
- Establish national and regional chambers of commerce and revitalize consular chambers to facilitate trade.
- Facilitate the adoption and implementation of agriculture and industrial policies that support the structural transformation of the economies of the region.
- Build the capacities of relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations (CSOs) and trade associations, to undertake and support regional trade, for example by monitoring progress and advocating the implementation of regional and continental policies, instruments, and measures.
- Participate in a Pan-African network to improve cooperation and coherence in interregional trade.
- Strengthen the institutional capacity of the ECCAS Commission to drive intra- and inter-regional trade.
- Make regional trade support networks proactive in policy dialogues and support the coordinated promotion of trade.
- Strengthen productive capacities and export competitiveness of companies in growth sectors.
- Establish a regional chamber of agriculture and commerce.
- Develop and strengthen enforcement mechanisms, including setting deadlines, identifying unimplemented measures and sensitizing members on their implementation, and sanctioning noncompliance and lack of responsibility for regional measures.
- Put in place infrastructure, processes, and systems that enhance trade route efficiencies.
- Prioritize regional and national value chains for trade enhancement support.
- Organize trade fairs and exhibitions to promote linkages, trade, and marketing.
- Boost intra-regional trade by raising awareness of enforcement for existing trade liberalization schemes and instruments.

Adherence to food safety and health standards, including sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards, is a critical determinant in regional food trade and ensuring access to safe food.

Healthy food and better nutritional outcomes require that food safety and disease control issues be a priority. ECCAS can ensure access to healthy food and better nutritional outcomes by:

- Harmonizing food safety standards and promoting the consumption of healthy food in the region, within the framework of AfCFTA. This should include the development of operational plans and effective enforcement for harmonized regional policies and sensitizing stakeholders and Member States on regional policies, particularly the new policies.
- Developing and implementing policies and strategies that promote value addition and good food preservation techniques to reduce post-harvest losses and enhance food safety.
- Investing in human resource, research, and advisory systems to enhance capacity on food safety.
- Rehabilitating roads to facilitate speedy access to good food (quantity, quality, and cost).
- Strengthening national capacity to implement and monitor SPS measures and eliminating (food safety related) technical trade barriers.

Summary of Key Message:

- Ensure greater agricultural productivity of smallholder farmers through intensifying strategic value chains; facilitating access to land, water, credits, seeds, fertilizers, and mechanization; investing in rural infrastructure; and strengthening resilience to climate change impacts.
- Ensure full implementation of the Common Agriculture Policy, which protects the environment, promotes good agriculture practices, and protects land against erosion and degradation.
- Deepen investment and development of the livestock sector as a strategic sector in the region.
- Develop or strengthen value chain services (research and development, training and advisory, input, business and equipment service delivery, networking).

Meeting CAADP commitments three (ending hunger in Africa by 2025) and four (halving poverty) requires focusing on the agri-food systems. This includes accelerating agriculture sector growth by boosting productivity, the adoption of sustainable and reliable production methods, access to appropriate and affordable farm inputs, and the adoption of appropriate technology; enhancing the capacity of value chain actors; and promoting the efficient, effective use and management of water.

In this section, the participants focused on the following: the underlying issues affecting the food system, how Africa can boost the productivity of smallholder farmers, how agricultural and economic growth can end hunger, how agri-food system can ensure access to healthy food and better nutrition, and how to address food safety in the context in a rapidly transforming value chains and burgeoning processing sector.

The Malabo Declaration provides a comprehensive roadmap to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable food production that guarantees smallholder livelihoods, food security, and food sovereignty.

To mainstream food systems into the post-Malabo agenda, ECCAS stakeholders proposed the following strategies and actions:

- Develop and implement appropriate, integrated Food System Roadmaps to design, execute, monitor, and evaluate programs and activities to meet the CAADP commitments. ECCAS must put in place strategies to ensure that the Common Agriculture Policy of ECCAS (PAC-CEEAC), the Regional Agricultural Investment Program (*Programme National d'Investissement Agricole pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutrition - PNIASAN*), and the Food and Nutritional Security Plan (PRIASAN) are implemented. An integrated food system roadmap should include mapping and assessment of food assets, production, locations, behaviors, distribution, consumption patterns, food waste, and technologies, as well as a social and gender analysis of the system.

- Intensify production in strategic value chains—including cassava, rice, maize, sorghum, wheat, chicken, fish, meat, and milk—to meet the region’s growing needs.
- Address land degradation, land tenure, and land management issues by operationalizing ECCAS’s land guidelines ([Traite Revise Instituant La Communauté Economique Des Etats De L’Afrique Centrale](#)) and undertaking land policy reforms to reconcile customary and civic laws and address retrogressive customary laws that hinder access to land.
- Support Member States to develop and implement national soil and fertilizer action plans to domesticate and operationalize the Nairobi Fertilizer and Soil Health Declaration. This effort would include designing projects and mobilizing investments to fund strategic components of the Declaration and promote investment in fertilizer production and soil testing services in the region.
- To address difficulties in accessing farm inputs, promote investment in local input production (establish local fertilizer, pesticide, seed, and agricultural equipment production plants); develop and implement smart input subsidy programs; strengthen input distribution systems to enhance last-mile distribution (for example, store safety stocks and establish input depots in strategic production locations); provide tax exemption for imports of short-term inputs; organize roadshows, trade fair, and exhibitions to facilitate farmer training; and strengthen equipment delivery and maintenance systems/services. In addition, establish investment mechanisms for the seed sector, strengthen seed testing laboratories and quality control systems, and establish national and regional gene banks.
- Strengthen farmer extension and value chain services (research and development, training and advisory, business and equipment service delivery, networking). This includes investing in training and extension programs to enhance input use and facilitating learning and experience sharing among Member States on successful extension and delivery models.
- Strengthen national research systems, establish centers of excellence and expert platforms in the agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries sectors, and strengthen regional coordination to enhance responsiveness and service delivery to agriculture.
- Develop policies that promote the adoption of post-harvest management technologies and practices, including investment in warehouses, storage facilities, and marketing infrastructure.
- Establish strategic food reserves and food balance sheets based on the region’s diverse food systems and products.
- Implement effective nutrition policies, including investing in food fortification to enhance household nutrition.

2. Technological Advancements and Efficiency

Summary of Key Message:

- Facilitate capacity development for value chain actors, and access to modern technologies.
- Harness technology to generate evidence to for planning and decision making, including identification of key drivers of agricultural transformation and emergency prediction and response.

Increasing agricultural productivity and improving livelihoods require the widespread adoption of technological advancements for greater efficiency. This includes promoting innovative agricultural practices, enhancing access to technology, and improving the efficiency of agricultural value chains. The third Malabo commitment (ending hunger in Africa by 2025) committed Member States to accelerate agricultural growth by doubling agricultural productivity levels through adoption of technology. This require enhancing policy and institutional conditions and support systems for sustainable and reliable production, access to quality and affordable inputs, supply of appropriate knowledge, information, and skills to users, efficient and effective water management systems notably through irrigation, and suitable, reliable and affordable mechanization and energy supplies, amongst others.

The questions guiding discussions in TWG 4 (Emerging Technologies, Biotechnology, AI, and Productivity Growth in Africa) focused on issues affecting smallholder farmers' productivity, enhancing mechanization of agricultural production and digitizing all key value chains to enhance efficiency, and identifying the key drivers of agriculture and food systems transformation, specifically those that have been adopted and those that have not (focusing on technologies such as irrigation, transgenic technology, Indigenous species, policy innovations, climate-smart agriculture, digitization of agriculture).

Africa's high population growth rate and climate change impacts have put pressure on the agriculture sector to increase production and productivity. In most African countries, where access to land is an issue, it will be difficult to increase the number of farms. As such, automation and the adoption of technology—not only production-related technologies such as improved seed, irrigation equipment, spraying, and labor-enhancing technologies, but also storage and processing, surveillance, and weather-related technologies—has become a pressing need to help increase productivity and address the effects of climate change. The Internet of Things (IoT) and AI offer promise across all industries, including agriculture. Advancements in these digital technologies have made revolutionary changes in agriculture by providing smart systems that can predict weather patterns and disease incidences, diagnose diseases, predict crop yields, and monitor, control, and visualize various farm operations in real-time (with the comparable intelligence of human experts). The potential applications of IoT and AI include the development of smart farm machinery, irrigation systems, weed and pest control, fertilizer application, greenhouse cultivation, storage structures, drones for plant protection, and crop health monitoring.

ECCAS should identify and deploy the recent research in digital technology-driven agriculture and agriculture engineering including AI and internet-based tools. AI can be deployed on small and large farms, various supply chains, and inclusive growth systems. Recent technologies will also help in the identification of key drivers of agricultural transformation. The starting point is to develop policies and strategies that would enable access to modern technologies and capacity building of actors. ECCAS should also put in place mechanisms and regulations to promote production and adoption of improved seeds, and to handle issues relating to biotechnologies, and biosafety.

3. Markets and Agro-Processing

Summary of Key Message:

- Develop a regional agro-industrial plan and industrial hubs based on the region's comparative advantage.
- Support full implementation of AfCFTA,
- Prioritize value chains (cassava, peanuts, meat, fish, coffee, cocoa, pineapple, tea, banana, oil palm, rubber, tomato; fruit trees, etc.),
- Promote public-private partnerships for the creation and implementation of agro-industries.

To improve food security, there is a need to strengthen markets through enhancing market access, value addition, and developing agro-processing capacities to ensure that agricultural products reach consumers efficiently and effectively. The Malabo Commitment Five — Boosting Intra-African Trade in Agricultural Commodities and Services — committed to harnessing markets and trade opportunities nationally, regionally, and internationally by tripling, by the year 2025, intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services and creating and enhancing policies and institutional conditions and support systems.

The questions guiding the discussions in TWG 6 — Boosting Intra-African Agri-food Trade — centered on the issues affecting the key tariff and non-tariff obstacles hampering cross-border and intra-African trade. Additionally, the discussions addressed key policy, regulatory, and institutional measures that could reduce these obstacles, and the necessary investments needed at country and regional levels to boost the integration of regional markets. Also, the discussions explored the key investments required at country and regional levels to enhance the competitiveness of domestic agri-food sectors in regional markets. Lastly, the discussions aimed to assess whether the AfCFTA is responding to the issues that affect trade in agricultural commodities.

The role of structured markets in stabilizing prices in the supply chain of agriculture is very important, as it follows the economic laws of demand and supply. A structured market system ensures competition (leading to innovation and creativity among competitors). It sets a pace for better price regulation among producers, warehouse owners, and sellers. With the presence of structured market control strategies, the rate of fraud in prices and the supply of goods and services are limited. When quality and health standards are not good, it negatively affects the stability of the price, and therefore its supply response. We need

structured markets (organized and formal places where farmers, traders, processors, millers, banks, and others enter organized, regulated trading) to be able to achieve the needed quality and health standards necessary to stabilize prices, while stimulating supply. A well-structured market within the region will help member countries to trade freely without fear of exchange rate differences (since the countries do not have a common currency). A structured market enables countries within the region to carry out online trading. To achieve a structured, ECCAS needs to focus on strengthening cooperatives and farmer associations, strengthening/building aggregation capacity/infrastructure (bulking centers and warehouse), strengthening the food safety and traceability system, mobilizing agricultural sector and value chain investment, strengthening extension service provision, strengthening capacity for lobbying and advocacy, improving availability of information on input and produce, and building/ensuring consistent supply of agricultural produce and commodities.

The region also needs to implement strategies to enhance agro-processing and build a successful agro-industry. It is not enough to generate primary agricultural products. The region needs to add value and process them into secondary products. Once these products have been processed, producers will need to get them to the market, brand them, and market them to wholesalers. Specific strategies to enhance agro-processing and build a successful agro-industry include:

- Putting in place a regional agro-industrial plan based on the region's comparative advantage and where each country is accountable towards the plan and process.
- Developing specialized agro-industrial hubs for agro-processing based on a clear understanding of the regional landscape of specific commodities. These agro hubs must be created based on the comparative advantages of ECCAS's Member States (agricultural value chains).
- Developing agro-industries with low impact on the environment, that will promote local agricultural systems, and better consideration of the principle of inclusiveness.
- Committing to implement AFCFTA through the development and strengthening of national legislative and regulatory frameworks of ECCAS countries and developing and implementing/domesticating regional policies that facilitate free trade area and regional value chain integration.
- Identifying the region's potential breadbasket and facilitating regional value chain integration (based on agricultural growth pole principle/theory).
- Promoting/facilitating PPPs to attract and scale up investment in targeted regional value chains and providing incentives to promote investment in agro-industries.
- Strengthening value chain distribution system through distributor and aggregator models and establishing warehouses in production zones and rural areas.

To ensure that the African agri-food systems transformation agenda prioritizes agri-business and processing, it is important to:

- Prioritize value chains (cassava, peanuts, meat, fish, coffee, cocoa, pineapple, tea, banana, oil palm, rubber, tomato; fruit trees, etc.),
- Promote PPPs for the creation and implementation of agro-industries,
- Strengthen tax relief measures to encourage investment in agribusiness, and
- Facilitate access to land and ensure land tenure security for agro-industries investment.

4. Partnerships, Finance, and Investment

Summary of Key Message:

- Develop and implement productive regional national agriculture investment plans, that incorporate innovative and sustainable financing modes including PPP models and green and climate funds.
- Establish investment mechanisms and appropriate funding models for priority agriculture value chains (Cassava, rice, maize, sorghum, wheat, chicken, fish, meat, milk).
- Develop strategic partnerships to mobilize investment from strategic private sector and regional and national institutions.
- Support countries develop agriculture sector partnership framework and establish policies, regulations, strategies, and platforms to promote PPPs in the agricultural sector.
- Establish dialogue platforms to improve planning, implementation, coordination, and monitoring of the ECCAS' agricultural investment plans and its alignment with the NAIPs.

It is crucial to enhance investment finance in agriculture to drive growth, productivity, and food security in Africa. The Malabo Commitment Two focused on enhancing both public and private investment finance in agriculture. This included upholding the commitment to allocate at least 10 percent of public expenditure to agriculture and ensuring its efficiency and effectiveness. The commitment also aimed at creating and enhancing appropriate policy and institutional conditions and support systems to facilitate private investment in agriculture, agri-business, and agro-industries, with priority given to local investors. Additionally, the commitment called for fast-tracking the operationalization of the African Investment Bank to mobilize and disburse investment finance for priority agriculture-related investment projects as provided for in the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

The discussions in TWG 2 — Enhancing Investment Finance in Agriculture focused on several key areas — included identifying the issues affecting investment finance in agriculture, determining the crucial investment areas within the sector for driving agri-food systems transformation post-2025, creating effective mechanisms to track the main financial flows into the agri-food systems, setting realistic and trackable targets for monitoring progress, establishing appropriate tracking methods to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of investment in agriculture, and finding the best way to track private sector investment in the post-Malabo era.

Budgetary allocation for the agriculture sector in the ECCAS region remains low, due to the competing priorities for dwindling revenue, yet private sector capital mobilization that would bridge this gap has remained elusive for both the government and private enterprises in ECCAS. Many new entrepreneurs and SMEs continue to face inadequate access to finance for expansion, research and innovation, product development, and even business startups, causing many people to shy away from owning their own businesses. Equally, private sector investment in the region is constrained by high tax rates across member

countries. The role of public-private sector partnerships in facilitating agriculture sector capital formation for the implementation of CAP-F in member countries whether this is for support of agriculture programs, value chain development, or individual business, cannot be over-emphasized.

To achieve an effective and strategic public-private sector partnership, the region must:

- Redesign and strengthen the (existing) PPP mechanisms and platforms to enhance resource mobilization and support for strategic agricultural sector and value chains.
- Establish strategic partnerships with key regional and global entities and the private sector.
- Support each country to develop an agricultural sector partnership framework and establish policies, regulations, strategies, and platforms to facilitate resource mobilization and investment for value chain development including infrastructure development, research, innovation and extension, technology adoption and skills development, agricultural inputs, equipment and infrastructure, agro-processing, mechanization, automation and digitization, sector communication and coordination and accountability, and business process improvements.
- Develop appropriate financing models and mechanisms for the priority agricultural value chains. This includes facilitating access to green funds and developing attractive and low-interest credit schemes for smallholder farmers and industrial investors to increase yield and investment in value addition.
- Leverage existing financial mechanisms and products for agricultural and value chain development.
- Organize business and TFP round tables.

5. Mutual Accountability and Biennial Review Processes

Summary of Key Message:

- Set up coordination structures and allocate adequate resources for the national BR process including coordination and communication beyond data collection and dissemination.
- Deploy modern ICT and satellite technologies (drone, AI, etc.) to enhance data collection, process, quality, and utilization.
- Develop strategic partnerships with National Statistical Agencies, Regional Research Institutes, and data sources to integrate and enhance data sources.

For Malabo Commitment Seven, stakeholders committed to a systematic, regular review process using the CAADP Results Framework to track the progress made in implementing the declaration's provisions. Mutual accountability ensures transparency, trust, and shared responsibility among stakeholders in the agricultural sector. The Biennial Review (BR) process is the main mechanism for mutual accountability in CAADP. The BR process fosters alignment, harmonization, and coordination among multi-sectoral efforts and multi-institutional platforms for peer review, mutual learning, and mutual accountability. It also

strengthens national and regional institutional capacities for knowledge and data generation and management, supporting evidence-based planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

The discussions on this theme (TWG 13) focused on addressing the underlying issues affecting CAADP BR Data Management and Mutual Accountability. The conversations looked at how to better integrate JSR and BR processes at the country level, incorporating development partner organizations' country-level activities into the JSR processes, learning from past BR processes, and transforming the BR into a more useful planning tool rather than just a retrospective exercise. Lastly, participants discussed making the JSRs more effective and institutionalizing them within the country and regional processes.

The ECCAS region can enhance data quality and mutual accountability by partnering with ICT and digital organizations and service providers to enhance data collection, analysis, and planning. Digital technologies like drones and AI can be deployed to capture changes in weather patterns and vegetation, map soil, manage smart irrigation systems, and create multi-stakeholder digital platforms. ECCAS should invest in GIS and remote sensing and satellite technology to validate statistical data and predict and respond to emergencies. It can also use AI to accelerate data processing and analysis (meta-analysis), facilitate foresight on changes in climatic conditions, and for scenario planning and simulation of outcomes for various policy options.

To strengthen the use of the BR process as a planning tool, the region and the continent should implement the recommendations of the successive BRs by:

- Re-evaluating the effectiveness of the BR mechanism as a self-evaluation approach in enhancing mutual accountability.
- Allocating adequate budget for BR and knowledge management coordination in national budgets.
- Investing in communication and dissemination of BR results using various tools, methods, and approaches targeting various audiences. This includes communication of national CAADP initiatives and developing robust online tools for BR use.
- Strengthening multi-stakeholder coordination, dialogue, learning, and accountability platforms – this includes strengthening national partnerships and donor platforms as well as follow-up of BR outcomes and recommendations.
- Enhancing partnership and capacity of trade associations, farmer organizations, media, and advocacy groups to track and report on progress on CAADP, and to advocate for the implementation of BR recommendations.
- Strengthening partnerships with national statistical agencies and developing a system/strategy to integrate BR indicators into national data and planning systems.
- Mapping out and developing strategic partnerships with national and regional data sources and stakeholders for data collection and analysis and developing a system to integrate these sources.
- Conducting an audit of national BR and knowledge management capacity (systems, processes structures, and tools); and developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy for continuous capacity building and training on the BR and data and knowledge management for national institutions and experts.

- Redesigning and institutionalizing continental, regional, and national JSRs to make them more effective.
- Developing incentive and reward systems to promote better performance and learning.

The importance of national development partners and the private sector in providing financial resources, technical expertise, and data for CAADP implementation in ECCAS cannot be overstated. To strengthen the incentives and participation of development partners in the BR process, particularly the JSR, national governments should design an effective coordination and enforcement framework that ensures development partners' alignment, support, and tracking of national development priorities, policies, and strategies through their interventions. This would ensure that development partners are well-guided on important development parameters to avoid duplication or implementation of programs and activities that are not aligned with national goals. Likewise, development partners should be encouraged to use the BR platform/process to integrate their development indicators and showcase their program outcomes (e.g., FAO RIMA Model). Additionally, Member States should establish a standing JSR committee that includes development partners and the private sector with well-defined roles, required support, and targets. This will contribute to the harmonization of national performance parameters, resource mobilization, and data collection efforts and initiatives.

6. Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity

Summary of Key Message:

- Conduct stakeholder mapping and develop a comprehensive CAADP stakeholder engagement strategy.
- Establish multi-stakeholder collaboration, and dialogue platforms for private sector, small-scale farmers, youth, women, and professionals at national and grass root levels.
- Build the capacity of women and youth for effective engagement in value-chain activities.
- Provide enabling environment and incentive, and leverage on existing financing mechanisms for private sector participation.

Engagement and inclusivity are fundamental principles that improve the effectiveness and sustainability of initiatives and policies. The Malabo Commitment Four – Halving Poverty by the year 2025 through Inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation – aimed to ensure that the agricultural growth and transformation process was inclusive and contributed at least 50 percent to the overall poverty reduction target. The focus was on creating and enhancing the necessary policy, institutional, and budgetary support and conditions, sustaining an annual agricultural GDP growth of at least six percent, establishing and/or strengthening inclusive public-private partnerships for at least five priority agricultural commodity value chains with strong linkages to smallholder agriculture, creating job opportunities for at least 30 percent

of youth in agricultural value chains, and supporting and facilitating preferential entry and participation for women and youth in gainful and attractive agri-business opportunities.

The questions guiding the discussions in TWG 9 centered around the underlying issues limiting inclusivity and equality in the agri-food system, obstacles relating to policy, institutional, technical, and financial factors that hinder the empowerment of smallholder farmers, youth, and women as actors across all agri-food segments. The discussions also explored existing opportunities to overcome these obstacles and boost participation by women, youth, and marginalized groups in agri-food system value chains. Additionally, they addressed what else needs to be done to ensure equitable distribution of wealth among all actors along agri-food system value chains.

To encourage more stakeholder participation in CAADP post-Malabo, CAADP should develop mechanisms and strategies for the engagement of youth, women, the private sector, Indigenous peoples, and vulnerable groups in the development and implementation process. Specifically, ECCAS Member States can enhance the democratization and decentralization of CAADP through:

- Conducting stakeholder mapping and developing and implementing a comprehensive CAADP stakeholder engagement strategy.
- Developing physical and digital multi-stakeholder collaboration, and learning platforms for the private sector, small-scale farmers, youth, women, and professionals at the national and grassroots levels to support CAADP implementation.
- Developing strategies for mobilization, coordination, and strengthening grass root stakeholders (youth and women groups) in the agriculture sector/ value chains.
- Establishing training centers and facilitating shows and exhibitions as a way of engaging rural populations, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable groups.
- Mobilizing resources to implement attractive agriculture sector employability strategies/activities to enhance rural youth and women's employability to reduce youths' migration to urban areas.
- Sensitizing authorities and village community leaders on the existing gender policy and laws and the importance of involving women and youth in development activities.
- Promoting PPPs and creating incentives for private investment in the agriculture sector and friendly taxation. Opportunities exist for ECCAS to strengthen and expand the Community Development Fund (CDF) of the BDEAC (CEMAC) for agricultural financing, leverage the United Nations Multi-Donor Fund's Blended Finance Mechanisms, and attract and channel Europe, Afro-American, and the Caribbean ECCAS diaspora's investment to the agriculture sector (e.g., through a strategic partnership with the African Diaspora Investment Fund (ADIF).
- Facilitating the creation of agriculture insurance schemes, and safety nets for vulnerable people.

7. Climate Change and Resilience

Summary of Key Message:

- The ECCAS region faces climate change and resilience challenges such as drying water bodies, drought, and climate-related conflicts, as well as weak adaptation and mitigation capacity. To address these issues the region should:
- Develop and support the implementation of a comprehensive regional climate change action plan.
- Strengthen the capacity and coordination of national and regional climate-related agencies to adequately serve agriculture based on the WMO Global Climate Service framework.
- Develop a Regional Strategic Food Reserve Strategy.

The Malabo Commitment Six committed to enhancing the resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and related risks by building resilient systems that ensure that by the year 2025, at least 30 percent of farm, pastoral, and fisher households are resilient to climate and weather-related risks. It also called for enhancing investments in resilience-building initiatives, including social security for rural workers and other vulnerable social groups, and for vulnerable ecosystems. Additionally, the commitment called for the mainstreaming of resilience and risk management in policies, strategies, and investment plans. Discussions on this technical area (TWG 7) focused on the underlying issues related to mitigation and adaptation to climate change for agri-food systems. The intension was to clarify and quantify mitigation and adaptation goals and align the need for mitigation actions with the imperative to boost growth and improved livelihoods in the context of low carbon emissions. The discussions also aimed to identify key elements of a successful adaptation agenda at the country level and explored technological and institutional opportunities that could boost adaptation efforts.

The ECCAS region faces climate change and resilience challenges such as drying water bodies, drought, and climate-related conflicts, as well as weak adaptation and mitigation capacity. To address these issues, ECCAS region must invest more in climate change adaptation, mitigation, and food systems resilience by:

- Developing comprehensive regional and national climate change adaptation and mitigation plans that respond to agriculture. These plans (policy and strategy) should ensure sustainable use of arable land and NARE, reduce transhumance-related conflicts in all dimensions and aspects including climate change-related agro-pastoral conflict, vulnerability to human trafficking and cross-border crime, and reduce the loss of biodiversity that affects agriculture and food security.
- Developing capacity and supporting relevant regional and national agencies to implement climate adaptation plans and to serve the agriculture sector effectively - targeting organizations responsible for NARE, climate change, and resilience efforts like meteorological departments /services, water management, coastal and marine protection, and disaster management focusing on:

- Technical, human, and financial support for the Central African Climate Application and Prediction Centre (CACP-AC); strengthening partnership with WMO Global Climate; and strengthening advocacy, resource mobilization, and technical capacity to implement ECCAS Weather and Climate Integration Strategy - support to countries to develop and implement National Weather and Climate Integration Strategy.
 - Establishment (where applicable) and capacity development support for relevant national agencies - national meteorological and climate resilience and adaptation agency, national disaster management departments. This includes supporting countries to develop and implement the National Weather and Climate Integration Strategy, and support for national meteorological services in the production of reliable data and services within the WMO Global Climate Services framework.
 - Harmonization of regional and national restoration and adaptation plans and measures starting with domesticating the PNIASAN and PRIASAN and popularizing and implementing ECCAS regional meteorological and climatology strategy.
 - Map out Agro-ecological zone and climate change hot spots.
 - Development of a Regional Food Reserve Strategy - establish a reserve fund, etc.
 - Establishing multi-stakeholder coordination, dialogue, learning, and accountability platforms for experiences sharing in support of the implementation of climate change adaptation plans.
 - Development of Regional Surveillance and Early Warning System (online)
 - Mapping of regional natural/ agricultural production resources that support agric activities.
- To strengthen the capacity for measurement, monitoring, and preparedness for multiple shocks for vulnerable communities, ECCAS should develop capacity for climate forecasting and set up and digitize user platforms that provide meteorology and agriculture-related information. This can include a food stocks management platform and an early warning alert system.
 - In addition, ECCAS needs to develop policies and systems for the protection of indigenous crop varieties and local biodiversity (to protect species and varieties faced with extinction). And promote the adoption of sustainable agricultural techniques and practices (agroforestry, agroecology, soil conservation and minimum tillage, smart agriculture).

8. Political and institutional reforms, and implementation

Summary of Key Messages

- Finalize the revision and develop an implementation plan for the ECCAS Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as part of Policy Reforms to reforms to achieve the transformation of food systems.
- Institutionalize and allocate adequate budget to coordinate and capacity building.
- Establish and strengthen regional CAADP M&E structures, processes, and tools.
- Partner with, build the capacity of, and leverage existing regional institutions for CAADP implementation in ECCAS.

The Malabo Commitment One is a recommitment to the key principles and values of the CAADP process, including the pursuit of agriculture-led growth as a primary strategy to achieve targets on food and nutrition security and shared prosperity; the exploitation of regional complementarities and cooperation to boost growth; the application of evidence-based planning, efficient policies, dialogue, review, and accountability shared by all NEPAD programs; the use of partnerships and alliances with farmers, agribusiness, and civil society; and supporting implementation at the country and regional levels through coordination and harmonization.

The discussions in TWG 1 focused on addressing the underlying issues related to the Principles and Values of the CAADP Agenda. This included the transition from narrow agriculture-led growth to an agri-food system transformation, the future of smallholder agriculture, and the extent to which smallholder-driven agriculture will continue to be the basis of agricultural development in Africa. Furthermore, the discussions considered the policy and institutional reforms and strategies necessary to mainstream agri-food systems into the post-Malabo CAADP agenda.

As part of policy (laws and regulations) reforms to achieve the transformation of food systems, prioritize finalization of the revision of the ECCAS Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and draw up an Action Plan for the implementation that includes revision of the national agricultural policies and law frameworks to align with the CAP. For example, review and develop laws on land ownership, facilitate access to land by smallholders and agribusiness investors, and support agricultural production.

The institutional reforms considered to enhance accountability to the rule of law and citizens include:

- Finalizing the rationalization process of the two RECs (CEMAC and ECCAS),
- Establishing, institutionalizing, and allocating adequate budget for multi-stakeholder/multidisciplinary regional coordination, steering, and monitoring structure (committee) on CAADP,
- Establishing and strengthening regional CAADP M&E structures, processes, and tools. This includes developing/ adopting appropriate strategies and tools to improve progress monitoring

e.g., the use of normative tools to evaluate country-led actions, setting up and operationalizing a citizen monitoring structure (regional citizens observatory or platform of non-state actors),

- Operationalizing the ECCAS Business Council (by integrating all inter-professional groups) and accelerating the establishment of the regional network of consular chambers (agriculture, crafts),
- Strengthening and operationalizing the newly created ECCAS Specialized Institutions and Implementing Agencies (COREP, OCFSA, CAPC-AC, CEFDHAC and ROSEVAC, etc.),
- Offering capacity building and training for targeted CAADP stakeholders on project coordination, policy harmonization, resource mobilization, and advocacy; mapping out and conducting training needs assessment for key CAADP stakeholders,
- Strengthening professional organizations to advocate and provide technical support on/for CAADP.

For successful implementation of the post-Malabo agenda on food systems transformation, ECCAS should leverage specific ECCAS / regional institutions and agencies including their research institutions. Equally, AU needs fast-track rationalization, consolidation, and strengthening coordination of RECs, and facilitate peer-to-peer learning at the ministerial level to enhance learning and accountability.

Policy and institutional reforms should particularly target access to land and security of tenure (enforcement), which is a huge challenge in ECCAS, by strengthening land administration and management systems as proposed within the CAP framework to reduce land grabbing and appropriation. Institutional capacity strengthening should also focus on building capacity for research and innovation and climate change adaptation at country levels.

9. Communication and Advocacy

Effective communication and advocacy are key determinants of the success of the post-Malabo CAADP agenda. To successfully implement CAADP, there is a need to:

- Develop a communication strategy for CAADP.
- Partner with and build the capacity of national stakeholders and partners to undertake communication and advocacy.
- Harmonize coordination, planning, and advocacy for resource mobilization.
- Strengthen media engagement in the CAADP process.
- Advocate for the implementation of existing policies at the national and sub-regional (REC) levels.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

ECCAS participants raised critical questions and challenges hindering the CAADP program and proposed solutions for the post-Malabo agenda. These discussions were informed by the framing of key issues and presentation on the country context, issues, and strategic priorities.

In the ECCAS region, the arid zone is more competitive in the production of meat and dairy products; this should be a strategic agri-food product for the region because of the comparative advantage it represents. The rainforest region, which is the cereals zone, is competitive for cassava, yam, maize, and rice. Selecting strategic products including comparative advantages can facilitate regional integration through the trade of agricultural goods and services. Equal support and investment should be accorded to crop and livestock farming. More investment and efforts are required in the livestock sector through the improvement of livestock management, development of livestock infrastructure, and value addition and revalorization/commercialization of livestock products (e.g., skin) to maximize value and return.

The ECCAS region has not recorded sufficient budgetary allocation and investment in agriculture like other sectors. It is therefore critical to implement strategies to strengthen strategic partnerships and mobilize investment from the private sector and development partners to bridge the funding shortfall from the public sector. Private sector partnerships are not only critical in mobilizing funds but also technical expertise. At the same time, the government can provide subsidies, reduce taxes, lower interest rates, and otherwise improve the enabling environment for private sector investment.

The nexus between climate change, governance, and insecurity in ECCAS requires urgent attention to ensure stability for agricultural production, especially in livestock farming areas where drought-related conflicts have arisen. As such, the region must implement a comprehensive climate mitigation and adaptation strategy to enhance livelihood resilience.

The ECCAS region should also prioritize the development of land administration and management systems to enhance access to land and land tenure security. Member states can adopt lessons from Rwanda, which deployed drone technology to map arable land for registration, thereby which facilitating increased investment in land.

Most Member States have not fully implemented CAADP because of inadequate institutional capacity, lack of political will, and inadequate resources. Institutional strengthening, capacity development, and use of regional institutions to support CAADP implementation will be key in the next CAADP dispensation. Enhancing accountability and enforcement mechanisms will also ensure commitment by national leadership.

Likewise, ECCAS has to adopt technology including digital technology, to spur transformation in the agriculture sector. This includes information and communication technology to address information asymmetry and facilitate trade, as well as productive technology to enhance productivity and

competitiveness and fast-track policy harmonization and integration. Africa's rich agricultural potential, combined with its diverse cultures, youthful population, and land and natural resources, can only be fully exploited if there is a deliberate effort and strategy for technology adoption and innovation.

Lastly, there is a need to implement youth employability and subvention programs and strategies to equip youth with the necessary production and management skills and techniques to create employment and encourage agri-entrepreneurs. Programs must be put in place to promote youth participation and access to technical skills and credit by women and youth.

ANNEX 1: Country Context, Priorities and Support Required – Presentations

SN	COUNTRY	OVERVIEW	PRIORITIES	SUPPORT REQUIRED
1	Cameroon	Population of 26.5 million, with about 70% engaged in Agriculture Major agricultural produces - timber, coffee, cotton, cocoa, maize fishery and livestock. Accounts for an estimated 80% of the country's GDP, 1/3 of foreign exchange earnings, and 15% of the country's budgetary resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural mechanization, • Development of agricultural value chains, • Adoption of climate-smart agriculture, • Enhance measurement and knowledge management in agriculture sector, • Promote conducive environment for innovative financing. 	<p>Technical support on productivity and sustainable production methods and building resilience to climate change.</p> <p>Improved infrastructure and access to production factors.</p>
2		2.3 million inhabitants in 2021, 800 KM of coastline and 85% of the surface is covered by forests. 1.8 Ha per inhabitant, 33.4% (or 768,200) of the population lives below the national poverty line, with chronic malnutrition affecting about 34 % of the population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of agricultural lands, • Development of an efficient seed system, • Strengthening agricultural stakeholders' engagements, • Create enabling environment for agricultural investment, • Industrialize the fishing sector. 	<p>Support the development of Agriculture sector strategy and investment plan.</p> <p>Mobilize and establish linkages with strategic partners for technical and financial support to the sector.</p>

SN	COUNTRY	OVERVIEW	PRIORITIES	SUPPORT REQUIRED
	Gabon	5.2 million hectares of arable land, of which 8% or 416,000 ha is exploited, providing about 17,000 jobs ≈ 20% of direct jobs in Gabon and contributing 5.6% of GDP in 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase state's contribution to the agriculture sector – financial and technical. 	

SN	COUNTRY	OVERVIEW	PRIORITIES	SUPPORT REQUIRED
3	Chad	Three (3) bioclimatic zones: Saharan zone (far north) represents 47% of the territory with rainfall between 00 and 100mm/year. Sahelian zone (central strip) - 43% of the territory with rainfall between 200 and 600 mm/year. Sudanian zone: 10% of the territory with rainfall between 800 to 1200mm/year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote diversification, sustainable growth, and competitiveness of rural production. • Develop strategic value chains in the rural area. • Strengthening resilience of rural production systems. • Create favorable conditions to attract investment and development of different rural sub-sectors. 	Reliable financial and technical support by the state, local authorities, professional organizations, financial institutions, donors and private sector.

SN	COUNTRY	OVERVIEW	PRIORITIES	SUPPORT REQUIRED
4	Central Africa Republic	Central African Republic have experienced significant changes and reforms that include: Development of agricultural policy and strategy (PNIASAN 2, PND); Recovery and peacebuilding in the CAR (RCPCA) after the crises of 2012; Agricultural development projects such as: PREVES, PREPAS, PRADAC, PADECAS, PRUCAC, PARSANKO etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalize national food systems coordination, • Strengthen agricultural research and seed system, • Establish a national Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS), and a national AS early warning system, • Strengthening the National Food Safety System; • Inclusion of women and youth to build agro-food systems. 	Material and technical support for national coordination and implementation, Partnership with regional and international research centers, Financial and technical support for the establishment of national food security monitoring system and national food security early warning system, Financial and technical support for strengthening the National Food Safety System (National Codex Alimentarius Committee).

SN	COUNTRY	OVERVIEW	PRIORITIES	SUPPORT REQUIRED
5	Equatorial Guinea	Unused arable land represents an agricultural potential of 850,000 hectares, of which only 26% (220,000 hectares) are exploited, with Plant, animal and fisheries production diversified and intensified. We are developing support programs with a climate-smart agricultural approach to improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalize the Multisector Coordination Committee for Food and Nutrition Security • Improve current market conditions. • Promote marketing and consumption of national agricultural products. • Adopt modern techniques for processing smoked and salted fish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Rural Development and Fisheries Fund, • Develop framework for access and protection to agricultural land (particularly for small farmers), • Promote equitable participation of women and youth, and revalorize agricultural activity as sustainable economic activity,

SN	COUNTRY	OVERVIEW	PRIORITIES	SUPPORT REQUIRED
		family incomes and increase soil productivity.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies for sustainable use and protection of the environment and NARE.
6	Republic of Sao Tome and Principe	2 Islands of volcanic origins, 6 Districts and 1 Autonomous Region. Continental shelf = 1,455 km ² , with a population of about 194,006 (2014). Gulf of Guinea 350 km from the African Coast (Gabon), 1001 km ² with approximately 220,000 inhabitants (2023). Humid tropical climate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the Zero Hunger Strategy. Review or adjustment of the program (PNIASAN). Implementation of the national irrigation strategy. Implementation of Financial Services. Increase Productivity and resilience. Inclusive access to markets and increasing the added value of local products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the Zero Hunger Strategy. Review or adjustment of the PNIASAN program. Implementation of the national irrigation strategy. Improvement of Financial Services. Implement strategies to enhance productivity and resilience. Promote value addition of local products and inclusive access to markets.

SN	COUNTRY	OVERVIEW	PRIORITIES	SUPPORT REQUIRED
7	<p style="text-align: center;">Republic of Congo</p>	<p>After the adoption of Malabo Declaration in June 2014, the republic of Congo through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishing (MAEP) has carried out specific actions below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Project (CADP), the Youth Agricultural and Entrepreneurship Project (YAEP), and the Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Project (IFADP). • Facilitation of agricultural credits through the Commercial Agriculture • Mobilization of agricultural stakeholders in Protected Agricultural Zones (PAZ-35). • Establishment of the Agricultural Machinery Operation Center (CEMA) Project to strengthen mechanization services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize agricultural stakeholders in PAZ. • Strengthen mechanization, increase investment in road infrastructure and irrigation. • Improve access to market for farmers. • Improve the post-harvest handling and develop value chains. • Strengthen strategic partnerships between the various stakeholders in the sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In its desire to support the agropastoral and fishing sector, the government has proceeded by. • The granting of tax and customs advantages relating to the importation of agricultural equipment and products by the 2023 Finance Law. • The legal structuring of the agro-pastoral and fishing sector with the preliminary draft laws currently being adopted. • How to access to secured land by Law No. 21 – 2018, setting the rules for land occupation and acquisition. • The agreement on investment advantages by Law No. 6 – 2003 of January 18, 2003, establishing the investment charter. • The OCOP “one country, one priority product” initiative. • The “Hand in Hand” initiative for financing agricultural projects. • TCP/PRC: organic agriculture, establishment of woodlots (around 50 hectares).

ANNEX 2: List of Participants

#	Name	Organization
1	Rachid Basso	AUDA NEPAD
2	Célestin Nga	PROPAC
3	Chouaibou Nchoutpouen	COMIFAC
4	Denis Pompidou	CAADP focal point
5	Estherine Director	AUDA NEPAD
6	Francis Doui	CAADP Focal Point CAR
7	Herman Achiri	Policy LINK
8	Ibrahim Linjouom	OCFSA
9	Joseph Maximin	PMF-AFRIQUE
10	Louis Essola	CEFDHAC
11	Moussa Demsa	ECCAS
12	Soulemanou Mohaman	AUDA NEPAD
13	Tobie Manga	CAADP Focal Point Cameroon
14	Nguepi Bebel	YPARD
15	Tchamadeu Weladji	YPARD
16	Anne Magne	MoA
17	Augustin Wambo	AKADEMIYA2063
18	Alphonse Danra	MINEPAT
19	Gninghaye Lorns	YPARD
20	Salomon Namkossere	Director of cabinet Ministry of Agriculture CAR
21	Abakar Mohammed	Head of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition ECCAS
22	Abderahim Toko	CEBEVIRHA
23	Alhadj Mahamat	CRSA
24	Germain Edou	CEBEVIRHA

#	Name	Organization
25	Libaon Netoyo	CAADP Expert Chad
26	Rassebaye Ngarhimdi	CAADP Focal Point Chad
27	Emmanuel Njukwe	CORAF
28	Cyprien Mobengue	CAADP Focal Point Congo
29	Justin Kouka	AUC
30	Alphonse Kanga	CAPC-AC
31	JB Moudou	CPAC
32	Choni Bolopo	CAADP Focal Point Equatorial Guinea
33	Mahlet Sileshi	AUC
34	Alain Ondo-Azi	PRASAC
35	Arnaud Kombila	General Director of Agriculture Gabon
36	Flore Wora	COREP
37	Ghislain Mbourou	CPAC
38	Nzamba Mombo	ROSEVAC
39	Patrick Nguema	CAADP Focal Point Equatorial Guinea
40	Catherine Mbinyo	Policy LINK
41	Freda Mbae	Policy LINK
42	James Ndegwa	Policy LINK
43	Marynissen Saskia	AUC
44	Emmanuel Olawale	Policy LINK
45	Joel Teteya	CAPC-AC
46	Assis Afonso	MoA
47	Amadou Tall	Policy LINK
48	Denis Pompidou	CARBAP Cameroon
49	Célestin Nga	PROPAC
50	Adama Coulibaly E.	UNECA Cameroon
51	R. Tavares	ONUDI Cameroon
52	Adama Taoko	FAO/SFC Gabon

#	Name	Organization
53	Andre S.	CARFS international
54	ASSIS AFONSO	CAADP Agriculture Statistics Sao Tome and Principe
55	Maximin EMAGNA	Private sector SME Platform Central Africa